

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF BERGEN COUNTY
One Bergen County Plaza, Fl 2
Hackensack, NJ 07601

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 21, 2017

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM BUT ARE INSTEAD A SYNOPSIS OF WHAT TRANSPIRED AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 21, 2017.

PRESENT: Chairman Daniel Ortega
 Commissioner Joanne English Rollieson
 Commissioner Junior Hernandez (late)
 Commissioner Steven Kopf (late)
 Commissioner Bob Taschler
 Commissioner Steven Weinstein
 Lynn Bartlett, Executive Director
 Kevin McCann, Director of Finance
 John Biale, Director of Development
 Julia Orlando, BCHHH Director
 Esther Gatria, Human Resources Manager
 Vincent Bufis, Field Operations Manager
 Jeffrey Slater, BCHHH Clinical Coordinator
 Terrence Corrison Esq., General Counsel

ABSENT: Commissioner Danielle Peterson

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ortega called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm and asked that the open public meetings statement be read. Executive Director Lynn Bartlett read the following:

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 Record on Friday, November 10, 2017 at which time the date time and place were set forth, notice of this meeting was also posted on the Authority website. The minutes of this meeting will be available following the next regularly scheduled meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Ortega lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Chairman Ortega asked that roll be called. Commissioners, English-Rollieson, Taschler and Weinstein were present. Commissioners Hernandez, Kopf and Peterson were absent. Commissioners Hernandez and Kopf arrived later in the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Weinstein to approve the regular minutes of the meeting of October 26, 2017. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Weinstein and seconded by Commissioner Taschler.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Chairman Ortega – AYE

Commissioner English Rollieson - AYE

Commissioner Taschler – AYE

Commissioner Weinstein - AYE

ABSENT: Commissioners Hernandez, Kopf and Peterson (1)

DISCUSSION

Chairmen Ortega lead the Board in a discussion of 2018 HABC Board meeting dates. After discussion with HABC Executive Director, Lynn Bartlett, he proposed that the 2018 meeting date remain the fourth Thursday of the month with the exceptions of July, August, November and December. The July, November and December meeting dates will be moved to the third Thursday, and the Board does not meet in August.

Additionally, the Board will meet at the following alternative HABC sites: April the Board will meet at the David F. Roche Apartments in Dumont, July will be at Lehmann Gardens in Park Ridge and the October meeting will be at Boiling Springs Gardens in East Rutherford.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Director Bartlett then provided the following updates and changes to the Board Report that had been circulated:

DEVELOPMENT

Franklin Lakes – pictures were circulated for all to see the clearance work that is underway for the 50 units of adult disabled housing that will be constructed.

Saddle Brook – a \$4.95 million commitment letter was received from Sussex Bank.

Emerson – this project was selected by NJHFMA to appear in the agency's Annual Report.

Commissioner Hernandez arrived to the meeting (5:42pm)

FINANCE

The first and second quarter reimbursements for BCHHH 2017 operations were received from the County. Third quarter purchase order was signed by HABC and returned to the County Treasurer.

RAD Escrow accounts are currently invested at CSBK. It was announced this month that CSBK is merging with Kearny Savings Bank. Ms. Bartlett stated that she would keep all informed on any effect the merger has on these accounts.

FIELD OPERATIONS

Director Bartlett reported that the third quarter SSBG grant funds for the MLK Senior Center Operations purchase order was signed and returned to the BC Department of Human Services for payment.

ASSISTED HOUSING

Finance and Rental Assistance Department work with HUD's Office of Shortfall Prevention (SPT) have been tied out. All projections have been finalized.

BCHHH

Ms. Bartlett informed all that Julia Orlando has been working on the continued development of policy addressing sheltering homeless pregnant women. Ms. Orlando submitted second draft earlier in the day. Ms. Bartlett stated that it was a very good draft that addresses the point that if there are more appropriate, supportive emergency shelters to provide necessary or needed services for the pregnant guest that they would be referred to that shelter. After attorney review and approval HABC BCHHH will begin implementing the policy.

Director Bartlett informed all that Julia has scheduled a meeting with the Board and Executive staff of Christ Church Community Development Corporation to discuss compliant implementation of code blue laws at the shelter.

In addition in response to recent incidence reports at the BCHHH some of the Bergen County Security Officers that staff the BCHHH would be attending Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) begin offered in the County.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Three full time Assisted Housing Specialists have been approved for the Housing Programs Department. New hires had been on hold while we awaited word from Washington on program funding levels as well as internal forecasting of voucher program administration.

One of the fulltime hires will be the conversion of a part time administrative assistant to the department to a full time position, with the remaining two being new hires.

