

MINUTES OF A REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WOODBRIDGE



The Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge met in a Regular Session in the community center of Adams Towers, 555 Rahway Ave., Woodbridge, NJ at 7:05 PM on September 8, 2014, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

Kathy Blaha 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 October 8, 2014, a copy of the notice of this 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.

Chairman Ficarra stated that Commissioner Barbee is out of town on business. He introduced our new commissioner, Ketan Shah.

The commissioners gave a brief history of their service to the WHA and welcomed Commissioner Shah.

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

PRESENT

Commissioners:

Gregg Ficarra, Chairman
John Kenny, Commissioner
Pedro Rosario, Commissioner – 7:27 PM
Betsy Rudowski, Commissioner
Ketan Shah, Commissioner

Council Liaison:

Brenda Yori Velasco, Councilwoman

Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

ABSENT

Commissioners:

Mark Barbee, Commissioner
Terri Briante, Commissioner

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the Rescheduled Meeting held on June 10, 2014 was made by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Rudowski and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

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

A motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting held on July 18, 2014 was made by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Shah and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

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

Counsel Corrison welcomed Commissioner Shah and explained to him that you do not have to be at a BOC meeting in order to vote on the minutes but, on the other hand, if he did not feel comfortable voting on them that is alright too.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Cathy Ellison, 3A, stated that cars travel very fast on Rahway Ave. and she is afraid to cross the street.

Chairman Ficarra stated that there is a program whereby lights flash if someone steps into the crosswalk.

Councilwoman Velasco stated that this is a county or state road.

Chairman Ficarra stated that the Police Director may be able to help us.

Commissioner Kenny stated that he would like to see a blitz regarding this traffic matter similar to the one that took place on Main St.

Councilwoman Velasco stated that she will follow-up on this but there is no guarantee.

Commissioner Shah stated that flashing lights would be a good idea.

Ron Pacansky, 2G, stated that after the Donuts and Discussions meeting he went on his scooter to ShopRite and was hit in the crosswalk but is ok. He also stated that he would like walk-in closets.

Commissioner Rudowski stated that she would like to see a lane for motorized scooters.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the Township is looking into a bike lane and possibly the scooters could share the same lane.

Mr. Pacansky stated that the scooters can only be used on the sidewalks, not the street. He mentioned that the only time that the scooters can go in the road is at a crosswalk.

Commissioner Shah asked what the maximum speed was on the scooter.

Mr. Pacansky stated that it is 5.5 miles per hour.

Chairman Ficarra stated that people probably need to be educated regarding scooters.

COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Ficarra proceeded to review the communication section of the BOC packet. He then referenced the letter from Odilla Castro regarding Elaine Colon and stated that it would be nice to invite her to meeting and present her with an award certificate.

At this Commissioner Rosario arrived (7:27 PM.)

Chairman Ficarra then asked about the window replacement.

Executive Director Brightman stated that everything is alright now.

Chairman Ficarra then asked about the merit award from NAHRO and if it is going forward.

Housing Director Blaha stated that we were not chosen for Nationals.

Chairman Ficarra spoke of the HUD letter regarding the Designated Housing Plan and stated that it is pretty straight forward and that further discussion will take place when the resolution is voted on.

REPORTS

a) Rents Uncollected: Chairman Ficarra stated that the rents are in good shape

b) Budgets: Chairman Ficarra asked about the budgets.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that the total is over one million dollars and is about 1.1 million dollars.

c) WHA incident reports:

Commissioner Rudowski asked about the incident at Olsen with the washers and dryers and if a visitor did this.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she does not think so.

Councilwoman Velasco asked about the domestic violence problems and if they were different people at WGA.

Housing Director Blaha stated that they were.

Councilwoman Velasco then asked if a domestic violence team is called in to follow-up.

Executive Director Brightman replied, yes.

Commissioner Rudowski then stated that it looks like there are 20 more incidents overall.

Executive Director Brightman stated this could include an unattended cooking fire.

Councilwoman Velasco again wanted to make sure that the domestic violence team was called out for incidents.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is part of the protocol to send them out. She also stated that there is no increase in crime. She mentioned that in the previous year we did not receive police reports and maybe it just looks like there is more.

d) Housing Manager Reports:

Chairman Ficarra asked about the second page – first issue.

Housing Director Blaha stated that we are back to court. She stated that regarding the second issue, all is quiet. She also mentioned that regarding the third issue, the man is in a hospital or may be in a nursing home.

Chairman Ficarra asked if his behavior is related to his health.

Executive Director Brightman responded, yes, and that he has no living relatives and; therefore, we have to deal with it.

Housing Director Blaha stated that the social worker gave him a memory test and if you answer it, you're ok.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we wrote adult protective services and told them if something happens, it is not our fault.

Chairman Ficarra stated that he assumes that there are regular meetings for Executive Directors and that possibly we could lead the charge to have something changed regarding same. He stated that perhaps this could be mentioned at the NAHRO conferences.

