

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 Monday, December 30th, 2019, at 4:37 pm, in the Community Room at the Rev. Albert Clayton Administration Building, 317 Sampson Avenue, Lakewood, NJ.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mr. Stafford-Smith called the meeting to order at 4:37 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 December 17th, 2019 and was posted on the Authority's official designated public bulletin board at the LHA Administration Building and website.

ROLL CALL

On roll call, attending Commissioners were:

Miriam Medina – *Chairperson (via phone)*
Gregory Stafford Smith – *Vice Chairperson*
Shabsi Ganzweig – *2nd Vice Chairperson*
Eli Rennert – *Commissioner*
Angela Caldwell – *Commissioner*
Denise Douglas – *Commissioner (via phone)*

Also attending:

Scott Parsons – *Acting Executive Director*
Terrence Corrison – *Attorney*

Absent were:

Joseph Weingarten – *Commissioner*
Ray Coles – *Township Liaison*

READING OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of November 13th, 2019 were reviewed.
A motion was made by Mr. Ganzweig, seconded by Ms. Medina, all present were in favor. Minutes were approved.

BILLS AND APPROVAL OF SAME

Bills were reviewed. After discussion a motion to approve made by Mr. Rennert, seconded by Ms. Douglas.

CORRESPONDENCE

HUD Notice: 2020 Housing Choice Voucher Renewal Awards. HUD has obligated 99.5% proration for HAP and 79% proration for the admin fees.

LHA letter to HUD Regulations Division regarding HOTMA
Thank you notes of appreciation from clients of the LHA

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Rennert briefly discussed the budget committee meeting that was held with the accountant to review the budget for 2020. The accountant provided the committee with information pertaining to how the authority will get back and not have a deficit next year. He expressed the meeting was very beneficial and feels it should be continued in the future.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Parsons presented the Board with his Executive Directors report.

REPORT OF ATTORNEY

Mr. Corrison stated that he had no new information to report at this time.

LHA BUDGET REPORT

Mr. Parsons present the Board with the Budget Report for period ending November 2019. Mr. Parsons pointed out that the LHA received a one-time developers fee payment in connection with the JFK RAD conversion in the amount of \$226,125. Without this payment the LHA would be operating at a break even rather than a surplus.

REPORT OF TOWNSHIP LIAISON - None**OLD BUSINESS**

- a. **ED Search:** Mr. Corrison stated that the Board has a desire to put forward a motion to retain Mr. Parsons and offer him a multi-year contract. Mr. Corrison proposed to the Board that he would like a motion to submit Mr. Parsons name to DCA for approval. Motion to retain Mr. Parsons as Executive Director, pending DCA approval and to allow the Personnel Committee to negotiate a multi-year contract was made by Mr. Ganzweig, seconded by Ms. Douglas. All present were in favor.
- b. **Administrative Plan:** After brief discussion, dates and times will be reviewed for the Board to meet again to review the plan as a workshop.

NEW BUSINESS - The following new business came before the Board:**a. Reorganization of Board – Nominations of Officers for 2020**

Chairperson: Ms. Medina was nominated by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Ms. Caldwell. Mr. Stafford-Smith was nominated by Mr. Ganzweig, seconded by Mr. Rennert.

Mr. Rennert explained that he would like Mr. Stafford-Smith to be Chair because he has done a tremendous amount over the last year and Ms. Medina, for reasons beyond her control, has not be able to attend any meetings or a minimal amount of meetings this year. There is a lot going on with the Housing Authority and someone needs to be present and Mr. Stafford-Smith has shown leadership over the past year. Mr. Ganzweig agreed. Ms. Douglass stated that she thinks Ms. Medina should remain Chair because even though she is going through family problems she has still been attending the meetings and stays up to date on what is going on. Ms. Douglass also stated that we don't need to kick somebody when they are down. Ms. Medina stated that she has been present even though she has not been physically present. Mr. Rennert stated that who holds the position of Chair can always be revisited.

Upon roll call Ms. Medina, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Douglas voted for Ms. Medina. Upon roll call Mr. Stafford-Smith, Mr. Ganzweig and Mr. Rennert voted for Mr. Stafford-Smith. Mr. Corrison stated that there was a tie in votes which will leave it status quo until it is revisited at the next meeting or until it is brought back to the table.

A motion was made at 5:04 pm by Mr. Ganzweig to take a five minute adjournment, seconded by Mr. Stafford-Smith.

The meeting was called back to order at 5:10 pm.

Mr. Corrison resumed the elections and stated that Ms. Medina will continue as Chairperson. Election of Chairperson approved.

Vice Chairperson: Mr. Stafford-Smith was nominated 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. Mr. Stafford-Smith will continue as Vice Chairperson. Election of Vice Chairperson approved.

2nd Vice Chairperson: Mr. Ganzweig was nominated by Mr. Rennert, seconded by Mr. Stafford-Smith. Ms. Douglas was nominated by Ms. Medina. Ms. Douglas declined the nomination. On roll call approving, Ms.

