

*These minutes are not verbatim, but a condensed version of what transpired at the Lakewood Housing Authority (LHA) Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting held on **Tuesday, February 23, 2016, at 6:04 pm**, in the Community Room at the Rev. Albert Clayton Administration Building, 317 Sampson Avenue, Lakewood, NJ.*

### **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Ms. Medina called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm. Ana María García announced that consistent with the Open Public Meetings Law: P.L.1975 c231, which requires that all meetings of public bodies shall be open to the public at all times, a notice of this meeting was provided to the clerk of the Township of Lakewood, the Ocean County Library, the Asbury Park Press, and the Star-Ledger on January 26, 2016, and was posted on the Authority's official designated public bulletin board at the LHA Administration Building, as well as the LHA website.

### **ROLL CALL**

On roll call, attending Commissioners were:

Miriam Medina – *Chairperson*

Eric Sherman – *Vice Chairperson*

Gregory Stafford Smith – *2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson*

Nechama Heinemann – *Commissioner*

Angela Caldwell – *Commissioner*

Shabsi Ganzweig – *Commissioner*

Also attending:

Mary Jo Grauso – *Executive Director*

Scott Parsons – *Assistant Executive Director*

Terrence Corrison – *Attorney*

Absent were:

Joseph Weingarten – *Commissioner*

Ray Coles – *Township Liaison*

### **READING OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of January 26, 2016 were reviewed. Motion to approve made by Mr. Stafford Smith, seconded by Mr. Sherman. On roll call approving, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Stafford Smith, Ms. Heinemann, Ms. Caldwell, Mr. Ganzweig, and Ms. Medina. Minutes were approved.

### **BILLS AND APPROVAL OF SAME**

Bills were reviewed. Mr. Stafford Smith asked about the work being done by Mr. Rooter Plumbing. Upon hearing that there were two separate instances involving the clay pipes at the sites, including roots in the pipes requiring the need to jet the lines, as well as excavating, and replacing and repairing the lines, he remarked that once those pipes begin to break down, they continue deteriorating. Mr. Parsons responded that the administration was considering using the maintenance staff at Princeton, who have experience with these issues, to maintain the LHA pipes. Motion to approve the bills made by Mr. Stafford Smith, seconded by Ms. Caldwell. On roll call approving, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Stafford Smith, Ms. Heinemann, Ms. Caldwell, Mr. Ganzweig, and Ms. Medina. Bills were approved.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

**Item 1:** Letter from Sonia Burgos, Director of the HUD Office of Public Housing approving the LHA 5-Year and Annual PHA Plan as well as the Significant Amendment for the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Program.

## **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

Mr. Stafford Smith presented the Personnel Committee Report. He said that the Committee had reviewed the overall performance of the Housing Authority and its Administration. He noted that they had received some of the highest awards from HUD and had “stepped up” when things had been thrown their way that were out of the ordinary. He cited in particular the handling of 72 vouchers from Lakewood Plaza II, which HUD asked the Agency to administer. These vouchers provided additional revenue. Mr. Stafford Smith noted that Lakewood Plaza II management was so impressed with LHA efforts that they thanked the staff with a luncheon. He pointed out that staff were awarded merit payments partially based on their ability to deal with and solve issues as they arise. Every time he sees a report and asks the Administration about a problem, that problem is already being addressed.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Ms. Grauso reported that the environmental review record was finalized and the Mayor has assured her that he has signed off as required. The report is critical to the RAD conversion. Initially the Township was going to complete the review, however, that did not happen. LHA went out for proposals and Triad Environmental was selected to complete the review.

There continue to be vacancies for various reasons at the high rise buildings: some residents may require assisted living or a nursing home; some have died; and some for reasons unknown have abandoned their units. Maintenance continues to work overtime to keep up with the unit turnovers. The Waiting List is viable and has remained open for some time.

Unarmed security is now at the Peter Ward Towers one random day a week. No one knows when they will be there and it has deterred unwanted visitors from entering the building. In addition the Lakewood police are patrolling the area more frequently and have made several drug arrests. The residents are very happy with their increased presence.

Applicants are being called in from the Section 8 Waiting List. HUD requires that 75% of new participants must be below 30% income median. Many of the applicants interviewed are over the 30% income median and cannot be approved. Their names are returned to the Waiting List. Therefore the process is slow but new families continue to be leased up.

