

# MINUTES OF A REGULAR 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 Regular Session in the community room of Olsen Towers, 555 New Brunswick Ave., Fords, NJ at 7:00 PM on May 4, 2015, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

Kathy Blaha read the 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 October 8, 2014, a copy of the notice of this regular meeting setting forth the date, time and location of this regular 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.

A moment of silence was held.

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

## PRESENT

Commissioners:

Terri Briante, Commissioner  
Gregg Ficarra, Chairman  
John Kenny, Commissioner  
Pedro Rosario, Commissioner  
Ketan Shah, Commissioner

## ABSENT

Commissioners:

Mark Barbee, Commissioner  
Betsy Rudowski, Commissioner

Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director  
Kathy Blaha, Housing Director  
Larry Stecker, Maintenance Director  
Maureen Guiney, Executive Asst.  
Mike Yannuzzi, Maintenance Manager

Councilwoman:

Lizbeth DeJesus, Councilwoman

Chairman Ficarra stated that Councilwoman DeJesus was not able to attend the meeting as her husband is ill and is in JFK but is coming along nicely.

Executive Director Brightman then stated that Commissioner Rudowski is also unable to attend.

A motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on April 6, 2015 was made by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Briante and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

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

Chairman Ficarra stated that all the issues in the minutes were addressed by Executive Director Brightman.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Barbara Donoghue, 2K, stated that the chute for the garbage has been locked for months and asked when it is going to be fixed.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is not broken and that we closed the chutes as people throw dangerous things down them, i.e., needles. She stated that there will be a new garbage system in the building and asked Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi about it.

Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi stated that it is not in-place as yet.

Executive Director Brightman asked that he get it done.

Mary Toth, 1A, stated that there is an odor from the food that people bring down to the garbage.

Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi stated that the garbage will be placed in a garbage room and then you should not get the odor.

Chairman Ficarra stated that the new process will help.

Housing Manager Blaha stated that this is in effect at Cooper Towers.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the new system will be in effect at all the buildings.

June Martin, 2H, stated that she has heat in her apartment and no one comes back to fix it.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the heat only goes on if triggered by the sensor outside.

Ms. Martin, 2H, stated that it is hot in her apartment and maintenance did not come back to fix it.

Executive Director Brightman asked Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi to look at the situation.

Edna Morrison, 5Q, stated that cars are parked on the grass.

Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi stated that the DPW is checking with the Township attorney regarding this situation and hoping to put in cement barriers.

Chairman Ficarra asked for clarification regarding this.

Executive Director Brightman stated that people pull up on our grass.

Chairman Ficarra stated that if this is the problem, he will bring it up to the proper source.

Ms. Martin, 2H, then stated that dogs are messing on the grounds.

Executive Director Brightman stated that Diane Boyle was supposed to talk to the owner of the pet shop and will see if she did so.

Chairman Ficarra stated that possibly we could put up another sign.

Fazlollah Motafef, 5B, a resident that did not speak English mentioned MCAT.

Helen Kramer, 3A, explained the rules of MCAT.

The resident showed Chairman Ficarra his card for MCAT that went back to 2012.

Chairman Ficarra asked if we have a way to communicate with the resident.

Housing Manager Blaha stated that she thinks he is trying to talk about the carts and that we don't allow them in the building.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we will try to find a way to communicate with him.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Chairman Ficarra stated that we are upgrading our technology.

Executive Director Brightman stated that Commissioner Rudowski asked for this update.

Chairman Ficarra asked if the staff needs to be trained.

Executive Director Brightman stated that they do not.

## Monthly Reports

- a) Rents Uncollected: Chairman Ficarra stated that our rent collection is near perfection.
- b) Maintenance & Mod: Chairman Ficarra asked Maintenance Director Stecker if there were any updates to his report.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that the grant from 2011 closed and there will be a new one for 2015 that didn't make it into the packet.

Chairman Ficarra asked if the other years are going according to plan.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that they are.

- c) Police Reports: Chairman Ficarra reviewed the police report.
- d) Housing Manager Report: Chairman Ficarra asked about the apartment that went on fire.

