

**HOUSING AUTHORITY OF BERGEN COUNTY**  
**One Bergen County Plaza, Fl 2**  
**Hackensack, NJ 07601**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF APRIL 27, 2017**

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM BUT ARE INSTEAD A SYNOPSIS OF WHAT TRANSPIRED AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 27, 2017.

PRESENT:

Commissioner Steven Kopf, Vice Chairman\*  
Commissioner Joanne English Rollieson  
Commissioner Junior Hernandez  
Commissioner Daniel Ortega  
Commissioner Danielle Peterson  
Commissioner Bob Taschler

Lynn Bartlett, Executive Director  
Kevin McCann, Director of Finance  
Esther Gatria, Human Resources Manager  
Vincent Bufis, Field Operations Manager  
John Biale, Director of Development  
Terrence Corrison Esq., General Counsel

ABSENT:

Commissioner Steven Weinstein  
Julia Orlando, BCHHH Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman, Steven Kopf, called the meeting to order at 5:55 pm and asked that the open public meetings statement be read. Executive Director Lynn Bartlett read the following:

Consistent with the Bryon M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act P.L.1975c231, all meetings of public bodies shall be open to the public at all times. Notice of the regular meeting was provided to The Record and the Jersey Journal on December 15, 2016, and was provided to the County Clerk for posting at the County Administration Building, at which time the date time and place were set forth. The minutes of this meeting will be available following the next regularly scheduled meeting.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice Chairman Kopf lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

\* Commissioner Kopf opened the meeting but left early due to illness

## **ROLL CALL**

Vice Chairman Kopf asked that roll be called. Commissioners English Rollieson, Hernandez, Ortega, Peterson, Taschler and Kopf were present. Commissioner Weinstein was absent.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Commissioner Taschler to approve the **regular** minutes of the meeting of March 23, 2017. Motion was seconded by Commissioner English-Rollieson.

VOTE:           AYES: All Present Commissioners (5)  
                  ABSENT: Commissioner Weinstein (1)  
                  ABSTAIN: Commissioner Hernandez (1)

A motion was made by Commissioner English-Rollieson to approve the **closed meeting** minutes of the meeting of March 23, 2017. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Taschler.

VOTE:           AYES: All Present Commissioners (5)  
                  ABSENT: Commissioner Weinstein (1)  
                  ABSTAIN: Commissioner Ortega (1)

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

### **Bergen County Housing Health and Human Services Center (BCHHH)**

Director Bartlett explained for the benefit of newly sworn in Commissioners Hernandez and Ortega that the HABC is the contracted manager of the Bergen County Housing Health and Human Services Center – the County’s 90 bed emergency homeless shelter. Monthly reports are provided on the HABC’s management of the BCHHH. Current month reporting in addition to the information provided in Board packet is the official announcement that Bergen County has been identified as the first County in the Nation to officially end chronic homelessness under the Zero2016 challenge.

BCHHH Director, Julia Orlando, in collaboration with Mary Sunden, Christ Church Community Development Corporation Executive Director presented at Community Solutions conference in Washington. Their learning session discussed system in place in Bergen County, shared their experiences in the process, and addressed replication of the same success in other Counties across the nation.

Julia is to be recognition by YWCA “extraordinary women” for her work at BCHHH. She is also going to be recognized by City of Hackensack Chamber of Commerce.

HABC Director, Lynn Bartlett, provided update on the expansion of nursing services at the

BCHHH. She reported that she and Julia met with County Administration, Department of Human Services and Department of Health to discuss specific nursing service needs at the BCHHH. The County representatives were exceptionally helpful and identified resources that would be available to address this critical need. The County has determined that they will fund the hiring of several per diem nurses for medication management. Additionally, the Department of Health will be relocating their TB nursing staff to permanent office space at the BCHHH. It was agreed that the nurses that are currently provided through a shared service agreement with the Sheriff's Office will continue.

To facilitate office space, should it be necessary, the HABC would move housing specialists back to HABC HQ to facilitate physical accommodations for the nurses on site.

2017 Contract negotiation and execution is presently underway and expected to be finalized in the next month or so.

### **Human Resources**

Board packet is current except for a maintenance assistant that was reported as hospitalized last month who was not hospitalized and has been terminated.

