

These minutes are not verbatim, but a condensed version of what transpired at the Lakewood Housing Authority (LHA) Board of Commissioners Regular Board Meeting held on Tuesday, May 28th 2019, 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. 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 3rd, 2019 and was posted on the Authority's official designated public bulletin board at the LHA Administration Building and website.0

ROLL CALL

On roll call, attending Commissioners were:

Miriam Medina – *Chairperson*
Gregory Stafford Smith – *Vice Chairperson*
Shabsi Ganzweig – *2nd 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 April 30th, 2019 were reviewed. Motion to approve made by Mr. Stafford-Smith, seconded by Ms. Caldwell. On roll call approving, Ms. Medina, Mr. Stafford-Smith, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Douglas. Mr. Ganzweig abstained. Minutes were approved.

BILLS AND APPROVAL OF SAME

Bills were reviewed. After discussion a motion to approve made by Mr. Stafford-Smith, 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

LHA Press Release – Lakewood Housing Authority Scored 100% from HUD. Ms. Grauso stated that there were several attempts to submit the press release to the local newspaper, the Lakewood Scoop. The press release was posted on their website however it was then removed almost immediately.

Property Lawsuit- To be discussed in closed session

NEW BUSINESS - The following new business came before the Board:**a. Resolution 5237 & 5238 – Tabled**

Resolution 5239 - Fee Accountant. After brief discussion, motion to approve made by Mr. Ganzweig, seconded by Mr. Stafford-Smith. On roll call approving, Ms. Medina, Mr. Stafford-Smith, Mr. Ganzweig, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell, and Ms. Douglas. Resolution 5239 approved.

Resolution 5240 - Extending Elevator Contract. After brief discussion, 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. Resolution 5240 approved.

Resolution 5241 - Retirement Agreement & General Release. After brief discussion, motion to approve made by Mr. Rennert, seconded by Ms. Caldwell. On roll call approving, Ms. Medina, Mr. Stafford-Smith, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell, and Ms. Douglas. Mr. Ganzweig abstained. Resolution 5241 approved.

b. Additions:

Admin Plan – Mr. Parsons provided copies of the Admin plan to the Board. Mr. Parsons stated that this is a starting point and now is the time to change any discretionary things that may need to be modified as this will guide the Authority going into the future. Once the Board reviews the plan it will then be presented at a Public Meeting for recommendations to be considered by the Board and will then be sent to HUD for final approval.

Personnel Matter – To be discussed in closed session

Mr. Ganzweig stated that he was notified about the upcoming hearings for clients that have missed inspections and would like administration to look into the matter so the client may have another opportunity to have another inspection to avoid wasting resources and time. Ms. Grauso stated that previously clients that have missed inspections used to come to the general hearings and as an accommodation Ms. Grauso has had the clients come in to speak to the ED personally to impress upon them the importance of being present for the scheduled inspection to avoid wasting the resources of the inspectors. The authority has implemented a source for the clients to be notified one hour before the inspector's arrival. Ms. Grauso stated that the Board should be aware to not overstep the bounds as a Board to get involved with the day to day operations of the authority. A motion was made by Mr. Ganzweig to have clients receive two letters. Ms. Grauso asked Ms. Leonard, the LHA inspector, to review the day to day process in which the inspections are scheduled and the deadlines that are required by HUD. After discussion, there was no vote on the motion.

MEETING OPENED TO HOUSING AUTHORITY CLIENTS

S. Small - Client of STEPS. Mr. Small gave recognition to Ms. Grauso, stating that he appreciated the time that Ms. Grauso took to talk to him. Mr. Small stated that he is currently working on resolving an issue regarding his removal from the waiting list for more than two years since with hopes to have the Board consider reviewing his case. Mr. Corrison stated that the process is not typical for the Board to review cases. Mr. Corrison stated to Mr. Small that Mr. McNeil is currently reviewing his case.