Finally Ms. Grauso reported that an unauthorized and inaccurate article appeared in the Lakewood Shopper regarding the LHA Section 8 Waiting List. The misinformation resulted in panicked phone calls to the LHA from frantic applicants concerned that they were being overlooked and their status on the Waiting List terminated. After much discussion, Mr. Corrison stated that as Executive Director, it is Ms. Grauso’s role to disseminate information regarding the Housing Authority to the public. Ms. Grauso explained that her goal was to ensure accuracy. In addition she insisted that all Lakewood residents must be equally informed.

## **REPORT OF ATTORNEY**

Mr. Corrison reported on the successful eviction of the tenant he discussed at last month’s Board meeting. The Judge had required the tenant to agree to abide by the banned list. That same

evening, the tenant allowed banned persons in the building. As promised, the LHA had video proof and witnesses willing to testify to his violation of the Judge's order. The tenant was evicted.

**REPORT OF TOWNSHIP LIAISON** – None.

**OLD BUSINESS** – None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

The following new business came before the Board:

- a. Ms. Grauso informed the Board that a staff member is currently facing numerous medical procedures that will exhaust her sick pay. Her co-workers are willing to share their sick-time with her and are asking for a policy change. Ms. Grauso, Mr. Parsons, and Mr. Corrison are determining the best way to calculate and implement the share time. Ms. Grauso will be presenting a Resolution at next month's Board Meeting.

b. **Resolutions**

**Resolution No. 5161** - Resolution Awarding Contract for Elevator Maintenance of Traction Elevators at the NJ54-2 Peter Ward Towers and NJ54-3 John J. Currey Building to TBD for the Period March 1, 2016 through February 28, 2017. Ms. Grauso stated that only one bid was submitted, which was unsatisfactory. She will either go out for more bids or negotiate with the sole bidder. Mr. Stafford Smith asked if the elevators were functioning. Ms. Grauso confirmed that they were and the tenants would not be impacted. Motion to table Resolution No. 5161 made by Mr. Stafford Smith, seconded by Ms. Caldwell. On roll call approving, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Stafford Smith, Ms. Heinemann, Ms. Caldwell, Mr. Ganzweig, and Ms. Medina. Resolution No. 5161 approved.

**Resolution No. 5162** - Resolution Awarding Contract to Systems Sales Corporation for the Supply and Installation of New Smoke and Heat Detectors. After discussion, motion to approve made by Mr. Stafford Smith, seconded by Ms. Heinemann. On roll call approving, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Stafford Smith, Ms. Heinemann, Ms. Caldwell, Mr. Ganzweig, and Ms. Medina. Resolution No. 5162 approved.

**Resolution No. 5163** - Executive Director's Evaluated Merit Increase for 2015 and Approved Salary Increase Effective October 1, 2015. Motion to approve made by Mr. Stafford Smith, seconded by Mr. Sherman. On roll call approving, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Stafford Smith, Ms. Heinemann, Ms. Caldwell, and Ms. Medina. Mr. Ganzweig abstained. Resolution No. 5163 approved.

**Resolution No. 5164** - Resolution Approving the FY 2016 Capital Fund Program Annual Statement and 5-Year Action Plan. Motion to approve made by Mr. Sherman, seconded by Ms. Caldwell. On roll call approving, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Stafford Smith, Ms. Heinemann, Ms. Caldwell, and Ms. Medina. Mr. Ganzweig abstained. Resolution No. 5164 approved.

**MEETING OPENED TO HOUSING AUTHORITY RESIDENTS** – None.

**MEETING OPENED TO THE PUBLIC** – None.

**COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

Mr. Stafford Smith observed that the rehabilitation at Chambers Crescent was going well. Ms. Caldwell agreed, stating that the last few tenants were finding new units.

Ms. Grauso took the opportunity to introduce the staff to the new Commissioners.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion by Mr. Stafford Smith, seconded by Mr. Sherman, all present voted to adjourn at approximately 6:58 pm.

*I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Township of Lakewood, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey, as held on Tuesday, February 23, 2016.*



Mary Jo Grauso, Secretary  
Executive Director