

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF BERGEN COUNTY
One Bergen County Plaza – 4th Floor Learning Center
Hackensack, New Jersey

MINUTES OF MEETING OF FEBRUARY 27, 2020

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM BUT ARE INSTEAD A SYNOPSIS OF WHAT TRANSPIRED AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 27, 2020 OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF BERGEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

PRESENT: Commissioner Angelo D’Arminio, Jr.
 Commissioner Joanne English-Rollieson
 Commissioner Junior Hernandez
 Commissioner Daniel Ortega
 Commissioner Danielle Peterson

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Peter Caminiti, Sr.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting to order at 5:50pm. Executive Director Lynn Bartlett read the following statement:

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 Bergen Record and posted on the Authority website on December 31, 2018 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 the regular meeting will be available following the next regularly scheduled meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Ortega led all in the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call Commissioners D’Arminio, English-Rollieson, Hernandez, Ortega, and Peterson were present. Commissioner Caminiti was absent.

MINUTES

The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of the January 2020 meeting of the HABC Board of Commissioners. Motion was made by Commissioner D’Arminio and seconded by Commissioner English-Rollieson; motion carried unanimously.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

D’Arminio – YES
English-Rollieson – YES
Hernandez – YES
Ortega – YES
Peterson – YES

Absent: Caminiti

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Bartlett reported the following update to the Executive Director report previously circulated.

COVID19:

- HABC has rolled out proactive precautionary measures to limit and reduce exposure for staff and residents in anticipation of the virus presenting in Bergen County. Following CDC recommendations and protocols as the HABC implemented no more in-person meetings with the public, program participants and tenants to perform required tasks for our rental assistance programs

BCHHH

- Following a bomb threat at the homeless shelter this week, the shelter was evacuated while the BC Bomb Squad cleared the building. Julia Orlando meet with Bergen County OEM to develop an improved crisis response plan for incidents of this kind. The individual that made the threat is an older individual with mental health issues that has been discharged from shelter. The County has assigned Clark Lamendola to work with Julia to improve access to medical care for the frail elderly homeless population at BCHHH with the intention of improving access to New Bridge Medical Center and their ambulance.
- The County Executive and Julia were invited by Community Solutions to Washington to speak to a national gathering of practitioners about our homeless services and sheltering model. Julia is unable to attend due to previously scheduled conflict, Mary Sunden the Executive Director of Christ Church Community Development Corporation may go in her place.

FIELD

- HABC has received a grant to install CCTV in Mahwah. This is a considerable upgrade to the current system.
- HABC received a grant to remove the playground in Ramsey to expand the parking lot and make ADA improvements to one unit. There presently is a funding gap between the grant award as initial cost estimates received for the work.
- Survey work has been contracted for exploration of parking expansion possibilities at Brookside Gardens in Bergenfield.
- The contracted Architect has begun work on the plans to renovate the bathrooms in all of the units at Lehmann Gardens in Park Ridge. This renovation project is unique in that HABC will be undertaking the work in occupied apartments.
- HABC is presently exploring the cost benefit analysis of converting all laundry machines from coin operated to card operated in an effort to reduce the sole outstanding operation that remains cash. Conversion may not be beneficial to HABC due to card operator fees that could significantly reduce HABC additional income for buildings.
- Green Physical Needs Assessments (GPNA) have been completed for all HDC buildings. Property Managers are reviewing the reports to determine feasibility of items reported in order to finalize a 10s-15 year plans to address items and move all buildings to greener functioning.
- Property Managers have begun utilization of CallMax for mass communication to tenants. This is an additional service of our software provider, and has been very successful and well received. Property Managers are able to communicate with all building or Zone residents in one communication by sending a voice recorded message or text message to tenants. Property

Managers are notified of the tenants that did not receive the message and are able to follow up on a case by case basis saving considerable effort from the former way of mass producing paper notices and circulating throughout the building.

- Scanning tenant files to the cloud continues. Mahwah, Lyndhurst and East Rutherford are presently being scanned. This allows for access to the tenant file from any agency computer, anywhere at any time. This is working exceptionally well.

ADMIN

- HABC has partnered with Montclair State University Business Analytics students. Students will be analyzing the success of Small Area Fair Market Rents, the efficiency of the work order system and agency inventory counts. The goal of the partnership is to provide real time information for policy decisions as well as create dash boards based on real time data.

WAIT LIST OPENING

- Franklin Heights a 10 unit senior building in Northvale will open to 50 applicants. The list will open March 24, 2020.

Chairman Ortega asked if staff have reviewed the restrictive covenant for Ramsey, making sure there is no requirement for the playground? Ms. Bartlett confirmed that staff had research and determined that playground can be removed.

