

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF JERSEY CITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING – JUNE 3, 2015

PRESENT: Chairman, Raj Mukherji
VICE CHAIRMAN, Reginald Jones
COMMISSIONER, Aneesah Abdullah
Commissioner, Freddie Kitchens
Commissioner, Thomas Kukla

COUNSEL: Joe Garcia, Esquire
Chasan Leyner & Lamparello, PC

STAFF: Marvin L. Walton, Executive Director/Secretary
Patricia Madison, Deputy Executive Director
Joyce Worthington, Director: Dept. of Compliance & Technical Support
Patricia Ramirez, Director of Rental Assistance Program
Timisha Walcot, Senior Accountant
Donna Chandler, Asset Manager of Curries Woods
Carol Tyler, Asset Manager of Hudson and Holland Gardens
Allison Ford, Asset Manager of Booker T. Washington
Carmen Carrillo, Secretary to the Board

Meeting commence at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Mukherji stated to Mr. Walton if he wanted to open with the Public Meetings Act and then commence the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Walton opened the meeting by stating that in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law this Meeting was advertised in, the Jersey Journal, the Hudson Reporter, the City Clerk's office and the JCHA Website. He stated for the record that the minutes of this regular meeting reflect that adequate notice of this meeting has been announced as is required by the Open Public Meetings Act.

Pledge of Allegiance was done.

Raj Mukherji announced: Public speaking

Mr. Walton, yes we have eight that have contacted us for public speaking.

The first speaker is Ethel Jones, Chairperson of Booker T. Washington Tenant Council.

Ethel Jones: Hello, good evening, I would like for my residents to speak first I would like to speak last. Mr. Walton stated okay no problem I'll shift you to the last.

Next speaker: Tammy Jones, Resident of Booker T. Washington, she was not present.

Next speaker: Robin Stewart Trustee Booker T. Washington, she stated she was present, Hello everyone, Mrs. Stewart did not have much to say tonight, I do thank you for giving us two repair men at Booker T. that was very good but the next thing I would like to work on "we haven't talked about the children" what are they are going to do for the summer, Commissioner Abdullah stated some activities? Mrs. Stewart replied yes, some activities, or buses or something like that, that was my concern! I know that REAC is coming to Booker T. so I cannot ask about the basketball rims and I already spoke to the manager, I won't bring that up. I really don't have anything but I would like for the board to work on something for the children this summer okay.

Commissioner Abdullah stated do you have anything in mind Mrs. Stewart?

Mrs. Stewart: I definitely would like to take them on trips, at least two trips per site, at least.

Commissioner Abdullah: stated okay.

Marvin: Chairman, do you mind if I respond to this? With my directions from the Board and bring full disclosure so you can know what we are doing and what is on the table. For those who live at Booker T we got estimates to correct the issue with the basketball court. We will need to invest \$50,000 to correct the issues. When we have the Booker T community meeting we will talk about it...we got decisions we need to make as a team. As I stated to you when I came out to visit with your group, we are not going to make these decisions in the back room we are going to bring items like this to the residents and you tell us what would you like to see happen. Since this item wasn't in the planned budget for Booker T, we would have to prepare a budget revision to cover the unplanned expenditure.

Mrs. Stewart: Replied, well we know we really want to get that done.

Mr. Walton: Okay, alright.

Mrs. Stewart: As well as other things too, that are going to cost more than \$50,000.

Marvin: Great and remember we only have a small amount of money that we have to work with because we don't have a money making machine.

Mrs. Stewart: Did you find any more information since we are speaking of money? On those boilers, I was speaking about ...

Marvin: We are getting closer. Last meeting I told you we are getting closer now we are even closer. Finally, we have a check list of items that are missing to complete for the NJHMFA, the Agency providing the funding to replace the boilers. The checklist will be completed over the next couple of weeks we should be able to get started on the installation of the boilers.

Mrs. Stewart: Okay

Marvin: We are getting there, I mean we know this is very tight...we are doing the best we can.

Mrs. Stewart: I appreciate that.

Marvin: No problem

Mrs. Stewart: Knowing that anyway, Raj question for you? Did you get any closer on thinking about if you wanted to send someone from TAB the chair or the vice chair to the conference in July?

Raj: We are going to see what we can do.

Mrs. Stewart: Because July is around the corner.

