

*These minutes are not verbatim, but a condensed version of what transpired at the Lakewood Housing Authority (LHA) Board of Commissioners Special Meeting held on Tuesday, January 22, 2019, at 6:03 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 6:03 pm. Teresa Acosta 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 and was posted on the Authority's official designated public bulletin board at the LHA Administration Building.

### **ROLL CALL**

#### On roll call, attending Commissioners were:

Miriam Medina – *Chairperson (via phone)*  
Gregory Stafford Smith – *Vice Chairperson*  
Shabsi Ganzweig – *2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson*  
Angela Caldwell - *Commissioner*  
Denise Douglas – *Commissioner*  
Eli Rennert – *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 Regular Board Meeting of January 2, 2019 were reviewed. Motion to approve made by Ms. Medina, seconded by Ms. Caldwell. On roll call approving, Ms. Medina, Mr. Stafford Smith, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Douglas. Mr. Ganzweig voted no. Minutes were approved.

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

Bills were reviewed. After discussion a motion to approve made by Mr. Ganzweig, seconded by Ms. Douglas. On roll call approving, Ms. Medina, Mr. Stafford Smith, Mr. Ganzweig, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Douglas. Bills were approved.

### **CORRESPONDENCE –**

**Item 1:** Letter from ED to Postmaster in Lakewood – Requested by Ms. Douglas. If there is no resolution, Ms. Grauso will go to Postmaster in person.

**Item 2:** Letter from ED to Mrs. Heinemann thanking her for her service on the Board.

**Item 3:** Email from HUD regarding the recent government shutdown. – Brief discussion regarding HUD permitting access to restricted reserves to be used for HAP if necessary during shutdown period.

**Item 4:** Letters from Mid-State Abstract regarding Lot 4, Block 758 – Mr. Corrison will address this in his report.

**Item 5:** Letter from AED to Fire Marshall – Mr. Parsons received a call from the Fire Marshall’s office to set up an appointment to determine what better options are available.

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – None**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT -**

The commissioners were provided with the Executive Directors report.

Ms. Grauso informed the Board that Panoramic Window will be out to measure windows in each individual unit at Peter Ward and LuLu Duffy and residents will receive a letter to be notified in advance.

It has been brought to the Executive Directors attention that notices that are posted in the Peter Ward Building are being removed. A locked display case for notices has been ordered to alleviate the problem.

Ms. Grauso stated that there was positive feedback from the residents regarding the onsite recertifications which began in December at the John Currey Building. Due to the success of the process, Ms. Grauso will be expanding the onsite recertifications to Peter Ward also.

Starting February, there will be morning and afternoon HQS inspections. Tenants were mailed out letters informing them that we are instituting a text alert system which will provide updates on the status of the inspector and an approximate time of arrival. Tenants are required to supply us with their cell phone numbers in order for them to participate for the text alerts or they may elect to opt out. Mr. Ganzweig stated that this is a step in the right direction.

Ms. Grauso further discussed the letter from HUD explaining that housing authorities will have the ability to access their restricted reserves to pay HAP during the partial government shutdown. After brief discussions, if the need to arises to access the reserve, the housing authority will have enough funding to pay HAP through March 2019. If the shutdown continues the housing authority will advise participants of their rights and responsibilities and will also advise landlords they cannot evict their tenants due to the housing authority’s failure to pay HAP in addition to any updates. During the partial shutdown the authority has decided to hold off issuing any new vouchers and holding any briefings.

Due to some recent events, along with the addition of a new commissioner, Ms. Grauso reminded the commissioners of their State required trainings, the roles of the commissioners, E.D. and staff and how they must work together to be an effective team. The Lakewood Housing Authority has been recognized by HUD as a high performer, selected to administer pilot programs and has had outstanding audits year after year. This has been achieved through a cooperative effort on the part of staff and the Board. No one should work in a vacuum but rather cooperatively. Ms. Grauso would like to see this Board allow management to continue to administer this agency through cooperation, courtesy and respect for each other. We all have our roles and I welcome constructive suggestions from all but let’s remember our roles and respect each other.