Commissioner English-Rollieson inquired relative to COVID19 if the HABC planned on ordering and stocking up on masks? Ms. Bartlett confirmed that the Authority would. Further, Ms. Bartlett explained that masks will be utilized for BCHHH as well as maintenance assistant's entering tenant apartments. Commissioner English-Rollieson followed up asking if HABC had hand sanitizer dispensers? Ms. Bartlett confirmed hand sanitizers at all facilities.

Commissioner English-Rollieson asked if the BCHHH guest threatening a bomb was charged? Ms. Bartlett stated that the guest was not charged but was discharged from shelter. The Commissioner followed up inquiring if the guest has a mental illness? Ms. Bartlett affirmed that the client does have a mental health diagnosis. Further Bartlett explained that though discharged staff have been successful in wrapping the guest with supportive services and that the Authority is working to re-house the guest.

Commissioner English-Rollieson asked if there was additional cost for the CallMax service? Ms. Bartlett confirmed there is an additional cost.

Commissioner Peterson inquired relative to the initial responsive changes to COVID19 how recertifications are completed for seniors in homes that can't get out to recertify. Ms. Bartlett explained that standard operating procedure has always and continues to be reasonable accommodation, regardless of COVID19.

ATTORNEY REPORT

Terry Corriston reported he has been busy with tenancy matters related to staff enforcing lease provisions. He explained that he was in Court this week for a tenant in violation of the no smoking policy. Efforts were successful in avoiding eviction, the tenant has decided to relocate utilizing their right to a voucher. Mr. Corriston credited staff efforts to in making our building pleasant communities for all to enjoy.

Mr. Corriston also reported the HDC purchase and closing on Ridgewood condo for affordable re-sale.

There were no questions.

PUBLIC MEETING

Chairman Ortega then requested a motion to open the meeting to the public. Motion was offered by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Hernandez.

Ms. Shenell Harris of Ramapo Brae Townhomes addressed all explaining issues she has had with building maintenance. She explained an issue related to contractor work performed in her apartment that left her furniture covered in dust; neither the contractor nor HABC properly cleaned up. She further expounded on issues with flooring tiles popping up continually and complained that flooring is only being replaced in vacant units. Ms. Harris complained about neighbors not cleaning up after their pets and that the problem is rampant throughout the complex. She stated she has spoken with the Property Manager regularly and he has been responsive but she is seeking more information relative to repair and maintenance issues, most specifically regarding unit upgrades. Commissioner Hernandez affirmed her complaints as a desire for a tenant sense of agency.

Chairman Ortega address Ms. Harris explaining that the HABC has held Board of Commissioner meetings at Mahwah. Ms. Harris confirmed that she attended. The Chairman explained that the purpose of holding Board meetings in buildings was for board members to outreach and hear from tenants. He stated that tenants can reach out to Board members via email, and that all tenants have right to attend these meetings. He pointed out that the installation of new cameras throughout the property will allow the Authority to address pet issues.

Ms. Bartlett explained that she has been in communication with Ms. Harris over the last couple weeks relative to these issues. She explained that she and Vincent Bufis have been researching the issue with the piping contractor and her furniture; emails have determined that the contractor was scheduled to go back and clean up and that she is waiting on documentation from contractor for dates and work completed relative to clean up. Until this week staff were unaware that Ms. Harris was seeking compensation and were unaware what compensation she was seeking. Both Ms. Bartlett and Mr. Bufis agreed that cleanup of the furniture is most appropriate and had approved cleaning awaiting on contractor response as to whether they had performed clean up.

Commissioner English-Rollieson inquired if the contractor is responsible to cover furniture or if the tenant is responsible to cover? Ms. Bartlett stated that the contractor is responsible.

Commissioner Ortega explained that staff is dedicated and that tenant meetings are held as routine operations. If tenants are not attending that can communicate a lack of interest in operations.

Ms. Norma Aviles then addressed the Board. She explained that back in September 2019 when taking out the garbage she was stung by a bee and had an allergic reaction to the sting. She asserts that because the garbage in the complex dumpsters was overflowing, she was stung. Ms. Aviles circulated pictures of an overflowing dumpster and stated that garbage is not removed for weeks at a time. She stated that eh garbage creates a situation with bears and other wildlife that come to feed on the garbage. Ms. Aviles stated she went out of network to have her bee sting addressed and submitted the medial bill to the property manager for payment by the HABC claiming the injury as a result of HABC negligence. She complained that she has not heard anything about the bill and medication that she had to take as a result.

Commissioner English-Rollieson asked if the garbage is removed by the Authority or contractor? Ms. Bartlett explained that that a contractor removes the garbage.

