

**REGULAR MEETING
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF TRENTON
HELD WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2022, 12:00 PM
In-Person and Virtual via Office Teams**

An Audio/Visual Recording of the meeting is on file with the Authority

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 pm by Chairman Anderson, who read the following statement:

It is 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

Commissioner	Present	Absent	Late	Early Exit	Time
Garrette	X		X		12:07
Gentry	X				
Green	X		X		12:05
Lopez	X				
Taylor	X				
Weldon	X				
Anderson	X				
Also Present: Jelani B. Garrett, Secretary/Executive Director David Truelove, Hill Wallack, LLP, General Counsel					

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette						X
Gentry	X				X	
Green						X
Lopez	X					
Taylor	X					
Weldon	X			X		
Anderson	X					

Motion Passed	X
Motion Failed	

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette						X
Gentry	X					
Green	X					
Lopez	X				X	
Taylor	X					
Weldon	X			X		
Anderson	X					

Motion Passed	X
Motion Failed	

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette						X
Gentry			X			
Green	X					
Lopez	X				X	
Taylor	X			X		
Weldon			X			
Anderson	X					

Motion Passed	X
Motion Failed	

REPORT OF SECRETARY

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary stated that he wanted to bring to the Boards attention that he provided the Audit for the year ending December 31, 2021. He stated that he wanted to give that to them one month in advance so they can review it. Also, if it is their pleasure, we can have the auditor come in and provide a presentation like they did before to answer any questions. I will have a resolution on next month's agenda to accept the audit.

Commissioner Garrette asked if we are going to have the auditor come in.

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary, replied yes, if that is the Boards pleasure.

Commissioner Garrette stated she would like that because it is the Boards audit.

Commissioner Taylor asked if that is by one vote or will it be put to the Board for a vote.

Chairman Anderson asked for a motion to have the auditor present at the November 9th Board meeting.

MOTION TO HAVE THE AUDITOR PRESENT AT NOVEMBER 9TH'S BOARD MEETING

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette	X			X		
Gentry		X				
Green	X					
Lopez	X				X	
Taylor	X					
Weldon	X					
Anderson	X					

Motion Passed	X
Motion Failed	

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary, introduced Resolution 22-22. He stated that this is the resolution that was tabled at the previous Board meeting for June, July and August 2022 disbursements.

David Truelove, Esq, Hill Wallack, LLP stated that it should be removed from the table then a motion to approve the resolution.

MOTION TO REMOVE RESOLUTION 22-22 FROM THE TABLE

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette	X				X	
Gentry	X					
Green	X					
Lopez	X			X		
Taylor	X					
Weldon	X					
Anderson	X					

Motion Passed	X
Motion Failed	

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary introduced Resolution 22-22 – Disbursements for the months of June, July, and August 2022 which you received at the last Board meeting. The total amount for those three months was \$3,763,007.26; \$2,972,928.10 was the General Fund and \$709,079.16 was the Capital Fund.

Questions and Comments

Commissioner Garrette stated she wanted to make a statement for the record, she noticed that the expenditures are a lot and they have affected our bottom line. Back to last months meeting there were some expenditures that were not brought to the Board or notified the Board that they would be like these legal ads for advertising for the Battle Monument, I don't know what that was for, Campbell Homes, Financial Consultant. This stuff is an activity that deals with operations, and I was not aware of it until Friday to it being expended. Something with All sites, gym rec, repair oak floor, project initiative. I don't know what that is. It is in the booklet. Ms. Huff mentioned it, but we should be aware of these expenditures before they are expended. As far as the furniture for the Administration building is concerned, it is outrageous. I don't understand why there wasn't a budget, and it was not presented to the Board to know to the degree that you were going to buy furniture. Again, I did speak of them in my email for the record in regard to unit inspections more than just yearly. And the expenditure for the maintenance and repairs for the summer was just outrageous. They had to be done but I did share with the Board last month that certain tenants did approach us and informed us of some of the issues in the buildings. But again, we got to do something this cost

