

**REGULAR MEETING  
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF TRENTON  
HELD WED. SEPTEMBER 13, 2017 12:00 PM  
ADM. BLDG., 875 NEW WILLOW STREET**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, John Raines, who announced it was to be noted in the Book of Minutes that the required 48 hours notice of this meeting was mailed to the offices of *The Times*, the *Trentonian* and the Clerk of the City of Trenton, as well as, having been posted in the main entrance of the Housing Authority in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law also known as the Sunshine Law.

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** William Fitzgerald, Shenette Gray, Gary Gentry, and Jessie Tossie, Commissioners; Darlene Weldon-Gordon, Vice Chair; John Raines, Chairman; and Jelani B. Garrett, Secretary/ Executive Director

**ABSENT** Kim Y. Taylor, Commissioner

**ALSO**

**PRESENT:** Rocky Peterson, Legal Counsel to the Board, Clifford Godfrey, Interim Deputy Executive Director, Latrice Leggett, Acting Director of Finance, Chrysti Huff, Redevelopment Project Manager, Vance Thompson, Acting Chief of Security, Amy Fleming, Acting Director of Housing Management Services, Audrey Walker, Manager of Admissions & Occupancy, Pamela Brooks, Director of Resident and Community Services and Francine Nalbone, Human Resources.

Chairman Raines stated that we have a quorum. Chairman Raines then asked for a motion for the adoption of the agenda.

Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon moved that the agenda for September 13, 2017 be approved; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Fitzgerald and upon a voice vote, as follows, the motion carried:

|                            | <b><u>AYES</u></b> | <b><u>NAYS</u></b> | <b><u>ABSTAINS</u></b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Com. William Fitzgerald    | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Shenette Gray         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Gary Gentry           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Jessie Tossie         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. John Raines           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Total                      | 6                  | 0                  | 0                      |

Chairman Raines stated the agenda has been adopted.

Chairman Raines stated next is approval of the minutes from our regular meeting held on August 9<sup>th</sup>, the special meeting held on August 15<sup>th</sup> and the minutes of the executive sessions

held on August 9<sup>th</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Chairman Raines then asked for a motion to move the minutes. Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon moved that the minutes be approved; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Fitzgerald. Chairman Raines asked if there were any questions. Seeing there are none Chairman Raines asked for the roll call. Upon roll call the motion carried as follows:

|                            | <u><b>AYES</b></u> | <u><b>NAYS</b></u> | <u><b>ABSTAINS</b></u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Com. William Fitzgerald    | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Shenette Gray         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Gary Gentry           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Jessie Tossie         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. John Raines           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>6</b>           | <b>0</b>           | <b>0</b>               |

Chairman Raines asked for the report of the Secretary.

Jelani Garrett, Secretary/Executive Director stated we have three resolutions on the agenda today. Resolution 17-30 is for the approval of the disbursements for the month of August.

Chairman Raines stated he would take a motion for Resolution 17-30. Commissioner Gray moved the motion for approval of Disbursements for the month of August; Commissioner Gentry seconded the motion. Chairman Raines asked if there were any questions.

Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon stated on August 9<sup>th</sup> ASSA Entry Systems repaired the doors the outside doors at the Abbott and Josephson Building but then again on August 25<sup>th</sup> we did the same thing why?

Executive Director Garrett stated two repairs – I know we had a problem with the doors; they came out I don't think they got everything they needed to get; also, there was a problem with Comtec with the card readers. There was a miscommunication and they had to come back out.

Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon then stated she had a question about the vehicles. Is it that they are old or am I reading the bill wrong. She stated she was asking because one of the vehicles had a flat tire and had to get towed. She asked: Did we not have a spare?

Executive Director Garrett asked Deputy Executive Director Godfrey if he remembered that instance.

Deputy Executive Director Godfrey answered Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon's question and explained that there were issues with the fleet, some were not registered, the new van was shot up and we were working on getting the fleet operational.