Ms. Aviles stated she had worked with the Zone office to address her flooring issues. She explained to the Board members that there have been no upgrades to her unit since she moved in. Commissioner English-Rollieson inquired how long she has lived in the unit? Ms. Aviles answered 5-years. She added that she pays rent on time. Then Ms. Aviles circulated pictures of the flooring tiles she is referring to. She stated that they're cheap and that she priced flooring to install herself but it is too expensive. Ms. Aviles shared that Staff have responded to her explaining that her first floor flooring was being replaced. Ms. Aviles then circulated a large packet of emails between herself and the property manager. Ms. Bartlett explained that this was the first she was being made aware of both the medical bill and the flooring issues and that she would address these issues.

Chairman Ortega explained that Ms. Aviles issues cannot be remedied this evening, that resolution would require research and follow up to address and resolve. Ms. Aviles said she understood and pointed out that the medical bill is from September and has not been addressed.

Commissioner English-Rollieson asked Ms. Aviles if she was previously aware of her allergy to bee stings? Ms. Aviles, said no. Commissioner English-Rollieson asked in a yearly inspection is done on the unit? Ms. Bartlett explained that inspections are more often than yearly because of extermination. Ms. Aviles stated that all apartment issues are addressed by staff before inspection, Board agreed that was good.

Chairman Ortega addressed Ms. Aviles and explained that Ms. Bartlett would research and get back in touch. Ms. Bartlett confirmed that she would be able to research work order requests for issues like Ms. Aviles counters, flooring.

Ms. Harris then re-addressed the Board of Commissioners adding to her earlier testimony explaining that there are tenants with no tiles on their floors. Ms. Harris stated that the property does not belong to tenants. Commissioner English Rollieson disagreed, explaining that "if you live there, its yours." Ms. Harris stated she is concerned no one else responding, but stated that Vinny has been very responsive. She said she has pictures that she would like addressed

Commissioner Hernandez shared that he's been there and has walked the property and that he would do so again.

Ms. Bartlett explained that tenants are illegally parking and blocking the garbage dumpster with their cars. Both Ms. Harris and Ms. Aviles verbally affirmed this fact. Ms. Bartlett reminded the Board, as discussed in other meetings, the HABC is aware of illegal cars on the property, when tenants have been asked to provide information on the cars for their households they refuse to provide the information. Ms. Bartlett furthered that HABC can research but the dual problem remains; HABC property management is trying to do their jobs and tenants are not doing theirs of not having excessive cars and not illegally parking, blocking the dumpsters. HABC replacement of ripped screens or other tenant caused wear and tear. Ms. Bartlett reaffirmed that HABC is committed to maintenance on the site, pointing out that most Board members have been to the site and the care for the site. Commissioner English-Rollieson inquired if the cameras can show who is blocking dumpster? Ms. Bartlett confirmed that the cameras show the illegal parking but the problem remains enforcement or action; the HABC does not have towing contractor for Mahwah. Mr. Corriston pointed out that illegal parking is a lease violation and can be addressed with lease violation notices.

Both staff and Commissioners alike affirmed that HABC will address the issues. Chairman Ortega recommended a tenant meeting pointing out HABC can and will do what is best but it only most effective if tenants want to engage and be part of solution.

Chairman Ortega asked both women if they attended tenant meetings? Both Ms. Harris and Ms. Aviles stated that they did not.

There were no other members of the public that wished to address the board. A motion was made by Commissioner Hernandez, seconded by Commissioner English-Rollieson and unanimously approved to close the meeting to the public.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Ortega asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda, resolutions 2020-13 through 2020-29 and 2020-21. Motion was made by Commissioner Hernandez and seconded by Commissioner Peterson.

- A. **Resolution 2020-13**
Resolution approving the routine expenditures for the HABC for the period of 1/13/19- 2/14/19
- B. **Resolution 2020-14**
Resolution approving the routine expenditures for the HDC for the period of 1/13/19-2/14/19
- C. **Resolution 2020- 15**
Resolution approving Change Order #2 for Nan McKay Consulting and Quality Control Services
- D. **Resolution 2020-16**
Resolution approving a contract for window washing services
- E. **Resolution 2020-17**
Resolution approving participation in the NJ State Cooperative Purchasing Unit
- F. **Resolution 2020-18**
Resolution authorizing a contract for fire suppression services
- G. **Resolution 2020-19**
Resolution authorizing a contract for Saddle River Boiler Replacement project
- I. **Resolution 2020-21**
Resolution ratifying a contract with Delta Dental

ROLL CALL VOTE:

D'Arminio – YES
English-Rollieson – YES
Hernandez – YES
Ortega – YES
Peterson – YES

Absent: Caminiti

Chairman Ortega asked for a motion to approve resolution 2020-20 as amended to reflect a 3-month contract extension for special labor counsel instead of one-year. Motion was made by Commissioner D'Armino and seconded by Commissioner Peterson.

- H. **Resolution 2020-20**
Resolution approving a 3 month contract extension for special labor counsel for the HABC

There was no further or new business. Commissioner English moved to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Hernandez seconded. The meeting unanimously adjourned at 6.45pm

Prepared by: Lynn Bartlett