Housing Director Blaha stated that Counsel Corrison is doing a presentation of landlord/tenant matters and this could be discussed.

Counsel Corrison stated that sometimes this winds up in court.

Councilwoman Velasco asked about the transfer option and how many people will be impacted.

Housing Director Blaha stated that no one will be unless they want to be and that a good number of people want a Section 8 voucher.

Executive Director Brightman stated that some people do not want Section 8 as they have to pay the utility costs.

Housing Director Blaha stated that they also have to pay a security deposit.

Councilwoman Velasco asked when the resident moves out, does the apartment go to a senior.

Housing Director Blaha stated that it does and that only the ones that are specifically mentioned are different and all the others are for seniors.

Chairman Ficarra explained to Commissioner Shah that we have extra reports for the summer but that we get the packet well in advance in order to review it.

Expense Report:

Commissioner Rudowski asked about the expense report and construction costs in May being 178% and in June 52%.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she and Maintenance Director Stecker saw the differences.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the accountant did line adjustments and that sometimes we used operating money to fund ESCO items that are later reimbursed.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that the costs are reimbursed by Constellation.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we are almost at year-end. All accounts will be reconciled with the Audit.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that we will be reimbursed the ½ million dollars for the windows.

Commissioner Rudowski stated that Bill Katchen did not bring this matter up but that is fine. She stated that she was not told this by the accountant.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we did not expect the ESCO to perform into the second generation so quickly.

Commissioner Rudowski asked if we will have the numbers by next month.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she doesn't think so as this will be at the close-out.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that the total reimbursement with the windows and Cooper boiler will be around one-million dollars.

f) Executive Director Brightman's report:

Chairman Ficarra asked if the loss of the Verizon had to do with the Olsen matter.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it could be and that she would talk to him later and that this was a heck of a weekend.

Commissioner Rudowski asked about the emergency plan and if it coincides with this situation.

Executive Director Brightman responded that it does not.

Chairman Ficarra asked about the fact that we had to put staff in the building.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that we had to have a 24 hour watch.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she sent all the commissioners an email.

Chairman Ficarra asked if there was an increase in overtime due to this situation and asked if the insurance helps with this.

Executive Director Brightman stated that overtime was involved and that it is not enough money to become an insurance matter.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is now time for Union negotiations.

Commissioner Kenny asked about the wind turbines.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she cannot give a report as everything went into the archives when we had a new carpet placed in the office and everything was boxed up.

Commissioner Rudowski requested that the report be given to everyone.

Executive Director Brightman replied, yes.

Chairman Ficarra stated that it is not spinning.

Commissioner Kenny stated that the Fire Dept. mentioned that the main breakers are shut off.

Executive Director Brightman asked how they would know this as they need a key.

Commissioner Kenny stated that he guesses that they had a key.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that there is a \$1,000 a year saving.

Chairman Ficarra asked who shuts them on or off.

Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi stated that the maintenance staff does.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that there is an automatic shut off.

Chairman Ficarra asked if there is an automatic turn on.

Executive Director Brightman stated that there is not.

Commissioner Kenny asked if Constellation shouldn't have to reset them.

Commissioner Rudowski stated that they make guarantees.

Counsel Corrison stated that there is a list of things to do.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that Sean Cashin and Jim Reese have been trained.

Chairman Ficarra stated that he wants to know if it is being used as he has not seen it work. He stated that this is not a knock but would like to know if it is working.

Commissioner Kenny asked if Constellation is getting state energy credits for this.

Executive Director Brightman stated that they are not.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that this is not cogen.

Executive Director Brightman stated that this is green, renewable energy and there is very little pay back. She stated that she will double check and look for specs.

Commissioner Rudowski stated that we should be saving 6,440 kilowatts.

NEW BUSINESS

Counsel Corrison addressed the Pravco litigation which was discussed during the July special meeting. He stated that while the Resolution #2668 included in the packet reflects the maximum amount \$15,938.76 that the Board authorized to settle the matter, he was able to negotiate a settlement for \$14,663.76 which was \$1275.00 less than the maximum authorized by the Board. He said that he did not anticipate a formal resolution stemming from the discussion in July and that there was no requirement that the Board adopt a resolution authorizing settlement for *up to* \$15,938.76 as opposed to adopting a resolutions once a settlement has been reached. He proposed that instead, since the parties have arrived at an acceptable figure, the Board should adopt the revised Resolution #2668 (which was distributed by email and at the meeting) authorizing the actual settlement for the negotiated amount of \$14,663.76.

At this time, the new reso was substituted for the old as follows:

- a) Reso #2668 – Reso of the BOC of the WHA Authorizing the Settlement of the Matter, Pravco Inc. vs. WHA

Motion moved by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Rudowski to adopt Resolution #2668.

Discussion

Commissioner Rudowski asked if a suit could be filed prohibiting the company from bidding again.