Medina, Mr. Stafford-Smith, Mr. Ganzweig, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Douglas. Mr. Ganzweig will continue as 2nd Vice Chairperson. Election of 2nd Vice Chairperson approved.

b. Resolutions:

- Resolution 5248:** Appointment of Commissioner to NJ Public Housing Authority Joint Insurance Fund
Resolution 5249: 2020 LHA Adopted Budget Resolution, FY from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020
Resolution 5250: Ratification of Full-Time Maintenance Mechanic: John Kownacky
Resolution 5251: Ratification of Part-Time Receptionist: Susan Pierson
Resolution 5252: 2020 Schedule of Regular Board Meetings

A motion to table all resolutions until the next meeting was made by Mr. Ganzweig, seconded by Mr. Rennert. Mr. Parsons stated that tabling the resolutions will cause the budget to be submitted late. Mr. Ganzweig commented that until there is a functioning board, we do not feel we can vote on it. On roll call approving, Mr. Stafford-Smith, Mr. Ganzweig, Mr. Rennert, Ms. Caldwell. Ms. Medina voted no, Ms. Douglas abstained. Motion approved.

Mr. Parsons asked what do we do regarding the next Board Meeting since one of the resolutions is to discuss/approve the 2020 schedule of meetings. A motion to continue with the fourth Tuesday of January was 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. Motion approved.

Mr. Rennert addressed the Board stating so everyone understands, that by us pushing off this budget, he knows that this affects the employees, the Board is being affected, anything that is in the budget, any increases is on hold. The budget was not approved.

c. Additions:

Discussion of By-Laws: Specifically date and time of Regular Board Meetings

Mr. Ganzweig proposed to the Board some By-Law changes, specifically the date and time of the meetings. He asked if any Board members had any suggestions or would like to recommend any By-Law changes. Mr. Ganzweig stated that he would like to add that if a Chairperson/Officer is absent 3 consecutive meetings, they will have to vacate their position. There was a brief discussion about the dates and times for future meetings which will be discussed at a future meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Mr. Parsons questioned why the budget wasn't going to be adopted due to the results of the reorganization election being that the budget committee met and decided that the budget would be submitted as is and if the need arises for a revision to submit a revision at that time. Not approving the budget at this time is going to create unnecessary work, regarding not implementing payroll increases and later completing retroactive changes, if the budget is going to be eventually adopted as is. Mr. Rennert stated that he wishes Meriam Medina could be sitting here so you could turn to her and say give us a functional board and we'll give you a functional Authority. This is not a functional board and we have not been a functional board for the past year. Mr. Parsons stated that he didn't think it was appropriate to put the employees in the middle of a board dispute. Mr. Ganzweig stated he feels bad that Ms. Medina dragged the employees into the middle of it but we had a discussion about this prior and there was an agreement to a peaceful transition and she lied. After a lengthy adversarial discussion amongst commissioners, Mr. Rennert stated that the budget could be adopted tonight if we could have a functioning Chair, Vice Chair and Second Vice Chair. Ms. Medina stated that there is and has been a functioning board. Mr. Rennert stated that as soon as the board resolves this the employee increases will go into effect retroactively.

COMMENTS FROM HOUSING AUTHORITY RESIDENTS - None

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Norma Berrios, LHA Section 8 Coordinator – Ms. Berrios stated that she has never seen anything like this in her entire 29 years being employed with the Authority. It is very disheartening how we, as employees, are being penalized because things didn't go the way you guys wanted it to go. Speaking on behalf of the employees, I don't think it's fair that we are the ones being penalized. Things have been better with Scott as the Acting Executive Director, but as far as the board, I have never seen anything like this before. This is sad that we are being held hostage, and I'm sorry to say that, but that's how I feel.

Madeline Leonard, HQS Inspector – Stated that we are one of the highest functioning Housing Authorities, we score well and when our audits are done we score amazing, which is not easy to do. We are not denying our participants, we all give 100% and the clients are getting more from us than they would get from almost any other Housing Authority.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Ganzweig responded to Ms. Berrios by stating we have taken concerns of employees very seriously. We have done our part to make your case work easier and better and to give you the resources to do a better job by modernizing and upgrading the technology in the way we do business. It has been this Board that has spent hours and hours to make it better. We don't do this for fun we do this because we have a responsibility to the clients we serve to the Authority. We spent hours going through the Administration Plan to make it better for you as well as for the clients. So I'm sorry that you feel you are put in the middle and I'm sorry that I am put in the middle as well, but we have a responsibility to our employees and clients as well. I understand that you're upset that the budget is being held up, I would also be upset. But imagine how the clients feel when they are put in the middle and they are not getting the services provided to them because it's not a functioning Authority. The clients are being penalized by us not being able to implement proper policies and procedures to run the Authority in an efficient manner because we have had an absent Chairperson for many, many months and it's not the way the Authority works and it's not fair when someone is appointed to a position to not show up. If you're a commissioner, you should show up or step aside and let someone else take that place. There have been pay raises and this Board approved those pay raises for a job well done. We are giving Scott a multi-year contract that you asked us to do. You came to the Board and we listened to you and we listen to any concerns or suggestions you have. I don't want anyone standing up here accusing us of holding anyone hostage. We are doing our job. There is somebody on the phone that is not and I'll leave it at that.

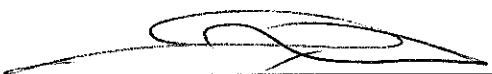
Ms. Douglass apologized to the employees because she feels that it is a hostage situation.

Ms. Medina apologized to the employees and doesn't want them to think she is holding them hostage. The employees stated they did not feel that way.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Rennert, seconded by Mr. Ganzweig. All present voted to adjourn at approximately 5:30 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, January 28, 2020.



Scott Parsons, Secretary
Acting Executive Director