The Tenant Service Coordinator has been identified and has completed the pre-employment process. Her anticipated start date is Monday, December 18th.

As reported last month the MLK Senior Activity Center Director position was filled by the part time Activities Director, leaving that part time position vacant. HABC has advertised to fill the position.

Staff completed training offered at the NJNAHRO Conference in Atlantic City this month. They attended courses on improved supervisory and management skills, purchase and procurement, and the NJ State budget process for PHAs.

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Scanning paper files to electronic files continues. Half the HCV program files have been converted.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

It is anticipated that the Housing Choice Voucher program will be funded in the immediate future by continuing resolution.

OTHER

Ms. Bartlett informed all that she was a guest presenter at the Bergen County Mental Health Board. She explained the HCV program, rent calculations, maximum subsidy and tenant portion of the rent calculations. Her presentation was very well received. She answered many questions and explained the program, they were very happy to have her present.

ATTORNEY REPORT

Mr. Corrison reported that he had just finished preparing for litigation in an Order to Show Cause for a terminated HCV program participant. Though the participant is represented by Counsel he is confident that the matter will be upheld by the Court. He is also addressing another litigated matter with another terminated HCV participant as well as addressing a personnel matter of a former employee that has filed suit against the Authority. He stated that the Board could go into close session for him to provide details but at present there was only a letter from the employee's attorney and he would keep the Board apprised of developments.

PUBLIC SESSION

Chairman Ortega asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public. A motion was made and seconded by Commissioners Taschler and English-Rollieson. Chairman Ortega explained that the public would be invited to speak on topics limited to the Housing Authority and asked that all speakers limit their comments to 5 minutes, which

would allow the Commissioners to address each commenter in a timely and appropriate manner.

Eileen Gunther #305 – Ms. Gunther asked to know the Authority’s procedures for addressing tenants that violate fraud policies, or have convictions. She informed the Board that she has spoken to the police department and that she has a scheduled court date on a matter but she wants to know the Authority’s policy when tenant’s violate occupancy policies and other tenants fear for their lives.

HABC Attorney Terrance Corriston responded by explaining that the Authority does terminate tenancies of those that have violated the rules or are creating a disturbance or nuisance for their neighbors. He explained that it is not a fast process, there is always two sides to a story and staff have the responsibility to verify all complaints to ensure that there is adequate evidence to support the allegations. He explained that having someone willing to come to court to witness and testify to the violation or disturbance is necessary to address a complaint.

Ms. Bartlett explained that any complaint made or received by a tenant will always be investigated by the Authority but that the Authority is not permitted to give or provide updates to the investigation to the complainant.

Mr. Corriston explained that there is a difference between HCV termination and public housing evictions/terminations. In the case of the latter, due process must be followed in that the tenant must first receive a notice to cease to cure the problem. Failure to cure is followed by a Notice to Quit which is then followed by eviction. Mr. Corriston stated that since he was not familiar with her specific issue he would make sure to be informed by staff and look into her issue.

Ms. Gunther followed up, explaining that she has subpoenaed for footage from the Authority’s surveillance cameras, and asked for the Authority’s process to comply with the request. Mr. Corriston stated that he had not seen the subpoena and that it has not come to the Authority as yet. Staff confirmed that no subpoena has been received. Mr. Corriston assured her that he would work with staff and familiarize himself with her issue. He also reiterated that due to the process he explained that the Authority must follow, that the Authority is not her best defense there is nothing the Authority can do to protect her. The Authority can look into the matter and act on as appropriate but she should be involved with law enforcement and the appropriate means to protect herself. Ms. Gunther acknowledged and thanked Mr. Corriston for this information and response.

Shenell Harris #208 – Ms. Harris questioned lease violations and her observation that there are tenants at Ramapo Brae that are not reporting all members of their household, that some tenants have allowed others to live with them which beside being unfair is directly effecting the parking situation at the property.

She acknowledged that HABC staff can't go into each house to see who is there but she commented that regular maintenance staff are aware of who is a resident and those that aren't but are there regularly. She observed that this is why problems occur because there are unauthorized guests or long term visitors that cause the problem.

Mr. Corrison admitted that she has identified the single most difficult lease provision to enforce, which is proving residency. Unfortunately you know what you see but when we go to investigate the information provided us shows they reside elsewhere. Proving an illegal live-in is exceptionally difficult to confirm. Mr. Corrison asked if there was an active resident counsel. He explained that an active resident council would help by giving residents more of a voice and aid in giving one another support in a more positive way. He highly recommended that the tenants consider forming a resident council, it will not solve the problem overnight, and it is a real commitment.

