

**REGULAR MEETING  
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF TRENTON  
HELD WED. September 12, 2018 12:00 NOON  
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, Kim Taylor Commissioners; Darlene Weldon-Gordon, Vice-Chair; John Raines, Chairman; and Jelani B. Garrett, Secretary/Executive Director

**ABSENT:** Gary Gentry and Walter Denson, Commissioners

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

Commissioner Fitzgerald moved that the agenda for September 12, 2018 be approved; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Taylor 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. Kim Taylor	1		
Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon	1		
Com. John Raines	1		
Total	4	0	0

Chairman Raines stated the agenda has been adopted.

Chairman Raines stated next is the approval of the minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of June 13, 2018, the Special Board Meetings held on July 25<sup>th</sup> and August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and the Executive Session Minutes. Chairman Raines asked for a motion to move the minutes. Commissioner Fitzgerald moved the motion and Chairman Raines 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion and upon roll call that motion carried as follows:

	<u><b>AYES</b></u>	<u><b>NAYS</b></u>	<u><b>ABSTAINS</b></u>
Com. William Fitzgerald	1		
Com. Kim Taylor	1		
Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon	1		
Com. John Raines	1		
Total	4	0	0

Resolution Passed

John Raines, Chairman asked for the Report of the Secretary.

Jelani B. Garrett, Secretary/Executive Director stated that before we go into the report he has a couple of introductions to make. In our efforts to align the organization and to bring the appropriate staff on to make sure we are meeting our service we have picked up two new employees. Petrona Jerome and Andrew Nwadike stand up please. A question was asked “in what capacity”? Executive Director stated Asset Managers and they will be working directly with Andrew. I would like to thank Mr. Godfrey for the work he has been doing. He has really been doing a yeoman’s job of handling a lot of different areas. They are coming on to align some things for us and to fill out the organizational structure. They have already fully jumped in. I have seen both moving around the sites, getting familiar with the staff and we have had several meetings to talk about our direction and our mission.

We haven’t met for a couple of months. There are a couple of things I would like to point out. August is always a tough month with move outs in the real estate industry. With the start of school people tend to move out in August. We had 19 move ins and 18 move outs. If you remember last year it was similar, we had 28 and 27 in August so we have held the line. For the first time we have 94% occupancy. We actually had a reduction of 46% in vacancies and a 5% increase in the vacancy rate. When we came on the vacancy rate was 89% and now we are at 94%. We had to make some adjustments to our goals, but we think we are in good shape to reach that 97% occupancy rate by the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of next year. Rent collections are very good. We are at a very high rate; we are at 98.8% with rent collection. In terms of our financials, we are at a significant loss right now. It is mostly in the maintenance area, maintenance contracts and maintenance materials. This has much to do with turning the units as well as addressing a number of dilapidated situations. When doing our inspections, we have run into a number of situations with mold in the bathrooms and different situation which we have remediated. We have put new bathrooms in and new kitchen cabinets in; that number will come down by the end of the year. The Finance department is working to determine and make sure that they are appropriately placed in the capital improvement area, so it is not hitting our operation budget. So those numbers will come down but is really a result of the work that needed to be done in various aspects of the sites. Commissioner Taylor and Vice Chair Weldon-Gordon asked questions with regards to the cost of Security. Executive Director Garrett explained that the cost for Security was up due to several employees out on vacation and a number of fire watches. When employees are out on vacation we have to provide coverage so it ends up resulting in overtime. Executive Director Garrett provided additional information regarding the increase in security cost.

Jelani B. Garrett, Secretary/Executive Director called upon Latrice Leggett, Director of Resolution to introduce Resolution 18-24.

Latrice Leggett, Director of Finance, introduced Resolution 18-24 approving disbursements for the months of June, July and August totaling \$2,287,411.42 General Fund and \$58,931.73 Capital Fund. Latrice Leggett, Director of Finance, recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt this Resolution approving the disbursements for June, July and August.

Chairman Raines stated he would take a motion for Resolution 18-24. Commissioner Fitzgerald moved the motion and Vice Chair Weldon Gordon 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion and upon roll call the motion carried as follows:

**RESOLUTION 18-24 (Attached)**

	<b><u>AYES</u></b>	<b><u>NAYS</u></b>	<b><u>ABSTAINS</u></b>
Com. William Fitzgerald	1		
Com. Kim Taylor	1		
Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon	1		
Com. John Raines	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Resolution Passed.