There being no further questions, Chairman Raines asked for a roll call. Upon roll call the motion carried as follows:

**RESOLUTION 17-30 (Attached)**

|                            | <b><u>AYES</u></b> | <b><u>NAYS</u></b> | <b><u>ABSTAINS</u></b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Com. William Fitzgerald    | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Shenette Gray         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Gary Gentry           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Jessie Tossie         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. John Raines           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>6</b>           | <b>0</b>           | <b>0</b>               |

Resolution passed.

Executive Director Garrett then presented Resolutions 17-31 and 17-32. He stated that both resolutions were an amendment to the contracts for appliances. 17-31 is an amendment to the contract with G.E. for refrigerators and 17-32 is an amendment to the contract with G.E. for ranges. I think what happened is that we approved the original resolutions back in April I believe and when we do those resolutions we usually estimate of the number of refrigerators and ranges that will be needed. I don't think that the estimate that was done previously took into consideration the large number of vacant units we had so we ran through that count turning vacant units and doing different things. So, with both contracts we need to amend them to increase the not to exceed amount so that we can ensure that we are able to authorize the purchase of for the number of refrigerators and ranges that we need though the end of the contract.

Chairman Raines stated he will take a motion for Resolutions 17-31 and 17-32. Commissioner Gentry moved Resolution 17-31 and 17-32; Commissioner Fitzgerald seconded the motion. Chairman Raines stated it has been moved and properly seconded and asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Fitzgerald asked if there were figures as to how many ranges.

Executive Director Garrett stated it is in the resolution. Originally, in terms of the ranges, it was estimated 15 of the 20" width, 25 of the 24" width, and 85 of the 30" width which are the ones we use the most and to date we have actually purchased out of the 85 which is the main one we purchase, we purchased 70 to date. We only have four months into that contract so we have a balance of about 8 months and we know that we still have a number of vacant units to turn. We may not purchase all of those but we want to make sure that we have the authorization to get what is needed.

There being no further questions, Chairman Raines asked for the roll call. Upon roll call the motion carried as follows:

**RESOLUTION 17-31 and 17-32 (Attached)**

|                            | <b><u>AYES</u></b> | <b><u>NAYS</u></b> | <b><u>ABSTAINS</u></b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Com. William Fitzgerald    | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Shenette Gray         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Gary Gentry           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Jessie Tossie         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. John Raines           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>6</b>           | <b>0</b>           | <b>0</b>               |

Resolution passed.

Executive Director Garrett stated that briefly there are just a few things on the secretary's report that I want to point out. On Finance side, currently as of July 31, 2017 we were tracking a loss of about \$517,000. We are holding the line on expenses. Actually, total expenses we are \$170,000 to the good. The problem is not so much our expenses but the problem is a revenue problem. Our operating revenue is \$273,000 less than we budgeted and the non-operating revenue is \$414,000 less than we budgeted and that is for two reasons. The operating revenue is a result of the vacancies. When you do the thumb nail math, you are looking at about \$300 per month times 12 for every vacant unit that we are losing in operating revenue. The non-operating revenue has a lot to do with our subsidy count and as we talked about before it is compounding because the subsidy that we receive for the subsequent year is based upon our occupancy rates for the year before so then again it becomes compounding. If you have low occupancy, then the next year your subsidy is going to be reduced as well as your operating revenue that you should be receiving from those units. So, those are the two main reasons for that loss. Potentially right now we are continuing to work to reduce those vacancies and by the end of the year we hope we will have made significant progress. Right now, we are projecting that by the end of the year in terms of operating reserves about 2.78 months' worth of operating reserves which means if we didn't receive any revenue we could take care of our bills for about 3 months. That is not optimal as to where HUD wants you to be. I think HUD wants you to be somewhere in the area of 4 months, Latrice said. So, we are a little under but we are doing our best to hold the line. One other thing, EPC re-commissioning, I don't know if you recall over the past we had a number of issues with respect to the comfort level at the senior buildings and understanding how this new system works. We are actually dealing with the firm that designed the EPC to come back in and re-commission the senior buildings; the heating and air conditioning plan at those buildings. What that is comprised of basically is looking at it again and seeing where the problems are; seeing what the equipment problems are; seeing what the programming problems are and fixing it so that we can past those problems in the winter months. We have some additional funds left over in the EPC so we are gearing it towards that. With that we are going to have to do an educational process for residents because I think what happens is we are used to a certain type of heat whether it is based board radiant type heat and this if forced air

