

## **MINUTES FROM A SPECIAL MEETING ON OCTOBER 12, 2011**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 6:02 p.m. on October 12, 2011 in the Community Room at Washington Manor, 340 Thomas Blvd, Orange, New Jersey.

The Executive Director advised that all requirements of the Sunshine Law were met.

A roll call was taken as follows:

### **Present**

Chairman Clifford Ross  
Commissioner Lillie Davis  
Commissioner Joseph Seneca  
Commissioner Evelyn Hudson  
Commissioner Ernest Williams  
Commissioner Joseph Juliano  
Commissioner Coram Rimes

### **Also Present**

Walter D. McNeil, Jr. Executive Director  
Ernest Booker, Esq., Feinstein, Raiss Kelin and Booker  
Several Tenants  
Several Employees

### **Discussion**

Reorganization of the Board of Commissioners

Ernest Booker said this is not a re-organization meeting. The bylaws provided say that the reorganization meetings take place in April which did not occur. Unless there's a resolution adopted by the Board we can't have a reorganization meeting. As a result of the departing of Commissioner Coley there is a vacancy in the position of Vice Chairman and that appropriate action is required by this Board at this time to fill that position. Mr. Booker suggested that we maintain status quo until April 2012.

## **Resolutions**

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5131-11 Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange Nomination for the position of Vice Chairman of the Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority of Orange.

Commissioner Rimes moved to adopt. Commissioner Hudson seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion?

A roll call was taken

All Commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Ross said I'm opening up the floor for nominations of Vice Chairman. Commissioner Rimes made a motion to nominate Commissioner Williams. Commissioner Davis seconded.

Chairman Ross made a motion to nominate Commissioner Seneca. Commissioner Juliano seconded.

Chairman Ross asked if there were any other nominations for Vice Chairman.

Chairman Ross called for a motion to close all nominations for Vice Chairman. Commissioner Juliano moved to close the nominations. Commissioner Davis seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion?

No discussion.

A roll call was taken.

All Commissioners voted in favor.

Chairman Ross asked the two nominees, Commissioner Williams and Commissioner Seneca to say a little something about why they should be nominated:

Commissioner Williams said I've been with the commission for 2 1/2 terms. He said it has been a great pleasure to serve the people of Orange and I tried to serve them to the best of my ability. He also tried to use his experience from the corporate world to bring to this organization to make things better for the residents of Orange. As Vice Chairman, I hope to work with the Chairman closer to something I call "Out of the box" "creative thinking" How we could make this organization a world class organization. Because there is a lot more we can do. Commissioner Williams said he thinks we are the class act in this town and he wants to be a major part of keeping us the class act.

Commissioner Seneca said thank you for the nomination. He said if one of us becomes Vice Chairman then the other will become Treasurer. Commissioner Seneca said that he's been on this Board a little over 5 years. He may or may not be here much longer. He also said he thinks if the Board does make him Vice Chairman he would work hard for this Board. He said he volunteers for all the extra activities and would work closely with Clifford Ross and Kerry

Coley. Commissioner Seneca said that his heart is in the right place. He only cares about the people here and not looking for anything else. He also has business experience and would move the Board to a positive position. He doesn't think there has been a time when anyone here has called him for help and he's ever said no. He loves Commissioner Williams and all the Board of Commissioners. He has enjoyed working with everyone on the Board and appreciates their confidence and would appreciate the nomination.

Chairman Ross asked for the Board of Commissioners who they would like to vote for Vice Chairman:

Commissioner Williams

Commissioner Seneca

Commissioner Williams  
Commissioner Davis  
Commissioner Rimes  
Commissioner Hudson

Commissioner Juliano  
Commissioner Seneca  
Commissioner Ross

Commissioner Ross said four votes for Commissioner Williams and three votes for Commissioner Seneca.

Mr. McNeil said the new Vice Chairman is Ernest Williams. Congratulations

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5132-11 Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange Nomination for the position of Parliamentarian of the Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority of Orange.

Commissioner Rimes moved to adopt. Commissioner Williams seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion?

A roll call was taken

All Commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Ross said I'm opening up the floor for nominations of Parliamentarian. Commissioner Seneca made a motion to nominate Commissioner Juliano. Commissioner Davis seconded.

Chairman Ross made a motion to nominate Commissioner Rimes. Commissioner Hudson seconded.

Chairman Ross asked if there were any other nominations for Vice Chairman.

Chairman Ross called for a motion to close all nominations for Vice Chairman. Commissioner Juliano moved to close the nominations. Commissioner Davis seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion?

No discussion.  
A roll call was taken.  
All Commissioners voted in favor.

Chairman Ross said I open the floor for nominations for the position of Parliamentarian.  
Commissioner Seneca said I like to nominate Joe Juliano. Commissioner Davis seconded.  
Commissioner Ross said I nominate Coram Rimes. Commissioner Hudson Seconded.  
Chairman Ross called for discussion?

No discussion.  
A roll call was taken.  
All Commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Ross asked for the Board of Commissioners who they would like to vote for Parliamentarian:

Commissioner Juliano

Commissioner Rimes

Commissioner Davis  
Commissioner Juliano  
Commissioner Seneca

Commissioner Williams  
Commissioner Rimes  
Commissioner Hudson  
Commissioner Ross

Commissioner Ross said three votes for Commissioner Juliano and four votes for Commissioner Rimes.

Mr. McNeil said Commissioner Rimes is our new Parliamentarian. Congratulations!