Jelani B. Garrett, Secretary/Executive Director called upon Ken Martin to present Resolution 18-25.

Ken Martin, Manager of Procurement and Contracts introduced Resolution 18-25 authorizing the Executive Director to replace and install the condensate tank and install domestic hot water heater at the Wilson Homes development.

Chairman Raines stated he would take a motion for Resolution 18-25. Vice Chair Weldon moved the motion, Commissioner Fitzgerald 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Chairman Raines asked if there were any questions. Executive Director Garrett answered the Boards questions. There being no more questions Chairman Raines asked for roll call and upon roll call the motion carried as follows.

**RESOLUTION 18-25 (Attached)**

	<b><u>AYES</u></b>	<b><u>NAYS</u></b>	<b><u>ABSTAINS</u></b>
Com. William Fitzgerald	1		
Com. Kim Taylor	1		
Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon	1		
Com. John Raines	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Resolution passed.

Jelani Garrett, Secretary/Executive Director introduced Resolution 18-26 authorizing the Executive Director to execute contracts between the Trenton Housing Authority and the Communications Workers of America three bargaining units.

Jelani Garrett, Secretary/Executive Director, explained that the current employee contracts expired December 31, 2016. Mr. Garrett explained that in July a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed by both parties. He further explained the details of the MOA.

Chairman Raines stated he would take a motion for Resolution 18-26. Commissioner Fitzgerald moved the motion, Chairman Raines 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Chairman Raines asked if there were any questions. Executive Director Garrett answered all the Board's questions. Chairman Raines then asked for roll call and upon roll call the motion carried as follows:

	<b><u>RESOLUTION 18-26 (Attached)</u></b>		
	<b><u>AYES</u></b>	<b><u>NAYS</u></b>	<b><u>ABSTAINS</u></b>
Com. William Fitzgerald	1		
Com. Kim Taylor		1	
Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon	1		
Com. John Raines	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

Resolution did not pass.

Jelani Garrett, Secretary/Executive Director stated that there is a walk-on Resolution and called upon Latrice Leggett, Director of Finance to introduce Resolution 18-27.

Latrice Leggett, Director of Finance introduced Resolution 18-27 authorizing the adoption of the 2018 budget. Latrice Leggett explained that the budget was approved by the Commissioners at an open public meeting held June 13, 2018. She further explained that the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requires that the governing body of the Housing Authority adopt the resolution after it has been approved. She stated that approving the adoption of the budget will bring us current.

Chairman Raines stated he would take a motion for Resolution 18-27 authorizing the adoption of the 2018 budget. Commissioner Fitzgerald moved the motion; Chairman Raines 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Chairman Raines asked if there were any questions, Commissioner Taylor had questions and Mr. Garrett answered her questions. There being no other questions, Chairman Raines called for the roll and upon roll call the motion carried as follows:

### **RESOLUTION 18-27 (Attached)**

	<b><u>AYES</u></b>	<b><u>NAYS</u></b>	<b><u>ABSTAINS</u></b>
Com. William Fitzgerald	1		
Com. Kim Taylor	1		
Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon	1		
Com. John Raines	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Resolution passed.

This concludes the Secretary's report.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Fitzgerald stated that he would like the resolution regarding the Union contracts revisited next month and put to a vote again. Chairman Raines stated that his concerns were noted. He also stated there will be an Executive Session following the public session to discuss personnel and contracts and this falls under that so I am sure we will have more discussion about that then. Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon asked the Executive Director what the policy and procedures for doing unit inspections. She stated the reason she was asking was that a resident of the Senior Buildings had their unit inspected and she wasn't sure if they had bed bugs or not but the bottom of their furniture was cut. She understands that it is after the fact but she would like to know what the procedures are going forward. Commissioner Taylor spoke on the Re-entry conference sponsored by Senator Corey Booker. She stated that herself, Mr. Garrett and Mr. Godfrey attended. She explained that the conference was regarding criminal background and housing options. She also stated that Mr. Garrett spoke and informed those in attendance of how Trenton Housing Authority deals with this now and it seemed to be well received. She provided more details of what some of the options/concerns were. Commissioner Fitzgerald asked if moving forward she can provide some information on how we should be dealing with this. Commissioner Taylor stated that the Executive Director has his views on that. At the present time, we are dealing with job opportunities and not addressing the issues of housing. She stated that the Executive Director will fill the Board in on what his ideas on this are and stated that she is in agreement with the Director.