is ridiculous. We have to know something before we are in crisis. This is a lot and we need the employees of those buildings to actually go in and be trained in what to look for so we can have some idea. We are affordable housing, but it is not becoming affordable for the Housing Authority. There has to be some kind of communication with the tenants understanding what their responsibilities are as tenants. The electric and gas, I understand it was summertime with the air conditioners but as we are coming out of the summer it has increased. We are paying it but it's just escalating in cost. I just want to put it on record, Oh and this video intercom. I think it is a great idea, but I don't recall being informed. Has it improved? These costs, I was not aware of any of this. Wasn't aware of this until we got the bill and got to approve it. I am not trying to say you're not being transparent but that is how it looks to me. Again, with this Aflac, just to give you a note on this, I know another government entity that had a relationship with Aflac but I just want you to look into this that if an employee gets hurt on the job because it shows in here on the line item it says personal disability meaning if they get hurt at home or outside the job they are covered but if they get hurt on the job Aflac does not cover it. So, I would like you to look into that. I don't want people to be surprised if they get injured on the job and try to get Aflac and they tell them that we don't have cover on the job injury it is just off the job. I just don't want anyone saying I am paying all this money from my check or if we are paying. I am not sure of that the agreement is. Is the Housing Authority paying on behalf of the employee or is it being pulled from their payroll. I am not sure of what the relationship is. But just on the record again, Kudos to the scholarships. I see there are a number of scholarships on here. Nathan and a few other people. It would be nice to know how they did. I don't know much about scholarships but as a Board member, we are distributing money, we are approving these gifts. I'd like to know a little bit before it happens. Some transparency. Accounting services, I notice there are some accounting services here. So now that we have this new financial director who seems very serious with all those years, are we still going to be contracting for Accounting Consultant services?

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary – Mr. Garrett informed the Board that the young lady we were hiring, Johanna Coyer-Harris, has taken another job as a business administrator in another city.

RESOLUTION 22-22

RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF TRENTON APPROVING THE LIST OF DISBURSEMENT FOR JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST 2022

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette		X				
Gentry	X					
Green	X					
Lopez	X				X	
Taylor	X					
Weldon	X			X		
Anderson	X					

Resolution Passed	X
Resolution Failed	

Commissioner Garrette – I hope that what I am saying in my statement is going to be on the record because if it is not, I am going to have to start reporting. I don't want to do this but if I have to take this further outside the Board I will. Cause like I just said you are not going to put this where it comes back on me where I am not doing what I am supposed to do at these meetings and outside these meetings. I don't want to sound like I am threatening but I will take it because I am not dealing with this. This stuff is insane.

Chairman Anderson – Commissioner Garrette everything is recorded.

Commissioner Garrette – Good but it is not in the minutes.

David Truelove, Esq., Hill Wallack – there is a verbatim recording of the meeting.

Commissioner Garrette – That's good.

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary introduced Resolution 22-29 disbursements for the month of September in the amount of \$916,025.24 (general fund - \$693,096.92 and capital fund - \$222,120.32)

Questions and Comments

None

RESOLUTION 22-29

RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF TRENTON (THA) APPROVING THE LIST OF DISBURSEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2022.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette		X				
Gentry	X				X	
Green	X					
Lopez	X					
Taylor	X			X		
Weldon	X					
Anderson	X					

Resolution Passed	X
Resolution Failed	

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary called on Mr. Godfrey to introduce Resolution 22-30

Clifford Godfrey, Deputy Executive Director, stated that in February 2022 the Board of Commissioners approved Resolution 22-04 authorizing the agency to hire outside contractors for the reconditioning of vacant units. That resolution was for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$300,000. This particular resolution requests that the Board of Commissioners increase that amount by \$150,000 bringing the contract to \$450,000. Resolution 22-30 seeks the authorization from the Board of Commissioners for Executive Director Garrette to continue the utilization of four general contractors for vacant unit reconditioning. To date we have pressed forward with Trevor Carpentry, Do It All Construction, VI Construction, and Donmor Construction for reconditioning at our Senior buildings. Now we are moving forward to doing our family sites.