Executive Director Brightman stated that there is a delay in its refurbishment due to the fact that the resident had to go to the hospital.

Housing Manager Blaha stated that it has now been taken care of.

Chairman Ficarra stated that the WHA did an outstanding job as did the Fire Dept. and residents. He asked that Commissioner Kenny confer our appreciation to the F.D. He also mentioned that he appreciates the fact that the staff goes above and beyond and appreciates their assistance.

- e) Resident Services Report: Chairman Ficarra reviewed the report and asked if Phyllis Wilcher got married yet.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she did not, but that the staff all chipped in and bought her wedding dress.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we are applying for the congregate grant.

- f) Budget Report: Chairman Ficarra asked if the commissioners had any questions on this report. There were no questions.
- g) Executive Director's Report: Chairman Ficarra thanked Executive Director Brightman for following up on the residents questions from the April BOC issues.

Executive Director Brightman spoke a little bit about the renovations at the WGA and stated that it is a tedious process and that the last sentence of her report is a big issue. She asked that the Board wait until the resolution is presented to discuss this matter in more detail.

Commissioner Kenny stated that if this resolution is related to RAD then we need to have a meeting in order to talk about the ramifications and the board and how this changes the dynamics of the Authority.

Chairman Ficarra concurred with Commissioner Kenny regarding the need for a meeting.

Executive Director Brightman stated that this resolution is just to name the developer as we have to approve a partnership agreement. She stated that Ingerman will be the developer and the construction company will build it and the Housing Authority will manage it with our staff.

Counsel Corrison stated that this has to be done with tax credits and will be a non-profit corporation.

Commissioner Kenny asked that if we manage it how are the funds allocated and inquired about the financial impact.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we will have more money.

Counsel Corrison stated that we will also have all new housing.

Chairman Ficarra stated that possibly we can be part of the decision making process.

Chairman Ficarra then stated to Commissioner Kenny that the other commissioners should also be able to talk about it.

Commissioner Kenny stated that he is concerned if someone from the public asks questions that he wants to have the answers.

Chairman Ficarra stated that he understands what Commissioner Kenny is saying in that the commissioners need to be informed and be able to give honest answers.

Executive Director Brightman stated that there is no plan as yet and this is still being evaluated.

Counsel Corrison suggested that the Board have a committee.

Executive Director Brightman stated that WAHC is part of the deal.

Chairman Ficarra stated that he is meeting this Friday and as Chair of the commissioners will part of the planning process.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Reso #2717 – Application for & Acceptance of 2015 CHSP Grant for Adams, Finn and Stern Towers

Motion moved by Commissioner Briante and seconded by Commissioner Shah to adopt Resolution #2717.

### Discussion

Executive Director Brightman stated that this is a renewal of congregate senior services.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

- b) Reso #2718 – Approve a Four Day Work Week for the Months of July & August 2015

Motion moved by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Kenny to adopt Resolution #2718.

### Discussion

Chairman Ficarra stated that summer hours are a tradition at WHA and that the third paragraph of the resolution is a nice summary. He stated that the staff goes above and beyond and this is a nice way to say thank you.

Commissioner Shah asked if maintenance will be working five days.

Chairman Ficarra stated that they will.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2719 – Award Labor Counsel Contract to Florio, Perrucci, Steinhardt & Fader from 5/1/15 to 4/30/17 for an Amount not to Exceed \$36,000

Motion moved by Commissioner Shah and seconded by Commissioner Kenny to adopt Resolution #2719.

#### Discussion

Chairman Ficarra stated that we award the contract to the highest scorer and that this firm has a good history with WHA.

Executive Director Brightman explained that the Labor Counsel deals with staff problems.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d) Reso #2720 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for April 2015

Motion moved by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Shah to adopt Resolution #2720.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

e) Reso #2721 – Resolution to Approve a Developer to Partner with the WHA for the Redevelopment of WGA

Motion moved by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Briante to adopt Resolution #2721.

## Discussion

Chairman Ficarra stated that this resolution addresses the proposed redevelopment of Woodbridge Garden Apts. on Bunns Lane. He stated that Executive Director Brightman is working hard and actively as she is knowledgeable with this matter and serves as a guiding light.

