

# MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WOODBIDGE



The Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge met in a Special Session in the conference room of the administrative building of the WHA, 20 Bunns Lane, Woodbridge, NJ at 5:00 PM on July 17, 2013, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

Donna Brightman read a Notice of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act P.L. 1975, C.231 which provided that notice of this meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge was provided in the following manner:

On June 25, 2013, a copy of this special meeting setting forth the date, time and location of this meeting was posted on the Housing Authority's official designated bulletin board located at 20 Bunns Lane, Woodbridge, NJ, sent to Town Hall for posting and was faxed to the Home News Tribune and Star Ledger on June 24, 2013.

There was a salute to the flag and a moment of silence was held.

Upon roll call, those present and absent were as follows:

## PRESENT

### Commissioners:

Mark Barbee, Commissioner (6:45 – 7:00 PM)  
Terri Briante, Commissioner  
Gregg Ficarra, Chairman  
John Kenny, Commissioner (5:20 – 6:15 PM)  
Nayan Parikh, Vice Chair (5:03 – 6:15 PM)  
Pedro Rosario, Commissioner  
Betsy Rudowski, Commissioner

### Council Liaison:

Brenda Yori Velasco, Councilwoman

### Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corrison, Esq., Breslin & Breslin  
(5:03 PM – 6:00 PM)

### Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director

### Other:

Bill Katchen, Accountant

A motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held June 3, 2013 was made by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Briante and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL: Barbee Briante Kenny Parikh Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
AYES: Briante Rudowski Ficarra Parikh Rosario  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Barbee Kenny

### COMMUNICATIONS

- Middlesex Water Co. – correspondence giving WHA a \$206.88 credit

Executive Director Brightman stated that Cooper is using more water than Olsen because there are more couples at Cooper and during construction water lines were shut down regularly resulting in more water being used. Figures should be more in line with Olsen now that construction is completed.

- Chairman Ficarra reviewed the loss statement from Hurricane Sandy - \$296,948.41
- Chairman Ficarra reviewed the letter from LS Engineering regarding the electric break at WGA.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the insurance company has not yet determined if it would be covered.

Commissioner Rudowski asked how residents were being notified.

Executive Director Brightman stated generally by letter but in emergencies staff goes door-to-door.

Commissioner Rudowski asked if we could use some kind of texting service.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she will look into it.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Reso #2606 – Adopt the Revised Sect. 8 Administrative Plan

Motion moved by Commissioner Rudowski and seconded by Commissioner Briante to adopt Resolution #2606.

#### Discussion

Commissioner Rudowski asked if revisions could be highlighted next time.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the whole plan was revised to provide a different format.

Commissioner Rudowski asked if there were any changes.

Executive Director Brightman stated that there were none and that just the format was changed.

Bill Katchen stated that Section 8 was funded at 83 percent.

ROLL CALL: Barbee Briante Kenny Parikh Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
AYES: Briante Parikh Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Barbee Kenny

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2609 – Award Contract for Window Replacement at Adams, Finn and Stern Towers

Motion moved by Commissioner Briante and seconded by Commissioner Rosario to adopt Resolution #2609.

#### Discussion

Commissioner Kenny arrived at 5:20 to partake in this resolution discussion.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the funding for this account was from ESCO funds.

ROLL CALL: Barbee Briante Kenny Parikh Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
AYES: Briante Kenny Parikh Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Barbee

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2610 – Adopting Monthly Bill List

Motion moved by Commissioner Parikh and seconded by Commissioner Briante to adopt Resolution #2610.

ROLL CALL: Barbee Briante Kenny Parikh Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
AYES: Briante Kenny Parikh Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Barbee

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Note: Commissioners Kenny and Parikh were absent for the rest of the meeting.

d) Reso #2607 – Approving the Annual Operating Budget

Motion moved by Commissioner Rudowski and seconded by Commissioner Briante to adopt Resolution #2607.

Discussion

Chairman Ficarra provided a summary of the budget.

Mr. Katchen explained that this was the public housing budget from 10/1/13 to 9/30/14 totaling \$1,927,796.

Commissioner Rudowski inquired as to why there was no AMP or CCOC budget.

Mr. Katchen said he could provide them.

Commissioner Rudowski said it was hard to tell how much the CCOC costs were.

Executive Director Brightman directed her to the salary cost page whereby it outlines everyone's salaries that were charged to the CCOC. Executive Director Brightman mentioned that this would give her some idea of the cost.

