

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



The Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge held its regular meeting in the community room of Finn Towers, 19 Martin Terrace, Woodbridge, NJ, in the Township of Woodbridge, New Jersey at 7:00 PM on September 7, 2017, the hour and date duly established for the holding of such meeting.

The Chair called the meeting to order, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and held a moment of silence.

Executive Asst. Guiney 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 4, 2016, 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.

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

PRESENT

ABSENT

Commissioners:

John Kenny, Commissioner  
Ryan Michelson, Commissioner  
Rukmal Rupasinghe, Commissioner  
Shontay Walker, Commissioner  
Gregg Ficarra, Chairman

Ketan Shah, Commissioner

Authority General Counsel:  
Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

Council Liaison:  
Lizbeth DeJesus, Councilwoman

Administration:  
Donna Brightman, Executive Director  
Maureen Guiney, Executive Asst.  
Mike Yannuzzi, Maintenance Manager

Administration:  
Larry Stecker, Maintenance Director

A motion to approve the minutes of the Rescheduled Meeting held on June 20, 2017 was made by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Michelson and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Shah

A motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of the June 20, 2017 was made by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Rupasinghe and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Shah

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Harris Haith, Adams, 4J, stated that he has been living at Woodbridge Housing for 15 years and that he has issues with several things that need to be investigated. He stated that he has tried to help the WHA but they are adversarial with him and that he no longer wants to work with the WHA as he is ignored.

He stated that he represents the residents and that the things that are going on are mean spirited. He mentioned that it is a hard issue to tackle as there are seniors and mentally disabled in the building. Several of his issues were as follows:

- Putting in the windows in 19 degree weather with the seniors and disabled people and whoever made these decisions should know that the residents were affected.
- Landscaper – apparently the contractors that the WHA hired were the cheapest guys to cut and blow grass on the cars and leave it.
- No air-conditioning in his building for one-half of the summer
- Sleeves in the windows of units and now proper air-conditioners have to be purchased and residents don't have the money.
- No new kitchens for his building
- He stated that the lady upstairs presents noise in his apartment at 6 AM every morning
- He stated that there were allegations of theft in the building
- He mentioned the trash chutes and since they have been closed there was roach infestation.

Mr. Haith stated that he has been investigated by the WHA and they are trying to evict him. He also mentioned that when we had a problem with a resident in the building that he went to the hearing to support the WHA. He also stated that he gives out awards to residents in the building.

Mr. Haith also spoke of employees, by name, and was cautioned by Executive Director Brightman and Counsel Corriston that this was unacceptable.

Counsel Corrison asked Mr. Haith is he would be willing to submit his grievances in writing to the Chair.

Mr. Haith stated that he would as he is not being adversarial and that he is about what is right.

Mr. Haith stated that he has a paper trail with Executive Director Brightman for a long time and that the WHA is trying to get him to move.

He stated that the WHA personnel do not need luxury offices and that the money should have gone to the coffers.

He stated that it is all about the spirit and that the WHA should be able to work with him.

It was decided by Chairman Ficarra that he would give Mr. Haith his personal cell phone number and that Mr. Haith could call him to setup a meeting to discuss the issues in question.

Mr. Haith again mentioned an employee by name and was cautioned by Counsel Corrison that this not allowed.

Counsel Corrison told Mr. Haith that since he said that he is not adversarial there have been several requests for him not to talk about personnel but that he still continues.

Chairman Ficarra told Mr. Haith that this has to be done in private as there is no defense for the other side and cannot be done at a public meeting.

Mr. Haith stated that the problems are an endless circle and he is willing to do whatever to help and apologized. He stated that these are just some of the issues and that he has more issues to discuss.

Chairman Ficarra stated that our Resident Commissioner can be a liaison for these problems.

Chairman Ficarra then stated that we have to start somewhere with improvements and that he is a councilman and that everybody thinks there street is the most important but that critical work has to be done first and then it goes from there. He mentioned that funding is on its way for all the buildings and that a resolution is being approved tonight to help with this.

Mr. Haith stated that he is just trying to bring matters to hand.

Rosemary Webber, 5E, stated that the regarding the air conditioner in her window, she asked maintenance if it was ok and they said it was fine and why should she have to get rid of a perfect air conditioner as she cannot afford a new one.

Robert Cedrone, 5C, Adams, stated that he used to be a contractor and that he went to PC Richards and paid \$300 for his air conditioner and that his pitch is out. He stated that he cannot afford a new air conditioner. He also stated that he is disappointed with the landscapers as once every 2 weeks the lawn is mowed and that they do a poor job and don't clean up as grass is all over the sidewalk and cars. He mentioned that the building was power washed and they sprayed sealer and that it looks terrible.