### **Field Operations**

Director Bartlett explained for the benefit of the new Commissioners that the entire Public Housing portfolio has been converted under the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Program. The six (6) former public housing buildings that have converted to project based assistance are Mahwah, Ramsey, Dumont, Palisades Park, East Rutherford and Lyndhurst. Conversion required that capital needs be addressed for each building; capital expenses are funded by a loan from the HDC. Every one of the rehabilitation projects and loan are reported monthly.

Vacancy updates from Board packet circulated is that there are only 2 vacancies in East Rutherford both have applicants under review. The vacancy in Dumont also has an applicant in review who has appeared on a fraud report. The applicant to fill the vacancy in Lyndhurst has been approved and will move in post 30-day notice to their current landlord. The Old Tappan vacancy has been filled. A deceased tenant is the only vacancy at The Manor work to address the tenant's belongings and fill the vacancy has begun. The Ridgecrest vacancy will be slightly slower to fill since a kitchen renovation is underway.

The wait list for all RAD senior housing buildings has been updated and cleaned up, creating 4 separate building wait lists. Director Bartlett complimented the efforts of both the Assisted Housing Department and Field Operations management to get this task done in record time.

The clean up results are as follows:

812 responded

42 requested removal from all lists

942 removed for no forwarding instructions

1129 removed for no response

Each building now has its own list, with an average of 460 applicants. Each list will be managed by the respective zone office responsible for the property. We are very pleased with this outcome.

### **Assisted Housing**

Telephone meetings were held with HUD Newark Field Office and HUD HQ Office of Quality Assurance Shortfall Office to ensure that program expenditures meet program projections established by HUD. The Federal Budgeting process targets lower expenditure rates than originally forecasted. Under a continuing resolution scenario, HABC is required to run its program projections in compliance with reduced funding and to identify and quantify any program shortfalls. Director Bartlett pointed out the new dashboard reports in this month's Board packet are provided by the HUD Quality Assurance Office. To be proactive and avoid any HUD calculated program short fall, HABC has implemented program costs savings measures – which includes identifying the living room as a sleeping area for all new admissions and any participant relocating. Additionally, Director Bartlett explained the anticipated consequences of the mandatory implementation of Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMR) which requires a fair market rent and payment standard for every zip code in Bergen County. This mandatory program change will most certainly effect program costs for HABC. Staff continue to run program analysis and models, as we get closer Ms. Bartlett will keep the Board informed and aware of all new program changes implemented and their natural consequence.

Ms. Bartlett also informed the Board of her attendance in the HUD held practitioner listening session on the Move to Work (MTW) program initiative. She explained that MTW agencies are given program waivers to tailor Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Programs to meet the jurisdiction's need. Congress is expanding the initiative to an additional 100 housing authorities. If the HABC is successful in being selected as a possible expansion MTW she is excited and exceptionally hopeful that the program waivers under MTW will be helpful in meeting the program requirements of SAFMR.

### **Development**

**Emerson** – the marketing, advertising and lease up planning process is underway. Finalized advertising in compliance with marketing plan is expected in May. Applications will be limited to the first 50 eligible applicants for this 14 unit project. Ground breaking is anticipated in July.

**MLK** – June field trip planned with bus rental to the African American History Museum in Washington DC.

**Saddle Brook** – staff are working on finalizing the mortgage commitment with NJHMFA. HDC is loaning \$1.35 million to the development of the project.

**Franklin Lakes** – will be constructed as modular based on bids received.

**Upper Saddle River** – HDC approved pre-development expenses to move project design and project studies forward.

**Northvale** - Senior Residence/Franklin Street Villas interior design has been completed and a showcase will be held in May. Photos are in the development packet. All work was done on time and within budget

### **Marketing/Communications**

Director Bartlett informed the Board that the HABC has begun to take steps to move our procurement process to e-procurement. Staff have participated in two vendor demonstrations, selection of vendor to be used will be determined in the next month or two.

HABC forms continue to be moved toward an electronic format. Communication with the HABC continues to be improved by expanded use of this format. Most recently the HCV program Move Out Notice has been moved to use on our website for processing.

A contract for large scale, agency-wide scanning has been executed which allows the HABC to scan all hard copy files to an approved electronic format. This process will shrink the tenant file footprint for all active program participants which at present exceeds 5000 in both HCV and building files.