Mr. Katchen explained the concept of the CCOC as it was derived from the Harvard Study and designed to make PHA's more accountable and more like private housing management companies.

Mr. Katchen noted that all roof top antenna rentals must stay in the Senior AMP and cannot go to the CCOC.

Mr. Katchen noted that our rental income was healthy due to the leasing percentage as well as the completion of Cooper Towers rehab. He stated that our total operating income was \$2,359,260. He directed the Board's attention to line 4590 (other general expense) which represents the ESCO debt service.

Commissioner Rudowski suggested that the line item contain the ESCO abbreviation.

Mr. Katchen further directed the Board's attention to line 8020 and stated that we have a funding cut of \$394,000 due to sequestration which amounts to 17%. He pointed out that the outlook for 2014 is not much better. The Authority's surplus is \$2,527,505. He made the Board aware that this budget is based on a funding deficit of \$184,984 due to the fact that we are not funded 100% by HUD.

Commissioner Rudowski questioned the schedule of positions and salaries; specifically, she questioned the Highland Park salary compensation and calculations.

Mr. Katchen responded that it was based on a percentage of the time staff members spent at Highland Park. He said that the prior agreement with Highland Park and Sayreville was \$70,000 in which the Director got 50% or \$35,000.

Commissioner Rudowski stated that she felt the Board as a whole was not given the opportunity to discuss the additional salaries which was not appropriate. She stated that she discussed this with Council Corrison and he suggested that in the future any additional salary increases in a shared service agreement be done separately by resolution in addition to the budget amendment. She further stated that with raises, honesty and transparency were necessary.

Commissioner Rudowski questioned Mr. Katchen as to whether or not the salary increases could be removed from the base as it bumps up an employee's retirement calculation.

Mr. Katchen said, no, they cannot and noted that the employee pays pension and healthcare costs on that increase and that state law prohibits not including it.

Commissioner Rudowski further stated that she was concerned that these increases would continue upon termination of the agreement.

The Executive Director left the meeting and went to her office to gather the agreements she had staff sign that stated these increases would terminate if the Highland Park and Perth Amboy contract terminated. The Agreement also went on to state that the increase could be terminated if their WHA work suffered. The Agreement further stated that employees would not receive mileage reimbursement for trips to Highland Park or Perth Amboy.

Commissioner Rudowski stated that she wished she knew this existed prior to tonight.

Executive Director Brightman responded that the BOC empowers her to make staffing decisions and that she has an obligation to protect the WHA's interest.

Commissioner Rudowski requested that Mr. Katchen add a column to the salaries page for Perth Amboy.

Commissioner Rudowski questioned why the Project Manager was still in the budget as the board passed a Reso when the job was created that it was a temporary position for 12 to 18 months.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the WHA received additional funds from the Township and he is there at their request. She added that the projects should be completed by fall.

ROLL CALL:	Barbee Briante Kenny Parikh Rosario Rudowski Ficarra
AYES:	Briante Rosario Rudowski Ficarra
NAYS:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Kenny Parikh Barbee

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

e) Reso #2608 – Approving the Introduction to the State Budget

Motion moved by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Briante to adopt Resolution #2608.

Discussion

Mr. Katchen stated that this is the State Budget which adds the Capital Fund and Section 8 programs. He directed the Board to page SS9: unreserved fund balance \$2,393,384 and restricted fund balance \$125,654. He stated that Section 8 is funded at 94%. Right now our program is solvent but if sequestration kicks in for 2014 we will have to take people off the program.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we are not that lucky in Highland Park as we were allocated 145 vouchers but can only support 130 of them.

Chairman Ficarra directed the Board to page 4 that noted the effect of the interlocal agreements.

ROLL CALL: Barbee Briante Kenny Parikh Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
AYES: Briante Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Barbee Kenny Parikh

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

f) Reso #2611 – Executive Session

Motion moved by Commissioner Rudowski and seconded by Commissioner Rosario to adopt Resolution #2611.

ROLL CALL: Barbee Briante Kenny Parikh Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
AYES: Briante Rosario Rudowski Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Kenny Parikh Barbee

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

The Board of Commissioners went into Executive Session at 6:25 PM and returned to Special Session at 6:50 PM.

The one member of the public was asked to wait in the Authority waiting room.

Action Subsequent to Executive Session

Chairman Ficarra reported that we discussed two potential lawsuits.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Briante to adjourn at 6:55 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

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Donna Brightman

Executive Director/Secretary