

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF APRIL 26, 2018

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM BUT ARE INSTEAD A SYNOPSIS OF WHAT TRANSPIRED AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 26, 2018, HELD AT DAVID F. ROCHE APARTMENTS, 2 ALADDIN AVENUE, DUMONT.

PRESENT: Commissioner Junior Hernandez
 Commissioner Danielle Peterson
 Commissioner Bob Taschler
 Commissioner Steven Weinstein

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

ABSENT: Chairman Daniel Ortega
 Commissioner Joanne English Rollieson
 Commissioner Steven Kopf

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Weinstein called the meeting to order at 5:37 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, 2017, 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

The Vice-Chairman lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Director Bartlett opened by addressing all those in attendance. She asked that personal conversations be held in the hallway for the purpose of preserving the recording of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call Commissioners Hernandez, Peterson, Taschler and Weinstein were present. Commissioners English-Rollieson, Ortega and Kopf were absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Taschler to approve the regular minutes of the meeting of MARCH 22, 2018. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peterson and unanimously approved.

VOTE:

Chairman Hernandez – AYE
Commissioner Peterson - AYE
Commissioner Taschler – AYE
Commissioner Weinstein - AYE

ABSENT: Commissioners English-Rollieson, Ortega and Kopf

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Director Bartlett apologized for the non-circulation of the written Executive Director report due to technical malfunctions. She thanked them for understanding that the ED Report would be provided orally.

There was a brief delay to turn on a microphone system to help everyone in attendance in hearing the Board reports and discussions.

DEVELOPMENT

Emerson

Ms. Bartlett reported that a workout meeting had been scheduled to discuss the construction lien that the project General Contractor, Belmont Construction, was threatening to place on the Emerson Veteran's project for increased costs the contractor had incurred due to delays in project start up. Ms. Bartlett explained that Belmont had still not processed any of the required paperwork necessary to receive final payment and closeout funds of \$168,000+ from the project's funders. Further, Belmont is claiming that they have an additional \$250,000 in costs incurred above the approved and outstanding \$168,000+. Ms. Bartlett would provide update on the outcome of the meeting at HDC's next meeting.

Fort Lee

Ms. Bartlett and HDC Tax Credit Consultant Martin Bershtein met with Borough Officials to discuss possible project funding sources. It has been determined that financing for the project would be a non-competitive 4% tax credit application, borough contribution and applications for both CDBG and HOME funds as necessary. The project to be developed is as the borough desires, a 90+ affordable senior rental project that will include a new senior activity center, parking and some borough office space as needed for the Health Department.

Franklin Lakes

Ms. Bartlett reported that construction is progressing very nicely. All residential structures are up, hardy plank exterior installation is underway, roofing has been completed and the foundation for the Community Room was in place.

Saddle Brook

Due diligence to complete construction finance closing is being completed; closing for the project's construction loan is anticipated in the next few weeks. Site work has begun and the deposit for the modular construction paid so pre-fabrication could begin. The commitment letter of \$850,000 from NJHFMA was received and will be accepted by HABC/HDC.

Upper Saddle River

The complete development team met earlier in the week to discuss design changes that would be necessary for the project to not only be considered eligible for 9% tax credit funding but to be competitive and hopefully receive funding. The team will continue to meet weekly to address and resolve issues necessary to meet the application deadline in late July. Re-design for these purposes will require shrinking the building slightly to reduce costs within the NJHFMA per unit costs.

East Rutherford

HABC staff completed an inspection of the building which shows no significant environmental issues that would hinder acquisition. Closing is still anticipated sometime in early June.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

North Arlington – John Biale met with Borough officials and they have identified a property on River Road that they would like to develop as affordable rental housing for veterans.

FINANCE

Ms. Bartlett reported that there were no changes to report from the Board packet that was circulated last week.

RAD rehabilitation work continues to move forward. Some of the larger projects to be completed have been contracted and the Board can expect to see considerable expenditures on these activities in the coming months.