Ms. Bartlett explained the Authority's efforts to address this ongoing issue with the award of a towing contract and the approval of a towing policy. This allows the Authority to address unauthorized cars on all HABC properties. She further assured tenants that the Authority is fully committed to addressing unauthorized tenants, but there are limitations to actions the Authority can take to confirm the presence of unauthorized tenants.

Commissioner Hernandez added his belief in the presence of a resident council to identify non-residents citing a visit to the Indianapolis Housing Authority and illustrating that their residents identify non-member use of the pool area and daycare, the resident council takes ideas and

Commissioner Taschler questioned how many parking spots there are at Ramapo Brae? Regional Property Manager Rob Moore stated there are a little over 100. Commissioner Taschler then asked how many residents are known to be living at Ramapo Brae with registered cars to this address? He followed up by asking if there is assigned parking? Ms. Harris responded that there is assigned parking but there are multiple cars for each address and even the visitor spots are not open and available.

Ms. Bartlett explained that to address this issue the Authority had developed a towing policy. The policy will require parking stickers and will enforce parking in assigned spots as well as address the overcrowding.

Commissioner Taschler asked if the parking problem was a new problem or if it was persistent. Ms. Harris stated that is a persistent problem. Commissioner Hernandez asked when was the last time parking wasn't a problem. Ms. Harris stated that it has always been a problem. Ms. Bartlett explained that parking will continue to be a problem, family units are no longer two car households, as the children in these family units age they need for transportation brings additional cars. She further explained

that in order to accommodate parking problems on other Authority properties playgrounds are being removed to create more parking.

Commissioner Hernandez asked if Ms. Harris is willing to participate on a resident council. Commissioner English-Rollieson commented that the most important thing is participation, residents attending the meeting this evening and offering comment show that they care and they want to make a difference. She offered that as a team they can accomplish more; as a team they can make a difference. Further, she concurred that a resident council is optimal way to make a difference; it gives voice to the residents. Chairman Ortega explained that this is the reason the Board of Commissioner meetings are brought to the residents, so that the Board could hear from residents first hand and find ways to work together to resolve issues. He further explained that the Board is considering establishing a sub-committee to facilitate greater interaction and involvement with tenants.

Ms. Harris reiterated the importance of the Authority going into units to make sure or verify who is in the unit. She shared a concern for unauthorized persons with felonies, arrests or other legal issues. Ms. Harris stated “there are a lot of them here”. Commissioner English-Rollieson informed Ms. Harris that she has the right to go to the Police Department to verify the sex offenders in the area.

Ms. Bartlett made clear for all in attendance that all tenants and household members must first be approved by the Authority. Further, all authorized tenants and authorized household members have passed a background check when they complete the eligibility process. Ms. Bartlett explained that convicted sex offenders are not permitted to be assisted with federal assistance and are ineligible to be assisted or approved to be household members.

Mr. Corrison stated that he will work with the residents regarding the allegation of unauthorized sex offenders residing in units.

Commissioner Weinstein concurred that the idea of a resident council to protect one another and be aware of things going on at the property is a great idea, he asked if there are criteria or rules that govern a resident council that identify actions the council can and cannot take in protecting the development.

Terry Corrison corrected that tenants really aren't protecting themselves in as much as meeting regularly to be the eyes and ears of concerned residents, he affirmed that any council would need to work directly with the Authority sharing their information for the Authority to follow up on difficult issues. He explained that a resident council is more a local group that cares about the community and is keeping an eye out and caring for the community. He stated this goes a long way in terms of communication to all residents that there are those who are paying attention and care about the community.

He explained that a resident council does not do their own monitoring or provide their own security but shares information and works with the Authority to be addressed.

Ms. Harris recommended a policy of three police reports for any one household would result in eviction. Mr. Corrison explained that the Authority doesn't wait for three reports, he stated that the Authority has a very good relationship with local law enforcement and as soon as the Authority is informed each case is looked at specifically and appropriate action is taken.

Chairman Ortega thanked Ms. Harris for her comments, he stated a belief that once the Authority implements the residential parking and towing policy that residents would see improvement.

Commissioner Taschler inquired if tenants used their cell phones to take photos of illegal cars that provided date and time stamps. Ms. Gunther stated that she has done just this thing, with license plates and times for use in the lawsuit she filed against a neighbor. Ms. Harris asked who the photo proof should be sent to. Ms. Bartlett directed that all resident proof should be sent to the zone office to the Regional Property Manager.