**REPORT OF ATTORNEY -**

Mr. Corrison discussed the letter from Mid-State Abstract regarding Lot 4, Block 758 with the Board. The conclusion of the title search determined that LHA is the rightful owner of the property and LHA never conveyed the property.

**REPORT OF TOWNSHIP LIAISON – None**

**OLD BUSINESS -**

Mr. Ganzweig asked the attorney to supply the language that is needed to add to correspondence regarding permission for applicants to audio record hearings/meetings. Ms. Grauso stated that there should be two statements, one for recertifications and one for hearings. Mr. Corrison provided language for hearings and will advise on recertification language. Motion to approve the language regarding clients right to record hearings made by Mr. Ganzweig, seconded by Ms. Douglas. On roll call approving Mr. Stafford- Smith, Mr. Ganzweig, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Douglas. Ms. Medina voted no. Motion approved.

The board briefly discussed the chain of commands within the LHA. Mr. Ganzweig asked if there is a policy in place. Mr. Corrison stated that if a written policy is desired the Personnel Committee should come up with language and present it to the Board.

Mr. Ganzweig updated the Board that he had informed the client that was discussed last month, regarding night kollel checks should not be counted as income, to reach out to the case worker for clarification.

Mr. Ganzweig asked for a status regarding the Administrative Plan. Mr. Parsons will be finalizing his review and will be sending it to Quadel to clean up the language. Mr. Ganzweig asked if a sub committee was formed to discuss it or if the Buildings & Grounds committee is covering it. Ms. Grauso and Mr. Stafford-Smith stated that it should be reviewed by the entire board. Ms. Grauso also stated that the Board may want to consider a retreat or a workshop to review. Mr. Corrison also stated that a public hearing will be required for the revised plan.

**NEW BUSINESS** - The following new business came before the Board:

- a. **Resolution 5232** - Writing Off Uncollectible Rents. Motion to approve made by Mr. Ganzweig, seconded by Ms. Medina. On roll call approving, Ms. Medina, Mr. Stafford Smith, Mr. Ganzweig, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Douglas. Resolution 5232 approved.

**Resolution 5233** - Amending the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan. Motion to approve made by Mr. Ganzweig, seconded by Ms. Medina. On roll call approving, Ms. Medina, Mr. Stafford-Smith, Mr. Ganzweig, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Douglas. Resolution 5233 approved.

- b. **Additions:**

**Income verification** - This topic was tabled.

**MEETING OPENED TO HOUSING AUTHORITY CLIENTS - None**

**MEETING OPENED TO THE PUBLIC -**

Mr. McNeil asked Ms. Grauso for some information regarding income levels of the residents at Chambers Crescent.

Mr. McNeil also announced that there will be a Fair Housing Meeting held on March 26<sup>th</sup> and would like the ED to attend to discuss the First Time Home Buyers Program.

**COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS -**

Mr. Stafford-Smith briefed the Board that he was contacted by outside officials and prominent members of the community regarding an applicant family. Ms. Grauso had provided Mr. Stafford-Smith with a chronological timeline regarding the applicant. Ms. Grauso briefed the Board regarding the history of the client and how she has made accommodations to the maximum extent permitted. Due to the unfortunate outcome of the applicant, Ms. Grauso feels as if she is being asked to make exceptions beyond the policies the Authority has in place. Mr. Ganzweig agreed that the Authority has over extended very much to the applicant, however now that they have advocates to assist them, will the Authority be able to offer any additional extension. Mr. Stafford-Smith has asked if there are any alternatives for the applicant. Ms. Grauso mentioned that DCA will be opening their waiting list in February and also asked if the client had applied to LTRAP.

Mr. McNeil from STEPS mentioned that the client has reached out to his organization. Mr. McNeil stated that the client must go through a preliminary process to see how he can assist the client.

Mr. Corriston mentioned that the Administration and Staff of the Authority needs to set a precedent to the public and to clients that the rules have to be followed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion by Ms. Medina, seconded by Ms. Douglas. All present voted to adjourn at approximately 7:43 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 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019.*



Mary Jo Grauso, Secretary  
Executive Director