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5135-11 Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of extending the contract of the Executive Director from February 2012 – January 2017. Commissioner Williams moved to adopt.

Commissioner Davis seconded.  
Chairman Ross called for discussion?  
A roll call was taken  
All Commissioners voted in favor

Ernest Booker said it is encumbered to us pursuant to his contract that we have a performance evaluation before we take any steps. A couple of years ago we prepared an evaluation form. I'm going to distribute this out tonight and to be returned to back at the meeting scheduled for

October 20, 2011. At that time this resolution will be on the agenda and subject to the evaluation.

Commissioner Rimes asked if Mr. McNeil's contract be sent electronically.

Mr. McNeil said yes. It's really not a big of a change from the previous year contract.

Mr. Booker said we should not discuss this. This is a violation of the Sunshine Law unless you waive your rights.

Chairman Ross asked for a motion to remove resolution #5135-11 from the agenda.

Commissioner Seneca moved to adopt. Commissioner Davis seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion?

No discussion.

A roll call was taken.

All Commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5136-11 Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange entering into a contract with Moe She Corporation for Training Provider for New Jersey Build. Commissioner Williams moved to adopt. Commissioner Hudson seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion?

A roll call was taken

All Commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5137-11 Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange entering into a contract with PHA Safety and Engineering Services, L.L.C. to perform and Conduct ten (10) hours Construction Outreach Course. Commissioner Williams moved to adopt. Commissioner Hudson seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion?

A roll call was taken

All Commissioners voted in favor

Mr. McNeil said this is the contractor whose providing that OSHA Training. It's \$725.00 for 10 hours of training. This is in part of the New Jersey Build. It is part of the curriculum

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5138-11 Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange Authorizing the Executive

Director to Issue Bonuses to the Staff. Commissioner Williams moved to adopt. Commissioner Hudson seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion?

A roll call was taken

All Commissioners voted in favor

Commissioner Seneca said I don't think we should be contemplating bonuses right now. We do pay well. It rubs me the wrong way. We could be employing more people.

Commissioner Williams said I don't mind giving a bonus but some are kind of high

Commissioner Hudson said the percentage is the amount you want to give them in bonuses

Mr. McNeil said yes, I want to say something on behalf of the staff. I know sometimes it sounds self serving but I want to tell you two things. I don't think its ludicrous, embarrassing or something we should not do. First and foremost we have employees who are not entitled to overtime. They are only required to work 32 hours a week. What I'm getting out of the employees right now is sometimes 60 hours a week and they don't get overtime. For three years we've held the line. We had surpluses. As of August 31, 2011 we have a \$379 thousand surplus in our operating account. What I am saying to you is we're very close right now to being forgiven for the \$1.1 million that the Housing Authority over requested from HUD and HUD approved about 6 to 7 years ago. So it's going to put us in a real good financial status. I have to run the agency I'm the CEO of the Housing Authority. What I'm telling you is I have employees who don't see their children at night including myself. I'm busting my butt for this agency and I got other people busting their butts. I made them take vacations; they weren't going because they want to make sure this project was going to go well. They applied for grants. We got \$750 thousand in grant opportunities for this agency in addition to the \$29 million in tax credits another \$560 thousand for the NSP3. You go a stellar agency with a stellar staff of 17 people. When I walked in the door we had 53 people we reduced the staff and the people who are working here now stood up really strong for what the agency believes in. They are long term employees and deserve everything put down here for them. I know you guys are the board, I don't want to appear angry or over bearing with the situation but I do want to stand up for my staff. Because they deserve every bit of it. They work hard. There here to 6:00 - 7:00 at night. They don't get extra paid to work here they could just punch out on me. I don't have the authority to tell them they are going to work extra hours regardless. We wouldn't get extra grants we wouldn't have been able to relocate people, we wouldn't have been able to put together individualize plans. This isn't a debate. I just want to put my issues on the table. I had this discussion with Commissioner Ross and the counsel about this already. We looked at the different numbers for consideration. That's what I passed out also other than the attachment.

I'm not ashamed of it, it's not excessive. I can't accept because where government workers we should be less.

Commissioner Seneca said that was not the intent of that statement.

Mr. McNeil said I just ask that you consider it. You're talking about splitting \$51,000.00 between 17 employees. It's not obnoxious

Commissioner Williams said we are passing the vote and I applaud you for that but in the future when you're making this type of presentation give us that speech prior to us voting on it so that we understand the type of effort that their putting out to justify these increases.

Commissioner Davis said I agree, if we didn't have the money I would say no. But I've seen them here all hours of the night. But next year if this is what you want to do we should discuss it before hand.

Commissioner Hudson said I do applaud your passion for your employees you are close to them so you will have to make the decision and present it to us. We have the money, it's available it's warranted to the staff.

Commissioner Ross said he is totally with Mr. McNeil and he's not with him. I know we said in the past that we won't do this bonus thing again but every year some things come up. This year we got a lot of extra money. I just fought with him prior to you coming here he wanted to give them a lot of money and I said no. I fought to get him down to this. As you see he's very passionate about his workers you heard what Commissioner Davis said. I think they are entitled to something. We're not giving them a lot of money but were giving them something. This is a little less than we gave last year.

Mr. McNeil said \$12,000.00 less.

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

Chairman Williams called for a discussion?

No Discussion

A roll call was taken.

All Commissioners voted in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter D. McNeil, Jr.  
Executive Director/Secretary