Commissioner Taschler asked if a car could be permanently banned from the property. Mr. Corrison stated that he's seen people permanently banned but not a car, and asked why not ban the people rather than the car. Mr. Corrison further explained that the implementation of the towing policy would be of great assistance to the Authority in identifying the regular violators and enforcing compliance.

Anyango Dickson #401 – Ms. Dickson stated that this meeting was different from the other meetings of the Authority she attends, she stated that she was looking for information on new policies or what has been changed and updated but as yet had not heard this information discussed.

Ms. Bartlett explained that the difference is that her normal attendance is at the quarterly run tenant meetings for the development and that this evenings meeting is a Board meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Authority. Ms. Bartlett explained that the Board is the governing board of the Authority that sets policy which staff then implements and that a tenant meeting would be held in a few more weeks.

There were no other members of the public that wished to address the Board of Commissioners.

A motion was made to close the public portion of the meeting by Commissioner Taschler and seconded by Commissioner Kopf.

CONSENT AGENDA

Discussion: Chairman Ortega proposed removing Resolution 2017-80 from the consent agenda which creates a pool of professionals for a five-year period to amend it to a two year period.

Director Bartlett explained the permissibility of a pool of consultants under the local public contracts law. She explained the pool does not create contracts with the consultants but creates a list that the Authority can go to to solicit sealed proposals for pricing for specific projects or jobs.

Commissioner Hernandez asked what would happen with a respondent or contractor that is in the pool who has had poor performance. Terry Corrison explained that the Authority would not choose them for the next project the exception being projects that are bid. Under the Bid regulations the Authority is bound to accept the lowest price and can only reject the bidder within a very small latitude.

Commissioner Hernandez then questioned Resolution 2017-78, inquiring what vocational services are provided at the BCHHH. Ms. Bartlett explained that there is a vocational coordinator at the homeless shelter who's purpose is to meet with shelter guests and assist in returning them to the workforce. Ms. Bartlett pointed out that a monthly report of the vocational coordinator is provided in the Executive Director's monthly board report. The report identifies the number of guest that have met with the coordinator, those that have been place in employment or training opportunities as well as demographic data. Ms. Bartlett further explained that the vocational services at the BCHHH are bid and a contract is awarded based upon bid responses.

Chairman Ortega then asked for a motion to approved the consent agenda without Resolution 2017-80. A motion was made by Commissioner Taschler to approve the consent agenda without Resolution 2017-80 and seconded by Commissioner Weinstein.

- A. Resolution 2017-76
Resolution approving the routine expenditures for the HABC for the period of 10/13/17 – 11/9/17

- B. Resolution 2017-77
Resolution approving the routine expenditures for the HDC for the period of 10/13/17 – 11/9/17

- C. Resolution 2017-78
Resolution authorizing a contract with Friendship House, Inc. for the provision of vocational services at BCHHH

- D. Resolution 2017-79
Resolution authorizing a contract with Care Plus Workforce Solutions for laundry services at BCHHH

- E. Resolution 2017-81
Resolution authorizing a contract with Regional Risk Managers, LLC for professional risk management and insurance broker of record services for a period of three (3) years

- F. Resolution 2017-82
Resolution authorizing a contract with D&L Paving Contractors Inc to repave parking lots, curbs and sidewalks at Ridgecrest Apartments

- G. Resolution 2017-83
Resolution authorizing a contract with TSUJ Corp for emergency generator replacement at Carucci Apartments

The vote upon roll call was:

ROLL CALL VOTE:

- Chairman Ortega – AYE
- Commissioner English-Rollieson - AYE
- Commissioner Hernandez – AYE
- Commissioner Kopf - AYE
- Commissioner Taschler – AYE
- Commissioner Weinstein - AYE
- ABSENT: Commissioner Peterson (1)

Chairman Ortega then sought a motion to approve Resolution 2017-80 with the amendment of five years to two years. Commissioner Weinstein made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Hernandez.

- A. Resolution 2017-80
Resolution authorizing the List of Qualified Professional Consultants for a period of two (2) years

The vote upon roll call was:

ROLL CALL VOTE:

- Chairman Ortega – AYE
- Commissioner English-Rollieson - AYE
- Commissioner Hernandez – AYE
- Commissioner Kopf - AYE
- Commissioner Taschler – AYE
- Commissioner Weinstein - AYE
- ABSENT: Commissioner Peterson (1)

Chairman Ortega then thanked everyone for traveling to Mahwah and wished everyone a very happy Thanksgiving. Commissioner Taschler made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Commissioner Weinstein and it was unanimously approved at 6:36pm.

Prepared by: Lynn Bartlett