Questions and Comments

Commissioner Garrette – the other three that we had last year and the year before what was the performance of the reconditioning. How well did they do in those apartments? Because we have some expenditures that I mentioned in my statement. So, tell us something besides us approving these people.

Clifford Godfrey, Deputy Executive Director, stated that three out of the four met or exceeded our expectations with getting the units done in a timely manner. As you can see there are light (3 days), moderate (5 days) or difficult (7 days). They were able to complete the units in a timely fashion outside of measures that were called for by COVID and delays in materials. Work inside the unit is deemed satisfactory. It has met the standard of our inspection process. We have a project manager that goes in, and also our maintenance and managers from the Occupancy standpoint to inspect the unit. We believe the work is satisfactory, they are local contractors, and we are helping out the community.

Commissioner Garrette – Wonderful! So you're adding one more because of the demand.

Clifford Godfrey, Deputy Executive Director, stated yes. We saw that the demand. We actually had four but one dropped off, so we were able to bring on Donmor for the last contract and that has helped but with the way the current economy is a lot of people just don't want to work. It has been very difficult. We have our Section 3 Program where we used to be able to utilize some of our residents who wanted to work. We would send them down to these contractors. Right now, we have depleted our list.

Commissioner Garrette – Did any of them say why they didn't want to work.

Clifford Godfrey, Deputy Executive Director, stated yes, opportunities or we aren't offering enough.

Commissioner Garrette – So, salaries are the issue.

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director, stated that at the last meeting I left a letter at your station which went into our challenges and our strategies for addressing those challenges and this was actually a part of those strategies to address those challenges.

Commissioner Taylor asked if the amount of rehabbing we are doing has increased. The cost of rehabbing these units has increased from last year. So last year how many apartments did we do?

Clifford Godfrey, Deputy Executive Director, stated he could get those numbers from last year but what we did was reduce the actual cost of turning over the unit. Initially, we were getting overhead profit that was placed on the materials, so instead of them getting the profit on overhead materials we brought it in-house, and we purchase the materials and just provide the labor cost and we renegotiated with the contractors on what their labor cost would be. We dictated how much it would be per unit versus them doing a walk through and giving us a price. So we were able to bring it down in that fashion and say that we can do a total of 100 – 120 units at this particular cost versus the cost fluctuating per unit.

Commissioner Taylor – okay so basically ever for our most difficult turnarounds we still have a 7 day turn around and I understand that most of the contractors are able to meet that turn around.

Clifford Godfrey, Deputy Executive Director, said yes and said it is about consistency in making sure we are giving them enough units that satisfies them keeping enough people on staff. So, with construction they will say that we need to have 20 units at one time for us to keep these people on staff as opposed to piece mail say because we are waiting on materials to come in is not beneficial for them because they can't keep the people on staff. So, if they have a gap of say three weeks before materials come in, their staff is leaving and going to other employment. It is about finding the happy medium.

Commissioner Taylor asked if we are anticipating an increase since we are going back to court for non-payment. And since it will probably become evictions, the cost will increase.

Clifford Godfrey, Deputy Executive Director, said yes, we can anticipate an increase and it all goes back to what Commissioner Garrette was saying about inspections. We are getting into the units, and we are seeing that people have skipped out. A skip-out is in addition to our vacancy numbers, and evictions and people being taken to court can result in us adding to the number of vacancies we had to turn over.

Commissioner Garrette asked if the contractors are exclusively working for the Housing Authority or if there is a job and they do the job do they have other work from other customers.

Clifford Godfrey, Deputy Executive Director stated that they are not exclusive, but we are working with them to make it exclusive. If you look at your disbursements, you can see that some of them are recurring because you see them doing other tasks.

Commissioner Garrette – you said that because of materials being delayed they don't any work whatever. She asked if they don't have enough work to keep their workers busy.