Counsel Corrison stated that this could be done by the state but is a long, costly process and he has only seen this done with big matters. He stated that this roof work was only temporary and we didn't expect to have a big snowfall but that the work still should have been done correctly. He mentioned that the State maintains a list of debarred contractors and they may be on it.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2669 – Designate Official Newspapers, FYE 9/30/15 Extend Contract for Elevator Services Contractor

Motion moved by Commissioner Rudowski and seconded by Commissioner Rosario to adopt Resolution #2669.

Discussion

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2670 – Application for & Acceptance of FY2014 ROSS Coordinator Grant App.

Motion moved by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Rudowski to adopt Resolution #2670.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d) Reso #2671 – Extend Contract for the Meal Delivery Program at Stern, Adams and Finn Towers

Motion moved by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Rudowski to adopt Resolution #2671.

Discuss

Chairman Ficarra asked if the company was up to snuff.

Executive Director Brightman responded that they were.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

e) Reso #2672 – Extend Contract for Elevator Services Contractor

Motion moved by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Rudowski to adopt Resolution #2672.

Discussion

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

f) Reso #2673 – Adopting Monthly Bill List

Motion moved by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Rudowski to adopt Resolution #2673.

Discussion

Chairman Ficarra asked about TD Financing.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that this is capital leveraging.

Commissioner Rudowski asked about VALIC.

Executive Director Brightman stated that this is a private pension whereby money comes out of the employees paychecks.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that it is more of a variable annuity, similar to a 401K, and it is not matched.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is done with pre-tax dollars.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

g) Reso #2674 – Write-off Uncollectable Rent Balances

Motion moved by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Kenny to adopt Resolution #2674.

Discussion

Commissioner Rudowski asked if we were going to pursue the first and the last person on the list.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we are and that the others are deceased.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

h) Reso #2675 – NJ Public Housing JIF Renewal

Motion moved by Commissioner Rudowski and seconded by Commissioner Kenny to adopt Resolution #2675.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

i) Reso #2676 – Revision of Flat Rents

Motion moved by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Rosario to adopt Resolution #2676.

Discussion

Chairman Ficarra stated that the 0-2 bedroom rate went down and the 3-4 rate went up.

Counsel Corrison stated that the mathematical formula is based on the FMR's.

Executive Director Brightman stated that this is done every year.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

j) Reso #2677 – Adopt the Revisions to ACOP to Coincide with the Designated Housing Plan

Motion moved by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Kenny to adopt Resolution #2677.

Discussion

Chairman Ficarra stated that the supporting material shows where the wording will be adjusted and asked about waiting lists.

Housing Director Blaha stated that the person would receive an apartment in the first building that is available and that there are no individual lists for buildings.

Commissioner Rudowski asked why there are no elderly units in Cooper or Olsen.

Executive Director Brightman stated that most of them are where we have the congregate program. She stated that the senior buildings have two designations: some are all handicap accessible (wheelchair) and other units are just disabled.

Commissioner Rudowski asked if Cooper or Olsen have these units.

Housing Director Blaha stated that they are not offered at Cooper, Olsen or Stern.

Executive Director Brightman stated that Cooper vacancies are filled from a COAH waiting list.

Maintenance Director Stecker stated that we can't make a door wider at Stern as it is an older building.

Executive Director Brightman stated that this policy is reviewed by many layers of HUD people and we were missing disabled units for family in our previous plan that is why we redid it.

Commissioner Rudowski asked about the point system and removing the educational point. She is concerned that someone is unemployed and going to school.

Housing Director Blaha stated that she didn't see any benefit to this and no one really uses it but, if the commissioners want it put back in the policy, she can do that. (There was no request to do so.)

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

k) Reso #2678 – Adopt the Revisions to ACOP to Include the Lump Sum Award of VA Benefits in the List of Excluded Income

Motion moved by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Rosario to adopt Resolution #2678.

Discussion

Chairman Ficarra asked if this would give the veterans a break.

Executive Director Brightman stated that most lump sums are excluded but the veterans were missed and this corrects the policy.

Chairman Ficarra stated that this is just correcting a mistake by HUD.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

l) Reso #2679 – Establishing the Payment Standards for the HCV Program

Motion moved by Commissioner Rosario and seconded by Commissioner Kenny to adopt Resolution #2679.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman stated that this is a compliance reso.

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

Abstain: None
Absent: Barbee Briante

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Comments from Commissioners

Councilwoman Velasco stated that the St. James fair will be taking place and that anyone who lived in Port Reading/Avenel may be interested in a booklet that she has.

Commissioner Rudowski welcomed everyone back and stated that we had a 100th birthday for Vig.

Commissioner Shah stated that he is looking forward to learning and being part of the Board.

Commissioner Rosario stated that 50 loaded backpacks were donated to the WGA children and that on October 10 the Port Reading Saints are holding a mini-super bowl challenge for disabled children from out of town at 7 PM.

Commissioner Kenny welcomed Commissioner Shah.

Chairman Ficarra also welcomed everyone back and complimented the newsletter.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Rosario to adjourn at 8:42 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

Donna Brightman
Executive Director/Secretary