Raj: The executive director is finishing his inaugural review of our finances and we will get a recommendation from the staff based on that, because he started doing that as soon as he started working here. He hit the ground running and he's still analyzing what the landscape is going to look like for the coming fiscal year. And then we are going to figure out how we can do that.

Mrs. Stewart: If you do agree and we pay for it ourselves, you will give us our money back... Right?

Raj: What do you mean?"

Mrs. Stewart: The conference is next month, so if I do want to go?

Marvin: the conference is next month....but the bid

Mrs. Stewart: I'm just saying...if you do say yes lets' send one person and we pay for it out of the funds we have you will give it back to us? Right?

Marvin: As stated during the last board meeting the chairman had made the commitment that he would send one and I supported that. We will send one person from the TAB and you all will make the decision as to who will represent the group at the conference. We will talk more about that at my meeting with the Tab on the June 10th.

Mrs. Stewart: that is great! I didn't know that...

Raj: One person in total

Mrs. Stewart: I understand!

Marvin: One representative from the TAB.

Mrs. Stewart: Oh it's not one person per site

Raj: No

Marvin: No

Mrs. Stewart: Oh I didn't know that either....

Raj: It's one person for the TAB.

Mrs. Stewart: Okay, Okay

Mrs. Stewart: Will talk about that at the TAB too.

Marvin: Yes we will talk about it.

Mrs. Stewart: I'll be there!

Marvin: Great

Raj: That we can do so without the amendment to the Travel Policy.

Marvin: yes....yes....yes...that's no problem.....

Mrs. Stewart: thank you,

Raj: thank you Mrs. Stewart....

Marvin: the next speaker I have is Sonya Coleman, Resident at Booker T. Washington

Sonya Coleman: Hello Hi everyone my name is Sonya Coleman, I am employed at Hudson County Welfare, I am a case worker...the last week I have had clients come in telling about they pay PSEG bill to housing....Hudson County Welfare is not accepting it...you have to have a PSEG bill and I know these people are telling the truth....but higher ups are saying no...so that's the problem, because if you pay PSE&G bill they give you more food stamps because you are taking from your cash....But in housing they are not giving these people their credit...they can't get it because as is always been told housing pays their own gas & electric...these people are saying no to these

people and I know these people are telling the truth....so I don't know how this is going to work out...because this old man was crying so bad and I felt bad for him...but what can I do because that is the rules, the rules of Hudson County Welfare...

Marvin: Your question, Is it true does the Housing Authority pay utilities on behalf of the residents?

Sonya Coleman: I'm not asking? I'm just telling you what these people are going thru...because if I live outside and I pay a PSE&G bill and I bring the actual bill there they take the numbers and put in a system...a check is sent to PSE&G for that resident for that gas and electric...whereas with housing you telling meAnd some people have a paper saying they pay excess utilities...they are not going for that...that is what I am trying to get out...of the feedback...they are not agreeing to that...

Raj: the Welfare Office...

Sonya Coleman: yes, yes there not....there saying no....

Commissioner Abdullah: so there are not paying for the public services you're saying...they have to come from low income...

Sonya Coleman: Right!

Commissioner Abdullah: so who does the public service money go to?

Sonya Coleman: Okay, say I had a PSE&G bill

Commissioner Abdullah: no, no who does housing resident where does the money go to pay for public service? Our office here?

Sonya Coleman: to the office...where we pay out rent....

Mrs. Stewart: to Commissioner Abdullah you didn't know that, you left ahead of time...

Sonya Coleman: yeah, yeah, so that's a big....you know what I am saying...I'm not saying you can't do it but these people are saying no....

Marvin: Okay well let me just say...here's the facts...there are some properties where the housing authority pay the utility and some properties where the tenant is responsible for paying the utilities and they get a utility allowance...that's the facts....okay not sure which property are referring too but it varies from property to property.

Sonya Coleman: Right

Marvin: So i don't know what the scenario is that you are presenting but if the tenant is responsible for paying utilities, than they can follow thru to what you just stating but if there not paying utilities there not going to have a bill to show.

Sonya Coleman: right but if you charge them...for excess utilities and I'm taking it and paying you \$50 to \$75 dollars and I'm taking that out of my low income...no...listen to me...