heat. Essentially it is never going to feel like it used to feel. We know in the past we had miscommunication with residents regarding the system but we are trying to correct it. Occupancy, as of August 31<sup>st</sup>, the vacancies were at 110 vacancies; that is down from 153 from the time we took over. That is a 28 percent reduction so we are moving in the right direction. If you look in your packet there is a bar chart and you can see the number of move-ins and move-outs. This month coming up, I know we have some challenges due to the number of lock outs. There were a number of folks evicted so we are going to have some challenges this month but at the same time we are turning over a ton of units so hopefully it balances out with this month. The last thing is on operations is if you look at the first 3 months in terms of rent collections, we were between 87 and 90 percent rent collections in the first 3 months of the year. Currently from April through August it is tracking anywhere from 97.6 and 98.3 percent. So, all of that is to say that we are doing well in our operating performance measures. Quickly, congratulations to Chrysti and all the staff that worked on the Page Homes property, we were awarded. We received the tax credit award from the NJHMFA so between now and September we are going to be working very long hours to get the financing plan submitted to HUD. We have a December 15<sup>th</sup> deadline to submit the financing plan to HUD which is essentially the whole plan for the development. In terms of scheduling, we are looking at breaking ground at the end of March early April and beginning demolition.

Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon stated she understands that we need to get our occupancy up but I am hoping and I am praying that we are really screening these individuals and not just putting people in these apartments in order for us to get money because my personal opinion is that we will be in the same situation that we are in now when we try to evict them and things like that. People showing up to get their keys in the pajamas and stuff like that what character are we looking for.

Executive Director Garrett stated he knows we haven't relaxed any and asked Audrey if she would speak on that.

Audrey Walker, Manager of Admissions and Occupancy, stated that we are screening. We have a wait list of over 3,000 people and we have certain HUD regulations that we must follow. Using those regulations, we screen out as many as we can and those we can't screen out based on regulations and laws we cannot. I have spoken with our lawyer based on quite a few of them that we felt like they might be issues but as far as the law is concerned we must follow the law.

Commissioner Fitzgerald asked if the people we are bringing in to check on the EPC at the senior building was the original firm.

Executive Director Garrett state that it was the original engineering firm, Group 14.

Commissioner Fitzgerald then asked what duration of time has it been since they initiated to this update.

Executive Director Garrett stated he thought it was done in 2014.

Commissioner Fitzgerald asked if as far as the Director could tell, there were no deficiencies on their part.

Executive Director Garrett stated that in an attempt to satisfy our residents and a lot had to do with a lack of education on our staff's part with this new technical system. I think if we went in and tried to make a lot of adjustments to the programming of it, there are certain set points that you have that ensure your savings and if it is operating in accord with this particular formula and we could guarantee that your savings will be this which is important because if we don't make the savings, we have an issue with HUD. If we fall short, we will have to pay back. I think the main issue is the educational piece on the part of our residents and our staff. This is not a lot of money; it is about \$15,000 to start with Abbott so we are looking at about \$45,000 to look at the programming to make sure it is meeting all the requirements that we set out to meet and also to see if there are any deficiencies in the mechanical portion of the system that is affecting the programming. It is important that we identify any mechanical deficiencies and fix those as well. We have dollars left in the EPC account that essentially, we can only use for EPC related items.

Commissioner Gray stated she understands that we are operating in the red now and I know that you are increasing the occupancy and the rent collections holding revenue at a stable level. She asked the Director if he has anything else in mind to make up that gap or do you have a plan?