Executive Director Brightman stated that a number of months ago we applied for RAD and met with the tenants. She stated that the Housing Authority will be converted from HUD's operating and capital funding, which is 82%, to project based vouchers. She mentioned that we have conditional acceptance and have 180 days to put a financial plan together. HUD will turn the ownership over to the Housing Authority which in turn serves to leverage real estate and borrow millions of dollars to do improvements. Executive Director Brightman stated that Olsen Towers was the recipient of a lot of improvements as was Cooper Towers. She mentioned that the other senior buildings will receive improvements going forward.

Executive Director Brightman stated that Bunns Lane is a separate matter and that redevelopment plans changed from rehab to new construction. We pay nothing as the developer is fronting the cost and they will try to demolish Bunns Lane and rebuild with all new housing. She stated that this will affect 150 families and that we have to give up our office and the community building and seek another location. Phase I will include the office site and also include buildings 11 through 18 that will move into apartments and this will include 74 families. She stated that we are trying to avoid relocation and are applying for tax credits. We will know in October and are not going to refill any apartments. We are trying to avoid disruption of the families. By Building #1 there will be a large community center.

Commissioner Rosario asked about the office and where the employees will be located.

Executive Director Brightman responded that it has yet to be decided.

Commissioner Shah asked who owns Bunns Lane.

Executive Director Brightman responded that it is the government.

Counsel Corrison stated that it is the Housing Authority with a declaration of trust and that there is a major lien on the property. He stated that when it is converted the government will remove the lien.

Commissioner Shah asked if Ingerman is going to do the funding.

Executive Director Brightman stated that they are taking all the risks and that this is a gamble which depends on receiving tax credits.

Commissioner Kenny then addressed Chairman Ficarra and asked if the project continues to go well, will we maintain Bunns Lane currently.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we are currently just repairing what is necessary in buildings 11-18. We will continue to keep up with buildings 1-10.

Chairman Ficarra stated that we will continue to keep Bunns Lane safe but will not be doing any major renovations.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we had to repair some porches due to unsafe conditions.

Commissioner Kenny asked about existing ESCO debt and capital leveraging.

Executive Director Brightman stated that part of the financial plan is showing how this will be paid.

Counsel Corrison stated that this has to be paid.

Commissioner Shah asked if the residents will still pay 30% towards their rent.

Counsel Corrison responded, yes, and stated that they will and that this will go from Section 9 to Section 8.

Executive Director Brightman stated that this will be multi-housing, not public housing.

Chairman Ficarra stated that this is an approach to providing affordable housing.

Counsel Corrison stated that more housing will be added.

Executive Director Brightman stated that 50 additional units will be added.

Chairman Ficarra asked how we will notify the tenants.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we will have a meeting with the tenants as well as notice them.

Executive Director Brightman said we are applying for funding in July and will know by October and then relocate the office. She stated that brand new housing will be wonderful for the residents.

Counsel Corrison stated that this will be done one phase at a time. He noted that the Township has pre-qualified developers.

Chairman Ficarra stated that there are generations of people on Bunns Lane.

Commissioner Shah was concerned with the generations of residents on Bunns Lane and stated that there should be a limit on the time that people can reside in public housing.

Executive Director Brightman stated that there is no time limit on public housing residency.

Commissioner Rosario was concerned as to where the staff will be relocated.

Chairman Ficarra stated that the important thing is that the staff has jobs.



Executive Director Brightman explained to the BOC that we are not spending any money and the developer is paying for all costs.

Chairman Ficarra stated that the residents will then be in beautiful housing.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Comments:

Commissioner Kenny wished all a Happy Mother's Day.

Commissioner Rosario also wished all a Happy Mother's Day and spoke of the Saint's carnival taking place on Wednesday through Saturday.

Mary Toth, 1A, stated that there is an elevator problem.

Executive Director Brightman stated that Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi had this repaired.

Chairman Ficarra asked the residents to call maintenance or the hotline regarding problems in the building.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Briante to adjourn at 8:00 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

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Donna Brightman  
Executive Director/Secretary