Lastly, Director Bartlett pointed out the late changes to the Consent Agenda to all. She explained that the resolution updating the HCV admin plan was removed to address new items recently identified by HUD, this resolution will be back on the agenda in May. Additionally, a resolution approving the submission of the agencies SEMAP score for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program is included. This is the self-assessment the HABC is required to submit annually on 15 specific test items identified for program.

*RECORD NOTE: Vice Chairman Kopf wasn't feeling well and left the meeting early at 6:31pm. Treasurer, Commissioner English-Rollieson, then chaired the meeting.*

### **Finance**

Director of Finance, Kevin McCann, reported that HABC cash is down for the month of March, primarily due to year end and 3 payrolls to process in the month.

RAD properties – cash is up \$149k, with slight fluctuations due to transfers from the RAD loan accounts.

Community Development/CoC – down \$16k primarily due to the 3<sup>rd</sup> payroll for this past month.

BCHHH – down \$52k, this is normal average HABC advance expenditure on shelter operations that is eventually reimbursed by the County grant. Payroll and taxes are higher due to third payroll. Laundry is over budget for unknown reasons, it is expected that this will settle and wash before year end.

HCV – cash decreased by \$36k this is payroll and a deposit on the new scanning software. Expense report shows that payroll and taxes are over budget due to 3<sup>rd</sup> payroll. All other expenses, except for software, are all under budget.

Grant programs – cash increased by \$33k, HUD finally approved and executed all our CoC grants.

Restricted accounts – RAD accounts paid \$220k for identified repairs/rehabilitation.

RAD Rehab Escrow Report – paid \$360k of \$3.4 million anticipated to be spent in the first 18 months.

## **ATTORNEY REPORT**

General Counsel Terrence Corriston reported that he has been very busy with tenant landlord issues, he pointed out that these haven't been payment issues but difficulties between tenants or cause related issues.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Peterson asked how the BCHHH clients currently receive their medication and prescriptions and how this would change with the arrival of the proposed nursing services. Director Bartlett explained that currently guests are responsible for their own medication. Meds are reported at intake so that staff are aware of what medication has been prescribed for each guest. Each guest is then responsible for taking the medication as prescribed. The nursing staff would then have responsibility for dispensing medication. By doing so, no guest would then have access to their medication while in shelter.

Commissioner Taschler acknowledged that this new procedure would result in better outcome, he questioned if the HABC would be taking on any additional liability. Ms. Bartlett has explained that this has been a discussion item as staff work through the details with the County which hasn't been finalized. Nursing staff would not be HABC staff but employees of the county. Even so, there would have to be consideration of HABC oversight that would need to be addressed.

Commissioner Taschler followed up inquiring if shelter operators have seen an increase in the number of guests or clients addicted to opiates. Director Bartlett affirmed that this is the reality. Commissioner Taschler asked how HABC-BCHHH is handling this. Director Bartlett explained that the problem of opiate abuse is unmitigated. She further explained that the guest abusing prescription opiates is treated similarly to the guest who abuses alcohol – both are required to have control of their behavior. Guests abusing recreation opiates are treated in accordance with the law. Ms. Bartlett further explained that without nursing services, both HABC staff or Christ Church CDC staff have been responsible to identify guests who may require medical attention and have them transported to the emergency room; which creates a continuing issue of revolving use of high end services.

Counsel Terry Corrison asked if the shelter had direct access to get guests into treatment, and if we begin to monitor medication is there an anticipation that guests may be in crisis? Director Bartlett responded that HABC has been working and meeting with County agencies and personnel to create a real continuum of care in regards to this medical issue. She admitted that the contract with Bergen Regional Medical Center is a considerable point in creating a true continuum of care for which the HABC has no influence. The best possible case scenario would be for the County's homeless shelter to have access to the County's medical detox beds and psychiatric services. She further commented that there is genuine hope for the best possible outcome for the development of a medical continuum, but cautioned that development – though a sincere possible reality – will take time. Ms. Bartlett stated that this is long term goal. Lastly, she also pointed out that there are private substance abuse rehabilitation agencies that are looking to expand operations in Bergen County and HABC has had discussions with those we are made aware of to identify ways we may be able to partner in order to have referral beds and services available to homeless guests in need.