### **REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

Chairman Raines stated he would like to thank Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon for putting together a phenomenal retreat. The retreat was this past weekend and there were some frank discussions and he is pleased with the direction the Housing Authority and the Board are going in.

He stated he was notified last Friday that we have a new Commissioner coming from City Council, the appointing authority. There were some paperwork issues that needed to be

resolved and I am sure he will be at the next meeting. There will be an Executive Session to discuss personnel and contracts and we will not be coming back to public session.

There is a job fair on September the County is putting on. Trenton Housing is one of the partners and they have been promoting it. As of yesterday, they have about 80 employers participating and are expecting between 750 – 1000 participants. It will be held at the Cure Arena. He would like to publicly thank the Housing Authority and its employees for getting the word out. Mr. Garrett will be getting an invitation to join the Workforce and Development board

Mr. Garret announced that tomorrow (9/13) we will have an event for local contractors here at the Donnelly Homes Gym. The plans for Page Homes are 95% complete, only 2 colors. They send out bid packages to 71 contractors that are on our local Section 3 list and local contractors. Chrysti has been following up with those contractors to make sure that they have received those bid packages and making sure they are here. The event will be from 10 to 2 and contractors will be able to ask questions, have a one on one with the developer.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Hines, Vice President of the French Towers Resident Council. He stated they have several issues starting with Security. They are letting people in without signing in, they are not calling up to the resident to announce visitor. Next is safety issues, he spoke on an incident that occurred in the building a few months ago. Lighting is poor in the parking lot. Maintenance in the units by themselves. There has been several complaints of things being taken. He would like security to open the doors for maintenance. He asked if we do background checks on people coming into our building, where are they coming from? Are they coming from mental institutions or what? When the residents don't take their medicine they are a walking time bomb.

Mr Garrett stated that they are senior disabled buildings and we are doing our best but you do have younger folks that we can't discriminate against. He stated that we have fresh eyes on the building now in terms of cameras and are actively looking to see what is going on. What I would suggest is that you log the issues with Petrona Jerome and I think that she is going to be very active in addressing different things. There are policies in place and now it is just about enforcement. Mr. Hines asked if they could get a copy of that. Mr. Garrett stated yes and asked if he had been in contact with Pam Brooks. Mr. Hines stated no so Mr. Garrett provided him with Ms. Brooks contact information and suggested he get in contact with her.

Next issue is the doors; you have guards leaving their post and locking the doors and we are left standing outside until they get back.

Commissioner Taylor asked Mr. Hines if the residents filed a report on the incidents that involved theft. Mr. Hines stated he did not but didn't know if others did. He asked if it was too late to make a report and was told that it was not. Have the other residents file a report on what items were missing and as close to the date and time that it happened. Chairman Raines stated that while it may sound trivial, if you don't write it down it never happened. You need to document it.

Commissioner Fitzgerald asked if the residents have updated contact list. Mr. Garrett stated they should have. We send out newsletters with the numbers listed and our Resident Services Department is very active in the buildings. Mr. Hines claims they haven't received it. Mr. Garrett stated he will see that they get those numbers. Commissioner Fitzgerald told Mr. Hines that once he gets those numbers, make sure the residents have them.

The next issue was guest coming in our building are taking over the community room and the pool room and the resident is not there with them. Mr. Garret asked Mr. Hines to log all of those things with Ms. Jerome. Mr. Hines stated that Ms. Jerome attended their meeting last night, so she is aware of some of these issues.

Clifton Anderson, 1240 Princeton Avenue, stated that he was appointed to THAs Board of Commissioners and was directed by the City Administrator to present this information to you. Mr. Anderson was welcomed aboard. Chairman Raines welcomed him to join the Executive Session following the public session.

Chairman Raines asked for a motion to close the Public Session. Commissioner Fitzgerald moved the motion, Vice-chair Weldon-Gordon 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion and upon a voice vote 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. Kim Taylor	1		
Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon	1		
Com. John Raines	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Chairman Raines asked for a motion to adjourn the public session. Commissioner Fitzgerald moved the motion; Chairman Raines 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion and upon a voice vote 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. Kim Taylor	1		
Com. Darlene Weldon-Gordon	1		
Com. John Raines	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

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Jelani B. Garrett.

Board of Commissioners  
Housing Authority  
of the  
City of Trenton