

MINUTES FROM A REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 20, 2014

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange was held on Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 6:33 p.m., Walter G. Alexander, 105 Wilson Place, Community Room, Orange, New Jersey. The Executive Director advised that all of the requirements of the Sunshine Law were met. A roll call was taken as follows:

Present

Chairman Coram Rimes
Vice Chairman Ernest Williams
Commissioner David Rossi
Commissioner Joseph Juliano
Commissioner Clifford Ross

Also Present

Walter D. McNeil, Jr., Executive Director
Angela Gurrera, Esq., Feinstein, Raiss, Kelin & Booker
Several Employees
Several Residents

Absent

Commissioner Evelyn Hudson-Dorrah
Commissioner Lillie Davis

Pledge of allegiance was said.

Chairman Rimes called for the adoption of the agenda. Commissioner Ross moved to adopt. Commissioner Rossi seconded.

Chairman Rimes called for discussion
No discussion
A roll call was taken
All commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Rimes called for a motion for the adoption and/or correction of the Minutes from Regular Board meetings on December 19, 2013 and January 16, 2014. Commissioner Ross moved to adopt. Vice Chairman Williams seconded.

Chairman Rimes called for discussion

Commissioner Ross stated that he did not receive the minutes in advance and didn't have time to review them and asked for them to be submitted for the next meeting. Commissioner Ross and Vice Chairman Williams both withdrew their votes. Minutes will be voted on at the next meeting.

Treasurer's Report

No report

Executive Director's Report

Mr. McNeil said that the Section 8 monthly report and Public Housing reports are consistent. No terminations from Section 8. 51 portable families in our jurisdiction that we are administrating. Mr. McNeil said Administrative money is given to the other agencies for our families in their jurisdiction.

Commissioner Juliano wanted to know if the staff is being compensated for handling the portable families.

Mrs. Marianna DeVincentis, Director of Section 8 explained portability as directed by HUD.

Commissioner Ross wanted to know if we could look at this from a different perspective regarding the housing stock.

Mrs. DeVincentis explained people move closer to where they work.

Mr. McNeil explained that the difference in the housing stock – bedroom sizes may be more available. He said Public Housing 246 units lease 4 vacant. Very consistent. Staying leased up. Several years ago we were not as leased up. We are healthier as seen on the reports. Food bank program is great.

Commissioner Ross asked about the rent collections.

Director McNeil stated we have been collecting back rents, penalties and fees. It is much different than it was several years. We are still getting 30/40 people leaving the property a year. We are getting better at turning over the units.

Commissioner Ross was pleased with the work order report.

Mr. McNeil said our community room is being redone that is why the meeting is being held here. It should be done in about another month or so. We are moving along.

Commissioner Rossi asked how the residents are.

Mr. McNeil said they are waiting with baited breath for the room to be open.

Mr. McNeil said that the food bank gives out 85, 40 pound boxes of food each month. It is a good program. Helps to decrease the food costs for our residents each month.

Commissioner Ross said this would have been a great time for the Tenant Association to have some things for the residents to do. Transport them to bingo or things like that.

Mr. McNeil would like to defer to the Resident Association for their comments; however no one is present at the meeting to discuss this.

Mr. McNeil said the he heard from the DCA about our NEP grant, the 25th is the last day of the public notice. He said after the 25th the Commissioners are going to sign all of the contracts with the awardees. Mr. McNeil said within ten days, we should see money from NEP grant that we were awarded to finish the Oakwood Avenue Development. If everything goes well, I anticipate this project getting done within six months. Mr. McNeil stated we have the final word on the environmental. He said today was the day I was anticipating having the final word back from the architect and the attorneys. I got the feedback from the architect. Mr. McNeil said he did not get the feedback from the attorneys. At the OHDC meeting, I should have all of the feedback and we should be able to go forward.

Mr. McNeil heard from the State about Walter G. Alexander. They are still processing the paperwork about the environmental reviews. Mr. McNeil wants to thank all of the Commissioner who got all of the information in (criminal background checks and background checks). Mr. McNeil said these are the few things they are waiting for. He said we should be within the next two weeks; both projects should be on point and going.

PUBLIC SESSION

Nobody Spoke

RESOLUTIONS

Chairman Rimes called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5275-14 Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange Approving Bills Resolution No. 1858. Commissioner Ross moved to adopt. Vice Chairman Williams seconded.

Chairman Rimes called for discussion.

Chairman Rimes had a question regarding Wad Street.

Director McNeil stated it was a typo it should be Ward Street.

Chairman Rimes asked about 6 refrigerators that were purchased.

Mr. Lance Hammond, Maintenance Superintendent, responded that they were for stock for use on any of our properties

A roll call was taken

All Commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Rimes called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5276-14 Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange Authorizing a Change Order to a Contract with LVJ Planning Inc, for the Alterations and Renovations to the Community Space and Administrative Office Space. Commissioner Ross moved to adopt. Vice Chairman Williams.

Chairman Rimes called for discussion

Mr. McNeil wanted to share his comments. He said that the change order is about the community room. I have been talking about making it look less institutional. Mr. McNeil said we wanted to put up drywall and insulation with sound proofing for our new training room. The largest expense is the split system air condition. It would be most cost effective with the contractors to due this unit. He said we did get bid quotes. Contractor there now gave us the lowest bid. Money was available in Capital to go out for full bid, since we already had the contractor there, it just made sense.

Chairman Williams asked about the exercise area.

Mr. McNeil said we will be putting some equipment in that space. Low impact equipment. We will try to replicate what we have at Walter G. Alexander. Each person will have to sign off that their physician has cleared them to exercise.

Vice Chairman Williams asked if someone will be there to instruct them on how to use the equipment.

Commissioner Juliano said everyone's individual health issue should be addressed.

Chairman Rimes asked why this was not included in the original bid.

Mr. McNeil explained the process of procurement and the reason for change. The biggest issue was the soundproofing of the training room. The walls will be painted. Chairman Rimes wants to see the painting in the order.

Chairman Rimes wanted to know who is going to get the money from the salvage of the compactor.

Commissioner Ross said the contractor will get money for a unit that is workable.

Vice Chairman Williams explained the cost effectiveness regarding the removal of the old system. The system was installed in 1972.

Chairman Rimes asked about the warranty and service contract.

Mr. McNeil said we will get a local company for our air conditioner. The warranty should be good for a year. This a common air conditioner unit used in America. It is an energy star unit.

A roll call was taken
All Commissioners voted in favor

Unfinished/New Business

Mr. McNeil wanted to recognize Marianna DeVincentis for her 36 years of service for the Housing Authority. Thank you.

Mrs. Marianna DeVincentis said thank you for allowing me to extend my career here.

Mrs. Shanda Hammond, Housing Manager, said we will be having a Black History program on February 26, 2014 at Walter G. Alexander and everyone is invited.

Mrs. Marianna DeVincentis said at the Black History program that four participants of the FSS program will be recognized. Some were able to escrow funds and will be getting money.

Chairman Rimes called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Ross moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Rimes seconded.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter D. McNeil, Jr.
Secretary/Treasurer