Commissioner English-Rollieson inquired how the payment standards and fair market rents are established under HUD's Small Area Fair Market Rent initiative. Ms. Bartlett explained that HUD calculates based on non-luxury rental data in the area. Most recently they have circulated this data by zip code. Mr. McCann confirmed that HUD generates the report. Staff have said they would circulate this HUD generated program and data to all Commissioners.

#### **OPEN TO PUBLIC**

Commissioner English-Rollieson asked if there was any member of the public who wished address the Commissioners. There was no member of the public who wished to speak or address the Commissioners.

#### **AMENDED CONSENT AGENDA**

Director Bartlett pointed out that the change in the consent agenda from the Board packet that was circulated was to remove the resolution authorizing changes to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan due to late developing changes to be included and the inclusion of the resolution authorizing certification of the SEMAP score.

**A. Resolution 2017-29**

Resolution approving the routine expenditures for the HABC for the period of 03/10/17-04/13/17

**B. Resolution 2017-30**

Resolution approving the routine expenditures for the HOC for the period of 03/10/17 -04/13/17

**C. Resolution 2017-31**

Resolution authorizing certification of the Section 8 Management Assessment Plan (SEMAP) for the period 04/01/16 - 03/31/2017

**D. Resolution 2017-32**

Resolution authorizing execution of a contract Reiner Group, Inc. for HVAC services

**E. Resolution 2017-33**

Resolution authorizing execution of a contract with National Tenant Network for background services

Commissioner English-Rollieson questioned whether National Tenant Network (NTN) has access to a tenant's credit profile and if the information is utilized to determine eligibility and other factors. Ms. Bartlett informed all that NTN generates the information provided from public records and that the information provided to HABC when we request a report is then used to determine program eligibility and hiring processes in accordance with our policies. Counsel Terry Corriston corroborated by explaining that there is nothing HABC is doing to provide the information to NTN but they are providing the information to us. Commissioner Hernandez inquired if the information being provided to HABC included criminal background checks insuring violent criminals are not assisted. Mr. Corriston and Ms. Bartlett explained that program regulations require determination that certain offenses have not be perpetrated by program participants. Commissioner Hernandez clarified his query by asking the employment practice of the HABC in regards to new hires and violent criminals. Human Resources Manager, Esther Gatria, explained that the background check is not done for every employment applicant but only upon an accepted conditional offer of employment. This is to ensure that the practice is not used discriminatorily. Conditional offers are subject to passing the background check and applicants sign a consent form to have the background check done.

Commissioner English-Rollieson asked if HABC was obligated to use NTN and Director Bartlett said no, HABC is not obligated, the service is procured per the local public contract law. Commissioner English-Rollieson followed up asking whether the vendor is permitted by law to utilize or sell the data they obtain. All concurred affirmatively, and Commissioner Ortega further explained the sale of information based upon utilization that would result in unsolicited marketing or coupons being received.

A motion to approved the consent agenda was made by Commissioner Taschler and seconded by Commissioner Peterson.

VOTE:           AYES: All Present Commissioners (5)  
                  ABSENT: Commissioners Kopf and Weinstein (2)



Commissioner Hernandez inquired regarding situations where discrepancies may arise between HUD and HABC or stakeholder or constituents where there is a blueprint for conflict resolution to make decision making transparent when there is allegation of disparate treatment. Counsel Terry Corrison responded by explaining that all program participants are provided due process in accordance with the program regulations illustrating specific examples for the HCV and housing programs.

### **New Business**

It was brought to the attention of the Commissioners that the recent change in Commissioners effected the personnel committee identified to evaluate the Executive Director. Mr. Corrison explained that members of both the HDC and HABC participated in the review and that Board review had been completed and had asked if members of the Board wished the review to be concluded without the proposed consideration of including a subordinate review of the Director, which process was never formalized, and the evaluation being 6 months overdue.

A motion was made by Commissioner English-Rollieson to finalize and conclude the evaluation of the Executive Director, Lynn Bartlett, which was thought to have been completed. Commissioner Peterson seconded the motion.

VOTE:           AYES: All Present Commissioners (5)  
                  ABSENT: Commissioners Kopf and Weinstein (2)

Commissioner Taschler moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner English-Rollieson seconded the motion

VOTE:           AYES: All Present Commissioners (5)  
                  ABSENT: Commissioners Kopf and Weinstein (2)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03pm

Minutes prepared by: Lynn Bartlett