Chairman Ficarra stated that since we are a federal agency services are subject to the lowest responsible bidder. He mentioned that after we have a documented issue with them then we are free to get someone else.

Mr. Cedrone stated that they missed spots on the building.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the landscaper left a lot to be desired and that we fired him and that the building was not power washed but there was a terrible leak and the cement between bricks needed to be sealed. She stated that when we receive RAD money the surface will be redone. She mentioned that regarding the air conditioner sleeves, they are

leaking, and need to be replaced. She stated that she doesn't know why residents were given the wrong information and she would look into the matter.

Mr. Cedrone stated that this was never addressed.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the sleeves are rotted and need to be replaced and that the correct air conditioner unit needs to go into them.

Mr. Cedrone stated that he cannot afford a new air conditioner.

Executive Director Brightman stated that perhaps we can purchase the units and give residents a payment plan. She stated that she will speak to the contractors but that they all need to be replaced.

Mr. Cedrone then stated that there was a leak on the roof.

Executive Director Brightman stated that Finn and Olsen Towers are scheduled for roof replacement.

Mr. Cedrone stated that he is speaking of Adams Towers. He then spoke of the washer that was broken and mentioned that he called the company and told them that he was on the Board and that they came immediately to fix it. He stated that he doesn't like lying but had to do it as the machine needed to be fixed.

Jeanette Flores, WGA, Building #11, stated that the parking has been taken away and that some tenants have 2 or 3 cars from 1 family unit and that she went to the office and was dismissed as a message was given to her by the secretary and that she was unable to see the head honcho. She stated that she was active as the resident council treasure for WGA. She also mentioned that WHA has been good to her and her son and helped her out but is concerned about parking and unauthorized vehicles taking parking spots.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she can park across the street.

Chairman Ficarra asked Ms. Flores to speak to Executive Director Brightman regarding the unofficial guests that are illegal at the end of this meeting. He recognizes her frustration and that it only takes 1 or 2 people to ruin it for others. He stated that once we get new housing residents will have designated spots.

Executive Director Brightman stated that parking is a bear and she is very thankful that we are now allowed to park across the street. She also mentioned that the first set of buildings will be ready in December and will provide some relief regarding parking.

Counsel Corrison asked about stickers for residents.

Executive Director Brightman stated that they are no longer required as we do not tow.

Chairman Ficarra asked Councilwoman DeJesus to bring the parking issue up at the next Council meeting to see if something can be done.

Ms. Flores thanked all.

Robert Smith, 6L, Finn towers, asked where the residents can and cannot smoke.

Chairman Ficarra stated that there is a code regarding outside smoking.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is 25 feet.

Chairman Ficarra asked if there was a designated area.

Executive Director Brightman responded that there was not.

Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi stated that the people smoke on Adam's sidewalk and Finn's driveway.

Mr. Haith said that they also smoke at the bus stop.

Executive Director Brightman stated that before HUD's rule was instituted we instituted our own rule and people were allowed to smoke in the gazebo but now they are not allowed to smoke within 25 feet of a public building as we are federally funded.

Chairman Ficarra asked if this will change when we convert to RAD.

Executive Director Brightman responded that it will not.

Mr. Cedrone asked if housing puts out flyers regarding this as he knows a person smoking on his floor in their apartment.

Counsel Corrison asked Mr. Cedrone to let Housing know who this is.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is difficult to enforce this regulation and that we do look for evidence.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Chairman Ficarra stated that there are many reports from the summer months in the packet. He noted that Executive Director Brightman would like to keep the summer schedule. He stated that the staff is in cramped quarters and this schedule helps the employees.

Commissioner Kenny also stated that this will help the parking situation.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she received the last of the RCC today; therefore, we can start the roofs, kitchens and construction of the replacement for Stern Towers shortly.

Chairman Ficarra stated that this took place due to Executive Director Brightman and her team's diligence. He then asked about the illegal use of the Home Depot situation.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it was not pursued.

Executive Director Brightman then spoke of the new housing on Bunns Lane and stated that we have to leave the middle of housing as that holds the main electric and master water for the complex. The new building is being done at the beginning (off Route 9) and the end of the block which encompasses buildings 1 through 6. Phase 3 is not funded as yet.

Commissioner Kenny stated that going through the middle of the complex would not be pleasant.