BCHHH

Operations – Cash Increased approximately \$110,000 as the result of 4th Quarter reimbursement of funding from the County. Director Bartlett informed the Board that the County has decided not to move forward with the proposal to create an Office For Housing, which would have been responsible for BCHHH management/administration. HABC will remain as Contract Administrator of the BCHHH. The HABC has submitted the 2018 budget for the Shelter to the BC Department of Human Services and anticipates a contract will be executed late summer.

Commissioner Taschler asked if the County gave a reason for not pursuing creation of the proposed new department. Ms. Bartlett responded that they had not.

Ms. Bartlett reported that nursing services for medication management had hit a standstill. The County had offered full-time employment to an applicant but was unable to successfully negotiate terms and the applicant refused the position.

The BCHHH was highlighted in conference materials at the recent Community Solutions Built for Zero conference. The Shelter’s continued ability to sustain ending chronic homeless was highlighted. Kudos to the BCHHH team and all their efforts!

Code Blue season is officially over. Moving the County forward toward establishing new policies or procedures to address the issues experienced this past season will be a continued work and the Board will be kept apprised of efforts and hopeful progress.

Ms. Bartlett reported that the HABC has been awarded a \$50,000 CSBG grant for the provision of program services combating opioid use and addiction among guests at the center. The grant will fund a CLEEN program which is expected to commence in May, it is a pilot program and all grant funds are required to be expended by September 30, 2018.

Commissioner Taschler inquired who the supportive service provider for the CLEEN program is. Ms. Bartlett informed all that it is Children’s Aid and Family Services (CAFS). CAFS through their Center for Drug and Alcohol resources has the Opioid Overdose Recover Program, the Recovery Specialists on staff will provide both patient navigation and recovery support to CLEEN program participants.

Maintenance at the Shelter was routine for the month.

Ms. Bartlett reported that both she and Ms. Orlando participated in the planning/drafting phase of a Bergen County Executive Order establishing a task force to address young adult homelessness in Bergen County. The EO creates a 16 member taskforce of service providers, non-profits and departments of county government to address this issue. Julia has been designated the task force lead.

Lastly, Ms. Bartlett reported the following shelter beneficiary data for the month:
Continuing Shelter – 82

Move Out – 14

Ratios Male 3:Female 1

Caucasian 2: African American 1

1/3 report mental health conditions

10% report substance abuse conditions

10% report chronic health conditions

HUMAN RESOURCES

Ms. Bartlett reported that a full-time staff account has been hired and the part time MLK program coordinator position has been filled; both the Finance Department and senior activity center are now back at full strength.

There was one termination of a field maintenance assistant this past month.

Human resources held meetings with the Assisted Housing Department to address concerns regarding working off the clock. Adjusting work flows and schedules to the reduction in work hours needs for a very small number of staff continues to be monitored to ensure employer compliance with workplace labor standards for hourly employees.

Human Resources is presently working with HABC general counsel and labor counsel to update the personnel manuals. Once updated manuals are finalized they will be brought forth for Board approval.

Lastly, Ms. Bartlett reported that there are presently 2 staff members out on family medical leave.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Bartlett reported that it was a quiet month for ITC. Program participant electronic file conversion continues. All of the Dumont and Bergenfield files (approximately 300) have been scanned and uploaded to the cloud, Palisades Park is scheduled next.

ITC is currently working on a redesign of the HABC website. The redesign is intended to make it easier to find information on our site. There will be an update and clean-up of the Commissioner page on the site. Ms. Bartlett informed all that our photographer will be at next month's HABC and HDC meetings to take head shots for utilization on the website.

FIELD OPERATIONS

Property Management/Vacancies

Ms. Bartlett credited field staff for their efforts to maintain vacancies below 1%. She reported that there were 9 vacant units this month which is a .87% vacancy rate. Unit turnover continues to be within a 30-day time frame.

Tenant Services

Ms. Bartlett discussed the April activities calendar and expressed the high level of tenant satisfaction of this expansion of programs in the buildings. Tenant services are being provided at Dumont, South Hackensack and Park Ridge. Given the high levels of participation and satisfaction of tenants, Ms. Bartlett explained that staff are exploring the possibility of expansion of programs, services and staffing necessary to expand.