Executive Director Garrett stated he has a plan that he wants to discuss with the Board next month; more of finding efficiency realignments. I think that in terms of the operation itself, the operation itself is lean. Like I said it is not really the expense side that is the problem. One of the things that is going to happen when we do our subsidy calculation for next year is we are going to have a higher subsidy because of the fact that our vacancy will be higher. Operating revenue and non-operating revenue is also due to the loss of Page Homes which is coming off line and Campbell Homes. So, what will happen is with our Development Agreement we actually are sharing the development fees right from the beginning so we will see dollars coming in from the development fees that will offset that loss we have in the subsidy and we also have deferred development fees hanging out there from Rush Crossings. The next year it looks like the audits we are getting from that next year we will start to receive our deferred development fees next year and that is actually close to 1 million dollars in total deferred development fees so if we get that over the next 4 or 5 years that will be an additional revenue source.

Chairman Raines asked if there were any other questions for the Executive Director. Seeing there were no other questions, Chairman Raines stated he was moving on to unfinished business,

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Commissioner Fitzgerald asked if we have taken care of the closets in the senior building.

Deputy Executive Director Godfrey stated some of the units have been addressed. We are currently in the process of retro fitting them.

Commissioner Fitzgerald then asked about the lady that had the daughters who said the drug dealers were selling drugs in the laundry room and the cameras weren't working over there. Did we ever fix those camera's?

Executive Director Garrett explained that we are still working on the cameras. Unfortunately, the camera situation is not just the cameras. It is an infrastructure situation. Pretty much we have a data system and been using a wireless systems and antennas. We could have got it up running but that would have been just a temporary fix so what we are doing is putting together an RFP for companies to come in take a look at it and giving us proposals on upgrading the entire system, not just the cameras but the entire infrastructure system. So, cameras are not fixed and doors are not fixed but we are working on a solution that is a permanent solution. The firm that we have been dealing with for years, we do not feel as though we were getting the service required. So, we cut them out and decided to go out for proposals. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of firms that do this but Mr. Martin is working hard to identify the firms that do this and Mr. Godfrey with his background is putting together a scope of services.

Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon stated she would like a clear understanding of when we do flyers. She stated she got this flyer in her mailbox. When we are given things from the housing authority, is the issue with the mailing or we have someone putting them in the mailbox because sometimes we have issues with sending flyers and sometimes we don't. So, she wants and understanding of how it works.

Executive Director Garrett asked Ms. Brooks, Director of Resident and Community Services if she has seen this flyer. Ms. Brooks stated she has not seen that flyer before today.

Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon stated that evidently this is going to be held with no cost and it is going to start on Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup> at 5 Eisenhower Avenue. If I am not mistaken that is our facility, correct.

Executive Director Garrett stated yes it is and asked if we have anyone using the building.

Ms. Brooks stated that the only one using it is Ms. Harris for the GED program from 9 to 12, Monday through Friday. If that flyer says anything about GED perhaps it came directly from her who came to us through Ms. Tossie. We have not seen the flyer, it was not sent to us for approval so if it is 9 to 12 that is normally when they have their GED program at Wilson.

Executive Director Garrett stated that there are some programs that we sponsor and advertise for but we also make the room available to outside organizations to do programs as well.

Commissioner Tossie stated that the flyer does have Ms. Harris' name on it. Ms. Brooks then said that is the GED program.

Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon said so this is something they put out and you had no clue about.

Commissioner Tossie stated that they have the approval to use the building and they put out the flyer to notify the students.

Chairman Raines then asked if there was any new business from the Board.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business

### **REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

Chairman Raines stated that he knew the Executive Director met with the cities Law Enforcement Community and the Mayor on partnering with the security situation at all our complexes. From what I understand, it was a very productive meeting. We have an executive session meeting to discuss personnel and contracts and we will not be coming back into public session. The NJNAHRO conference starts on November 13<sup>th</sup> so if you are planning on attending let Fran know.