Marvin: If that is the issue I see what is happening.... You taking the housing authorities bill that states excess utilities and trying to get them to pay ...they are not going to pay that...because that is not utilities...the housing authority has the right per the HUD regulations to charge excess utilities because understand, I think we talked about this a little bit at one of the community meetings, if you have multiple air conditioners as well as other high energy requirements in your unit then you as a resident will be responsible for paying the excess charges.

Sonya Coleman: Okay so now I'm going to use me...me as the example ...

Marvin: Okay.

Sonya Coleman: All my air conditioners were gift, my washer machine was a gift, my dryer was gift, so these things were given to me now I'm held accountable for it...I work but someone who is getting 322 and they are going to give you because I gave them a washing machine or I gave them a dryer...or I gave them an air conditioner how will they get their money?

Marvin: Mrs. Coleman that's not the responsibility of the housing authority. What the housing authority is responsible for providing you the unit in a suitable condition to live. It's your decision as a tenant should you decide and go and get the multiple other items that would require you to be responsible for paying excess utilities...the housing authority we will not cover the excess utilities...that's in accordance with the ACOP and the lease and if you are lease compliance....you have to pay.

Sonya Coleman: so that's what you are saying... we are going to find some people dead in some of these apartments because older people because they don't know when their bodies are over heating because they can't afford to pay for an air conditioner...

Marvin: That's not what I'm saying.

Sonya Coleman: basically that's what saying being said... Because I'm just ...see I can pay for my gas and electric...I can pay my excess utilities my whole thing is everybody else is not as fortunate...and I see this people coming up here with these and you know people crying and really trying to explain this to case workers and case workers saying well I'll go see my supervisor and the supervisor said no...no

Marvin: But the piece I want to make sure you understand is the reason why they are being told that because that is not utilities...that's excess utilities that the housing authority charges the tenant for having multiple electrical units in their apartment.

Sonya Coleman: I understand that

Mrs. Stewart: the problem is the housing authority is not giving us a bill...saying that we pay this monthly because if you give me a bill and I'm paying 75 dollars excess utility a month I'll take that letter to PACO or welfare I get more food stamps or something because its showing that I'm paying for something, but housing authority is not giving us nothing...

Marvin: Let me investigate that concern.

Mrs. Stewart: that is what she is saying...

Marvin: If that's what you are saying that you just need to have a bill in order to provide proof that we charged you for the excess utilities.

Sonya Coleman: yes

Marvin: I think that something we can do but let me investigate that okay...

Raj: maybe, it might be worth looking into if it's a wide spread issue it might be worth seeing what the county office exactly needs

Marvin: as proof

Raj: Yea, yeah it might be a verification issue.

Commissioner Abdullah: not only that before we move on I was just talking to the chairperson I was saying to myself...they don't have units like Lafayette Gardens have their own units their own gas and electric bill um I don't know whether Currie Woods whether you it have your own unit? Do you guys? Do they pay their gas & electric bill?

All guest response no, no housing authority does....

Commissioner Abdullah: or whatever, so does Duncan or the rest of them...well Booker T and Holland these complex don't have so that's not to me as a commissioner and resident commissioner, I always state that is not fair...so again, i know you are going to look into it and Patricia is going to look into it and maybe Raj and probably vice chair but it needs to be really be looked into because I can't see that happening when there is no gas or electric meters on site.

Marvin: What I can tell you is this and it's a shame I don't have it here, the HUD regulations clearly states, that "excess utilities is allowable" we can bill for excess

utilities because HUD knows that when we pay these utility bills we are paying them on behalf of the residents and some instances some residents have more electrical units such as air conditioners and deep freezers and they contribute to the increase in the utility bill...Commissioner Abdullah I understand that...for the record you feel that excess utilities is allowable but you don't feel it's fair ...I know that's your opinion and I respect that... but we are abiding by the regulations...and the regulations states we can do it...if we don't charge excess utilities then we are going to have an extremely high utility bill that we have to pay and then that is going to come from the operating subsidy which will reduce down the amount of funds available to operate the property...so it is not a win/win on both sides unfortunately, but that's the reality.

Commissioner Abdullah: I understand that...

Marvin: so we made the decision to enforce it and it's in the ACOP and allowable...it is something that it's being done across the country even in other housing authorities.

Commissioner Abdullah: But executive director it's the new units.