ASSISTED HOUSING

Ms. Bartlett reported that HAP for 2018 has been funded at 100%. She explained that this is a welcome change from 4th quarter projections and funding for the program which anticipated an overprojected program shortfall. Further consideration will need to be given to the effect of implementation of Small Area Fair Market Rents on the program. Ms. Bartlett stated that the next few months should provide data.

OTHER

Ms. Bartlett reminded Commissioners of the upcoming harassment prevention training opportunity and encouraged as many Commissioners to participate.

Ms. Bartlett also pointed out the HABC/HDC lease with the County for our current headquarters space expired in February. The County circulated a draft to extend the lease for an additional 5 years. Ms. Bartlett shared that the Development committee would meet to consider the possibilities of developing an HABC/HDC owned mixed use property for occupancy within the next 3-5 year time frame. This proposal would be to develop office space for both the HABC and HDC along with affordable rental housing.

Ms. Bartlett along with the present Board of Commissioners publicly acknowledged Regional Property Manager, Mike Pasquale, for his exceptional and outstanding performance in managing two zones for several months this past winter. Throughout the hardest weather months both zones operated exceptionally without crisis or issue under Mike's leadership while covering for a colleague that was out on medical leave. Everyone thanked Mike for his commitment and leadership during this time.

Commissioner Taschler inquired regarding follow up on prior month's discussions on the development of policy at the BCHHH addressing pregnant homeless women, he asked if there had been resolution. Ms. Bartlett informed him that HABC had developed final draft policy and submitted to the County for approval – which was recently received. The new approved policy is presently being implemented.

Commissioner Hernandez inquired regarding the young adult homelessness initiative, asking how far the initiative has progressed. Ms. Bartlett explained that the targeted population are 18-24 year old adults that are homeless, and the task force that has been identified are agencies that currently provide services and engage with this population. Ms. Bartlett reported that the EO has only been drafted and not finalized or passed yet.

Commissioner Peterson asked if the nurse for medication management had to be an RN, LPN or other licensed professional. Ms. Bartlett explained that the position would need to be filled by a licensed medical profession that is able to prescribe and dispense medication.

ATTORNEY REPORT

Mr. Corriston informed the Board that it was a busy month. There were three contested hearings for HCV program terminations and there was a full day of landlord/tenant disputes - one issue being resolved pre-litigation and one that moved to litigation. Mr. Corriston reported that it was a busy month prepping for hearings and litigation but he pointed out that it is all indicative that the staff is doing their job identifying participant abuse or non-compliant landlords.

PUBLIC SESSION

Vice-Chairman Weinstein asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public. Motion was made and seconded by Commissioners Peterson and Taschler - all Commissioners were in favor.

The Vice-Chairman then asked if any member of the public wished to address the Board.

John Hollinger (#303) inquired regarding follow up of a previously held meeting at David F Roche Apartments regarding the provision of a mobile assisted living program on-site. He asked if things had progressed and if the program would be made available. Ms. Bartlett responded that tenant interest in the program did not meet threshold requirements for the provider to be able to provide the services and as a result of the insufficient interest in participation the program could not be provided. Ms. Bartlett further explained that the Authority would not provide any type of nursing services but would only contract with a provider of services, and without the interest or sign up to receive services the program could not be successful or benefit to the provider. She explained that if tenants had a change of heart and there was now a renewed or increased level of interest among residents that they should inform the on-site office so that we could re-engage discussion with service providers.

Patricia McGeean (#203) stated that she just loves the building. Ms. Bartlett genuinely thanked her for comment and acknowledged that enjoyment of the building had to properly be credited to both residents, as well as staff for creating a healthy living environment both physically and socially.

Seeing there was no else who wished to address the Board, a motion was made by Commissioner Taschler and seconded by Commissioner Hernandez to close the public portion of the meeting, all were in favor.

CONSENT AGENDA

Vice-Chairman Weinstein then asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.