Clifford Godfrey, Deputy Executive Director – not at the numbers we need. So if we are dishing out say 6 units and say they can be completed in say 24 days or something like that. If they need to be completed in that amount of time, they need to beef up their staff because the units are being done simultaneously not one at a time. So if they reach a halt they will ask if we have any other work for us to do.

Commissioner Garrette asked if \$450,000 is going to be enough and I see that some of the work is like \$15,000 a unit, one was \$20,000.

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary – this is additional, you will also see in the Procurement report you will see that we are getting ready to go out for bid again to get in line for next year. We are putting the RFP out again and hopefully bring in at least four or more.

Commissioner Garrette asked if this is \$450,000 for now until December.

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary – you had approved it for \$300,000 and this is for an additional \$150,000 bringing to \$450,000 for the year. And we have another RFP for 2023. And please, I am asking the Board to look at what I left at your place. It really identifies what we are facing and outlines our strategy to address those challenges. This letter was actually to HUD on rent collections and vacant unit turns.

Commissioner Garrette – that would be appropriate. Thank you.

RESOLUTION 22-30

RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF TRENTON (THA) AUTHORITY AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO CONTINUE TO UTILIZE THE SERVICES OF FOUR GENERAL CONTRACTORS FOR VACANT UNIT RECONDITIONING

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette	X					
Gentry	X			X		
Green	X					
Lopez	X				X	
Taylor	X					
Weldon	X					
Anderson	X					

Resolution Passed	X
Resolution Failed	

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary – Resolution 22-31 will be presented by Chrysti Huff, Director of Redevelopment.

Chrysti Huff, Director of Redevelopment, stated that Resolution 22-31 is a resolution approving and authorizing the Executive Director to submit the Annual Plan for fiscal year 2023 to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Every year we prepare a plan detailing our operational goals and objectives for the upcoming year. These goals and objectives are formulated as a result of collaborating with staff, residents, local government and other public community agencies.

Questions and Comments

None

RESOLUTION 22-31

RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF TRENTON (THA) AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SUBMIT THE ANNUAL PLAN FO FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2023 TO THE US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette		X				
Gentry	X			X		
Green	X					
Lopez	X					
Taylor	X					
Weldon	X				X	
Anderson	X					

Resolution Passed	X
Resolution Failed	

This concludes the Secretary’s report.

NEW BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS

Commissioner Weldon expressed concern with Commissioner Garrette running for Mayor.

A conversation between Commissioner Garrette and Commissioner Weldon ensued.

Commissioner Gentry asked where are we in the North Trenton development? Are we stuck in the mud?

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary explained where we are with the process.

Commissioner Gentry asked if Council approved the sites we were looking for.

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary – It never made it to the agenda. It was pulled from the agenda.

Commissioner Garrette asked: have you called Council President regarding the docket and inquirer what happened. By this time, you should have already been in communication to find out what happened.

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary stated that the Board Chair had spoken with Council President.

Commissioner Garrette asked what she had to say.

Jelani B. Garrett, Executive Director/Secretary stated he did not want to get into that on the record because it deals with negotiations., deals with contracts. It is not something I really want to discuss in the open session. It is something I would prefer to discuss in closed session. Suffice to say, at this point, I still believe we are in a good position. He explained further the position we are in now.

Commissioner Garrette – When we went into Executive Session last month that should have been discussed.

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

None

A motion was made to go into Executive Session, and it was noted that we will not be coming back to open session.

MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette		X			X	
Gentry	X			X		
Green	X					
Lopez	X					
Taylor	X					
Weldon		X				
Anderson	X					

Motion Passed	X
Motion Failed	

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Motion	Second	Absent
Garrette						X
Gentry	X				X	
Green	X					
Lopez	X					
Taylor	X					
Weldon	X			X		
Anderson	X					

Motion Passed	X
Motion Failed	

Meeting adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

Jelani B. Garrett.

Board of Commissioners
Housing Authority
of the
City of Trenton