Executive Director Brightman stated that so far between Ingerman and us it has been managed very well and that Ingerman did a phenomenal job controlling the demolition and was very considerate of the tenants. She stated that parking is a problem but that the residents will receive new dishwasher's and garbage disposals as part of the new housing.

Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi stated that he will move his truck so that Jeanette Flores can park directly in front of her building.

## NEW BUSINESS

a) Reso #2871 –Designate Official Newspapers – FYE 9/30/18

Motion moved by Commissioner Walker and seconded by Commissioner Rupasinghe to adopt Resolution #2871.

ROLL CALL:           Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES:                Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS:                None  
Abstain:             None  
Absent:              Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2872 – NJ PHA JIF Renewal 2017

Motion moved by Commissioner Michelson and seconded by Commissioner Walker to adopt Resolution #2872.

ROLL CALL:           Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES:                Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS:                None  
Abstain:             None  
Absent:              Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2873 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for the Month of August 2017

Motion moved by Commissioner Rupasinghe and seconded by Commissioner Kenny to adopt Resolution #2873.

ROLL CALL:           Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES:                Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS:                None  
Abstain:             None  
Absent:              Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d) Reso #2874 – Write-off Uncollectable Rent Balances FYE 9/30/17

Motion moved by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Rupasinghe to adopt Resolution #2874.

ROLL CALL:           Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES:                Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS:                None

Abstain: None  
Absent: Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

- e) Reso #2875 – Award Contract for the Roof Replacements at Finn & Olsen Towers and the Drain Pipe Replacements at Olsen & Cooper Towers to MTB, LLC for \$353,340

Motion moved by Commissioner Walker and seconded by Commissioner Kenny to adopt Resolution #2875.

ROLL CALL: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

- f) Reso #2876 – Reso of the WHA Making Application to the Local Finance Board for the Proposed Issuance of Bonds (RAD)

Motion moved by Commissioner Walker and seconded by Commissioner Michelson to adopt Resolution #2876.

### Discussion

Chairman Ficarra stated that Council voted on this on Tuesday night.

Counsel Corrison stated that in order to go through with the RAD transaction we need to go through the Local Finance Board.

Chairman Ficarra stated that they have better interest rates.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we need permission to do this and also need to hire a financial advisor.

ROLL CALL: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

- g) Reso #2877 – 2017 Adopted Budget Reso – FY 10/1/17 – 9/30/18

Motion moved by Commissioner Michelson and seconded by Commissioner Walker to adopt Resolution #2877.

ROLL CALL: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

h) Reso #2878 – Establishing the Payment Standards for the HCV Program

Motion moved by Commissioner Walker and seconded by Commissioner Kenny to adopt Resolution #2878.

#### Discussion

Executive Director Brightman stated that the payment standards have been lowered but that we did not change ours.

ROLL CALL: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

i) Reso #2879 – Annual Update of HCV Utility Allowance

Motion moved by Commissioner Rupasinghe and seconded by Commissioner Michelson to adopt Resolution #2879.

ROLL CALL: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES: Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

j) Reso #2880 – Award Contract for the Kitchen Cabinet Replacements at Adams Towers and A/C Sleeve Replacements at Adams, Finn and Greiner Towers to GMT Contracting in the Amount of \$452,400

Motion moved by Commissioner Walker and seconded by Commissioner Rupasinghe to adopt Resolution #2880.

## Discussion

Counsel Corrison stated that NDP Construction was disqualified because they were not responsive to the bid specs even though they were the lowest bidder. He stated that he received a protest from them and responded, in writing, that according to the bid specs the contractor was required to have at least five years of experience which they did not have. He stated that this had nothing to do with price. He mentioned that he has not yet received a response from them and hopes that we don't wind up in litigation. He did not check with Christina Smolder as to whether the lowest bidder extended their rate beyond the 60 days and if they did not it would be subject to review.

Counsel Corrison stated that the contract would be awarded subject to confirmation that the lowest bidder has extended the price past the 60 days.

Chairman Ficarra asked to be informed as to the progress of this matter.

ROLL CALL:           Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES:                Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS:                None  
Abstain:             None  
Absent:               Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

k) Reso #2881 – Reso Awarding the Financial Advisor Contract to Phoenix Advisors LLC

Motion moved by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Michelson to adopt Resolution #2881.

## Discussion

Chairman Ficarra stated that we need this for the RAD conversion.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we need a financial advisor as the application is due next week.