Marvin: No it is not the new units...these are the older properties. Primary the older units now let us say this and I'm going to close after this....For example, Commissioner Abdullah, at Glenview those individual units you can have multiple air conditioners in the windows if a tenant desires and they will get the utility bill directly as they are responsible for paying their own utility bill. We cannot consider charging them excess utilities.

Raj: because we have six minutes left in the public speaking portion we are going to ask the next three remaining speakers to limit their comments in a discussion of two minutes each...so next is Christoria Smith, Lafayette Village...

Ethel Jones, Chairperson: Booker T. Washington, Excuse me Raj it is my go now okay!

Raj: but you said you wanted to go at the end...Ethel Jones I said after my residents...Raj: that right you did say that

Ethel Jones: I'm Ethel Jones I always do that I like my residents to speak first...um so far everything is going good but when are we going to get a plasterer do we have a plasterer we need a little bit more help because we are having an inspection and we want to get a high grade so they don't have to come back again...and if ...I want to make sure that the guy who did the doors he did them right this time because you know we had that incident with the door problem and I could have knocked him out...(laughter) because you rush and sent him down there and the doors were all messed up...you know but other than that...and that little meeting we are supposed to have tomorrow you can settle that today Patricia okay after the meeting...I can speak with you guys...

Ethel Jones: Alright...Okay

Marvin: thank you

Raj: thank Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Smith, not present okay...Mr. Townsend of Lafayette Village and finally Kyleen Martin, Lafayette Village not present...okay any other public speakers....seeing any.

Raj:

We will move on to start the Agenda um do we have a motion to move item no# 1 out of convenience to the public motion to move item #1 which is a close caucus to the end of the Agenda...Commissioner Abdullah I make a motion....Moved by Commissioner Abdullah, second by Vice Chair Jones...seeing no discussion we will close it by unanimous consent.

Please call the ROLL:

There being no questions, comments, or discussion Mr. Walton took the roll. Commissioner Abdullah, yes Commissioner Kitchens, yes, Commissioner Kukula, I, Vice Chair Jones, I and Chairman, Mukherji, I.

Raj:

ITEM #2: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING MAY 6, 2015

Chairman Mukherji read aloud this Resolution authorizing the acceptance of the minutes of the Board of Commissioner regular meeting held on May 6, 2015.

Do we have a motion on the minutes...?

Commissioner Abdullah, I make a motion on the minutes...

Raj: Moved by Commissioner Abdullah

A motion was made by Commissioner Abdullah and seconded by Commissioner Kitchens.

There being no questions, comments, or discussion we will close it and call it a roll.

Mr. Walton took the roll. On Roll Call Vote, Commissioner Abdullah, yes, Commissioner Kitchens, yes, Commissioner Kukula, yes, Vice Chair, Jones, yes and Chairman, Mukherji, yes...

Chairman Mukherji do I have a motion to place Items #3 - #9 which are all the remaining items on this evening's agenda, and moved to a consent agenda.

Moved by Commissioner Abdullah:

A motion was made by Commissioner Abdullah and seconded by Commissioner Kitchens to move items #3 - #9 onto a consent agenda.

Raj: that is read the items in record that is items 3-9.

ITEM #3: RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF JERSEY CITY APPROVING ACCOUNTS PAYABLE FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE, 2015

No questions or comments

ITEM #4: RESOLUTION APPROVING AN ADDITIONAL SIGNATORY TO THE JCHA'S BANK ACCOUNTS

No questions or comments

ITEM #5: RESOLUTION CONFIRMING EXECUTION OF THE TERM OPTION CLAUSE TO SUPERIOR WELDING COMPANY FOR WELDING SERVICES "AS NEEDED" AT VARIOUS JCHA OWNED DEVELOPMENTS FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR.

No questions or comments

ITEM #6: RESOLUTION CONFIRMING AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO EXCELSIOR PLUMBING CO., INC. FOR EMERGENCY REPAIRS AT BERRY GARDENS.

No questions or comments

ITEM #7: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO FALLON & LARSEN TO CONDUCT A FISCAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT OF THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION CORPORATION PROJECT #4138, ARLINGTON GARDENS, FOR THE PERIOD OF 04/01/14 TO 03/31/15.

No questions or comments

ITEM #8: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO FALLON & LARSEN TO CONDUCT A FISCAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT OF NEW

JERSEY HOUSING & MORTGAGE AGENCY PROJECT #1099, 254 BERGEN AVENUE, FOR THE PERIOD OF 04/01/14 TO 03/31/15.