Chairman Raines stated that the Board has a walk on Resolution.

Commissioner Fitzgerald stated that he wanted to put forth a motion to extend Mr. Garrett's contract. Rocky Peterson, Legal Counsel asked for how long and Chairman Raines stated for one month pending the resolution of his permanent contract. Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon asked what contract were we talking about and Chairman Raines stated the Interim contract. His Interim contract expires this Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. We will discuss the details in Executive Session and I think we will be very successful this afternoon. Board Counsel advised that we have something in place.

Chairman Raines asked for a second on the motion to extend Mr. Garretts Interim Contract for an additional 30 days. Commissioner Gentry seconded the motion and upon a voice the motion carries as follows

|                            | <b><u>AYES</u></b> | <b><u>NAYS</u></b> | <b><u>ABSTAINS</u></b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Com. William Fitzgerald    | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Shenette Gray         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Gary Gentry           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Jessie Tossie         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. John Raines           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Total                      | 6                  | 0                  | 0                      |



## **PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION**

Chairman Raines called upon the public

Richard Green, 237 Oakland St, Apt 419, asked when they were going to get a social worker. Executive Director Garrett stated we don't know about a social worker but he explained that we are looking at having a presence at every building. So, there will be a management person at every building including Abbott.

Mr. Green said that a social worker would be good because sometimes they need assistance with some of their paperwork and a social worker would be good for that.

Executive Director Garrett suggested that he speaks with Pam Brooks to discuss what type of needs you have. We may be able to bring in some organizations that can assist with some of the needs.

James Baker, 237 Oakland St, Apt 309, stated that in front of the doors at the Josephson building every time it rains or snows there is a puddle that forms in front of those doors and it makes it very slippery.

Chairman Raines stated for full disclosure, Brother Baker is one of my pastors' sheep's so we spend a lot of time together.

Johnnie Mae Scott, 101 Eisenhower, stated that she lives upstairs and her neighbor on the first floor has an air conditioner in her window that is in her yard and all the leaves and stuff collect on it and the resident does not clean up. Ms. Scott presented pictures of what she was talking about. Ms. Scott doesn't feel that she should be cleaning up after the resident. She stated she has never had a problem like that.

Executive Director Garrett stated that on the next round about he will have the landscape crew sweep it.

Rufus Crossland, 237 Oakland St., Apt 911 stated that they are really in need of a social worker.

Tracey Taylor, 113 Eisenhower Ave, stated that she is so appreciative of her transfer. She has been a resident for 21 years and she sees the direction we are going in and she is so happy to be a part of it. The quality of the new house she has is beautiful; it was worth praying for and waiting for and I hope everyone else will have the appreciation, gratitude and pride that I have.

Chairman Raines asked for a motion to close public comments. Commissioner Gentry moved the motion; Commissioner Fitzgerald seconded the motion and upon a voice vote the motion carries as follows:

|                            | <b><u>AYES</u></b> | <b><u>NAYS</u></b> | <b><u>ABSTAINS</u></b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Com. William Fitzgerald    | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Shenette Gray         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Gary Gentry           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Jessie Tossie         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. John Raines           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Total                      | 6                  | 0                  | 0                      |

Chairman Raines asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Fitzgerald moved the motion, Vice-chair Weldon Gordon seconded the motion and upon a voice vote the motion carries as follows:

|                            | <u><b>AYES</b></u> | <u><b>NAYS</b></u> | <u><b>ABSTAINS</b></u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Com. William Fitzgerald    | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Shenette Gray         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Gary Gentry           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. Jessie Tossie         | 1                  |                    |                        |
| Com. John Raines           | 1                  |                    |                        |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>6</b>           | <b>0</b>           | <b>0</b>               |

Chairman Raines stated that the Board would not be returning to public session.

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Jelani B. Garrett  
Board of Commissioners  
Housing Authority  
of the  
City of Trenton