ROLL CALL:           Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra  
AYES:                Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra  
NAYS:                None  
Abstain:             None  
Absent:               Shah

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

At this time, Counsel Corrison stated that he received a letter from PHADA and NAHRO. He mentioned that back in 2012 HUD changed the way housing authorities were funded and due to a deficit they recaptured reserves. He stated that money was recaptured by HUD for those authorities that acted wisely and had reserves. A lawsuit was started for lost funds and was resolved in favor of the housing authorities. Now, a second lawsuit is pending and we have

time to get into it as there is a 6 year statute of limitations. He mentioned that money can come from the Judgement Fund. He stated that the WHA was shorted \$856,000 in the year of 2012-2013.

l) Reso #2882 – Approving the Extension of Summer Hours until July 2018

Motion moved by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Walker to adopt Resolution #2882.

## **RESOLUTION #2882**

### **APPROVING THE EXTENSION OF SUMMER HOURS UNTIL JULY 2018**

**WHEREAS**, the Executive Director has requested that the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge keep its workday schedule as approved by Resolution #2862 until July 2018. The hours are as follows:

Monday through Thursday – 8 AM to 4 PM with ½ hour for lunch  
Friday – 8 AM to 1 PM

**WHEREAS**, the staff would still maintain a 35 hour work week by extending the day with an abbreviated 30 minute lunch period (Monday through Thursday); and

**WHEREAS**, the maintenance staff has elected to keep regular hours.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge, New Jersey, that the Executive Director is hereby authorized to extend the workday an extra ½ hour Monday through Thursday and abbreviate the workday on Friday by closing at 1 PM until July 2018.

Motion to adopt Resolution #2882 moved by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Walker and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL:	Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra
AYES:	Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra
NAYS:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Shah

I hereby certify that the above is a true and exact copy of the Resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge at their Regular Meeting of Sept. 7, 2017.

---

Donna F. Brightman, Secretary

m) Reso #2883 – Reso Authorizing the Executive Director to Join the PHADA/NAHRO Operating Reserve Lawsuit

Motion moved by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Rupasinghe to adopt Resolution #2883.

**RESOLUTION #2883**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO JOIN THE PHADA/NAHRO OPERATING RESERVE LAWSUIT**

**WHEREAS**, the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge has received a letter from PHADA/NAHRO stating that the United States of Federal Claims Court has ruled that HUD’s action of taking operating reserves from housing authorities was a breach of the Annual Contributors Contract; and

**WHEREAS**, PHADA/NAHRO has estimated that the damages due to the Woodbridge Housing Authority are in the amount of \$519,114; and

**WHEREAS**, the BOC of the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge is desirous of joining PHADA and NAHRO in a second lawsuit to recoup these funds; and

**WHEREAS**, PHADA/NAHRO is filing the second lawsuit on behalf of these Authorities that did not join the initial lawsuit in which an award was issued in the amount of 135 million dollars.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge, New Jersey, that the Executive Director is hereby authorized to send PHADA/NAHRO a check in the amount of \$3,000 from non-federal funds to join as a plaintiff in the second lawsuit to recoup operating reserves.

Motion to adopt Resolution #2883 moved by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Rupasinghe and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL:	Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Shah Walker Ficarra
AYES:	Kenny Michelson Rupasinghe Walker Ficarra
NAYS:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Shah

I hereby certify that the above is a true and exact copy of the Resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Township of Woodbridge at their Regular Meeting of Sept. 7, 2017.

---

Donna F. Brightman, Secretary

## **COMMENTS**

Councilwoman DeJesus welcomed everyone back from their summer break and asked to post flyers in the buildings regarding the Hispanic festival. She then asked if the parking is one spot per apartment.

Executive Director Brightman stated that there are not enough parking spots. She mentioned that even before the problem with construction some residents would park in the office lot, after hours as Commissioner Walker did.

Counsel Corrison questioned as whether giving one parking sticker to each apartment would be helpful.

Executive Director Brightman stated that spots are not designated now.

Jeanette Flores, building 11, stated that she doesn't complain that often but did reference the parking situation.

Commissioner Kenny stated that the Police Dept. has their own towing if we need their services.

Chairman Ficarra asked Councilwoman's DeJesus' help with this matter.

Counsel Corrison then referenced the air conditioner sleeves and stated that he knows of someone that had mold and the remediation cost them \$20,000 due to poor a/c sleeves.

Counsel Corrison stated that HUD's new proposed capital funding is at 45% to 50% so, therefore, he is glad to see that we are converting to RAD.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Kenny and seconded by Commissioner Rupasinghe to adjourn at 8:55 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

---

Donna Brightman  
Executive Director/Secretary