No questions or comments

ITEM #9: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL TRAVEL BY JCHA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF TO ATTEND DESIGNATED TRAINING WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES.

No questions or comments

Raj: those are the items being moved to the consent agenda...seeing no discussion we will call the roll.

Mr. Walton took the roll. On Roll Call Vote, Commissioner Abdullah, yes, Commissioner Kitchens, yes, Commissioner Kukula, yes, Vice Chair, Jones, yes and Chairman, Mukherji, yes...

Raj: do we have a motion on the consent agenda comprise of items 3 thru 9 on this evening meeting agenda... the items were previously read into the record.

Raj: Motion on the consent agenda: Moved by Commissioner Kitchens and seconded by commissioner Abdullah.

Raj: Any item on the consent agenda is open for questions or comments or discussion.

Going once, going twice, we will close it by unanimous consent and call the roll:

Mr. Walton took the roll. On Roll Call Vote, Commissioner Abdullah, yes, Commissioner Kitchens, yes, Commissioner Kukula, yes, Vice Chair, Jones, yes and Chairman, Mukherji, yes...

Raj: consent agenda carries and we will go with matters of information before we go into close caucus.

Marvin: Thank you, just a couple of items I would like to bring to attention of the Board. Something I stated we would do at the last meeting and would make available to the public, I would like to present each of the discussion items we had at the last Board meeting with the status. The same thing will happen after each Board meeting. We will make this available to you so if anyone wants a copy you can hang around we will make

sure you get a copy. It just shows you the status of all the issues discussed at our last Board meeting and the status of those discussions. This will be made available to everyone at the Board meetings.

Commissioner Abdullah: Awesome!

Raj: Mr. Walton on behalf of the board, we certainly commend you for the transparency, and we think it will be helpful to keep the public inform on what were some of the things we are working on. Commissioners all agree....very professional!

Mr. Walton: In addition to that, I would like to just make an announcement our next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 1, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. same time and same location.

Commissioner Abdullah: I will be in Paris, I will not be here.

Mr. Walton: As well is the community calendar for the month of June 2015, which has been published and will be distributed. Also, I would like to bring to the Board's attention that the REAC Inspections for Berry Gardens were completed on Monday, June 1st. This property received a 77 physical score last year and I am excited to announce that we received a 94 for this year's inspection.

Commissioner Abdullah: What site was that Berry Gardens?

Marvin: 94 a great job, just want to take the time to congratulate the Asset Management Team under the direction of Patricia Madison. They did a great job. The Property Manager for Berry Gardens is not present tonight, but she and the staff are doing a fantastic job as well.

Patricia: I would let her know.

Marvin: I also would like to report to the board that this is beginning of my sixth week here and I have visited every single public housing property and attended their community meeting. During this time I had great dialogue and conversation and as I have stated to them my mission is simple and that is to keep the residents engaged, educated and empowered and I am for that and I will continue to do just that. I am not only saying it but you are going to see in my actions as well. Looking forward to working and continue to build a relationship with the Resident Councils. I have a meeting with the TAB coming up on the 10th and looking forward to some great dialogue there as well.

Commissioner Abdullah: Is that it?

Marvin: thank you yes.

Commissioner Abdullah, great!

Raj: do we have a motion on item number 1 which was moved to the conclusion of the Agenda:

ITEM #1: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A CLOSED CAUCUS REGARDING PERSONNEL MATTERS, LITIGATION AND GRANT STRATEGY

Commissioner Abdullah would like to make a motion:

Raj: Moved by Commissioner Abdullah and seconded by Vice Chair Jones, we throw a third in there for commissioner Kitchens because I think there were multiple seconds at the end of the table.

Open for discussion seeing none we will close by unanimous consent. We will call the roll:

Mr. Walton took the roll. On Roll Call Vote, Commissioner Abdullah, yes, Commissioner Kitchens, yes, Commissioner Kukula, yes, Vice Chair, Jones, yes and Chairman, Mukherji, yes...

Chairman Mukherji stated, "We will not be returning to conduct business in any public portion of the meeting, this will conclude the public portion of this evenings meeting. We thank the public for attending.

Meeting ended at 6:50 p.m.