M. Whiter - Client of STEPS. Mr. Whiter mentioned his dealing with Ms. Grauso and how she had helped assist him even when it was after hours. Mr. Whiter thanked Ms. Grauso for her public service.

MEETING OPENED TO THE PUBLIC

Lorraine Heilmann - LHA Case Specialist, employee of LHA 13 years. Ms. Heilmann asked if it is ok for the public to record meetings. Mr. Corrison replied, yes. Ms. Heilmann had asked the Board if there were any circumstances that led to the abrupt retirement of the Executive Director. Mr. Corrison stated that since it is a personnel matter, that information cannot be disclosed.

Norma Berrios - LHA Section 8 Coordinator & Staff Supervisor, employee of LHA 28 years. Ms. Berrios stated that she is sorry to see Ms. Grauso go and that she has experienced a lot of bad things during the course of her employment, such as two raids, one from the FBI. Ms. Berrios stated that she stood by the Housing Authority during those times because she knew there was no wrong doing and currently she feels lost not knowing what is going on. Ms. Berrios asked what is the position of the LHA and whom is the go to person. Mr. Corrison stated that she will continue to report to Mr. Parsons in the absence of Ms. Grauso.

Anita Brent - LHA Quality Control, employee of LHA 26 years. Ms. Brent asked if there is a plan in place to replace the Executive Director and if there is a statute to conduct an ED search, or if there is a deadline to meet to do a search. Mr. Corrison had stated that there will be a search starting soon.

Ana Maria Garcia - LHA FSS Coordinator, employee of LHA 20 years. Ms. Garcia had asked for clarification of who to report to for client information. Ms. Garcia stated that she has had clients put their closing on hold. Ms. Garcia deals directly with the Executive Director when having contracts and checks signed. Mr. Corrison stated that Mr. Parsons will, in the absence of the Executive Director. Ms. Garcia asked if Mr. Parsons is the Acting Director and Mr. Corrison replied that it has not been determined yet.

Jim Kelly - Maintenance Manager, employee of LHA 9 months. Mr. Kelly had asked the Board as we go forward, is there a transition plan in place or are we throwing things in place? Mr. Corrison replied that Mr. Parsons will be taking on rolls of Ms. Grauso as of her departure date of May 31st.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Ganzweig for the record stated that from the ED report, paragraph #6, I believe that it is not true. Mr. Ganzweig addressed the LHA staff, Contrary to what was said, we care about the work you do and we appreciate the work you do. We have your back. Things will continue running smoothly and if there is any input in the future that you would like to bring to us we always appreciate feedback.

2nd CLOSED SESSION

Motion to go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter at 7:45 pm made by Mr. Stafford-Smith, seconded by Mr. Ganzweig. On roll call approving, Ms. Medina, Mr. Stafford Smith, Mr. Ganzweig, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Douglas.

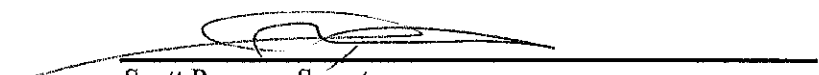
Motion to return to open session at 8:15 pm made by Mr. Stafford-Smith, seconded by Mr. Ganzweig.

Motion to authorize Scott Parsons to serve as Acting ED until further notice of the Board. The Board is also resolving to make a commitment of one year to Mr. Parsons as Assistant Director and he will not be discharged from that position without cause for at least one year while he is also serving as Deputy Director. In lieu of a pay increase during the time that he is serving as Acting Director he will receive LHA paid medical benefits for family coverage in lieu of single which he presently has and that shall last so long as he is serving as Acting Director. Mr. Parsons will take all actions necessary to perfect his duties as Acting Executive Director and Secretary to the Board. Motion made by Mr. Ganzweig, seconded by Mr. Rennert. All present were in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Mr. Stafford-Smith, seconded by Mr. Ganzweig. All present voted to adjourn at approximately 8:17 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, May 28th, 2019.



Scott Parsons, Secretary
Acting Executive Director