

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF JERSEY CITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING – JULY 1, 2015

PRESENT: VICE CHAIRMAN, Reginald Jones
COMMISSIONER, Aneesah Abdullah
Commissioner, Hector Fuentes
Commissioner, Freddie Kitchens
Commissioner, Thomas Kukla

COUNSEL: Mitchell L. Pascual, Esquire
Chasan Leyner & Lamparello, PC

STAFF: Marvin L. Walton, Executive Director/Secretary
Patricia Madison, Deputy Executive Director
Steven Cea, Director of Development and Design
Joyce Worthington, Director: Dept. of Compliance & Technical Support
Patricia Ramirez, Director of Rental Assistance Program
Eilleen Ingram-Willis In-House Legal Counsel Resident
Carmen Carrillo, Assistant Secretary to the Board
Gloria Cousar, Accounts Payable
Vicki Guingon, Human Resources Director
Allison Ford, Asset Manager at Booker T. Washington

Absent: Chairman, Raj Mukherji

Meeting commence at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting commenced with Vice Chair Jones calling the meeting to order with Roll Call:

Marvin: Commissioner Abdulla, present, Commissioner Kitchens, present, Commissioner Kukla, present, Commissioner Fuentes, present and Vice Chair Jones, present and Chairman Mukherji, let the records reflect that he is absent today.

Vice Chair Jones: can we commence with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Walton opened with the Public Meetings Act after the Pledge of Allegiance. 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.

Mr. Walton: before we entertain the speakers for the evening I would like to introduce our newest board member Mr. Hector Fuentes, who has been appointed by the Mayor's office and blessed by City Council. I would like to give him an opportunity to talk a little bit about himself and his excitement about working with the Jersey City Housing Authority.

Commissioner Hector Fuentes: good evening everyone, I would like to thank the Mayor, City Council and the Housing Authority Board for giving me an opportunity to serve the people in Jersey City and the residents. I work for the Laborers in the National Union in which training is done around the state and training is provided for the residents in different housing authorities to ensure when construction projects are in process they are given the opportunity to be a part of it. We also have a comprehensive training in furniture program because unlike other individuals, residents in the housing authority in different cities are able to work in these projects. As a person working directly in this organization we have throughout the state given out the opportunity to hundreds of individuals to come in and take advantage of the programs that we actually provide. I am very happy that Jersey City is the most progressive housing authority throughout the state, and I am very happy to be here. Thank you so much, looking forward to working with the residents of Jersey City and the housing authority.

Marvin: thank you and welcome aboard.

Mr. Walton: Vice Chair Jones, we have four speakers for this evening. Before we get started, I would like to introduce a Resident Public Participation Form that will be used going forward for the public participation portion of the agenda. Currently, if residents would like to speak at the Board meetings, they would place a call to the Property Manager and ask to be placed on the list to speak. We develop a form which will be located in each of the management office at each property. Residents will be required to complete the form and leave it with the management office. The management office will send the form to ED's Office and will be placed on the speaking agenda. This is being done, so we can have a record of the speaking request and so the housing authority can be made aware of what will be discussed in case we need to bring documents to the board meeting. In this case, we can be better prepared to address the issue(s) that are being addressed. I would also like to take the time to explain to the residents who address the board; Board meetings are a public forum, if you want to discuss a specific topic or make comments at the meeting you may do so. This is an open meeting and any resident can come and you don't have to be on the speaking list to come to this meeting. We only ask that if you are planning to address the Board that the Resident Public Participation Form should be completed and given to the property manager. They will make sure it is given to us here the central office, so that we can have you on the agenda to speak.

With that said we have four speakers and the wonderful thing is that all four are from Booker T. Washington:

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

Ethel Jones: As I always say, I would like for my residents to speak first I would like to speak last. Mr. Walton stated okay great we can do that we will refer to you last.

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

Next speaker: Robin Stewart: Trustee Booker T. Washington, Hello everyone, Would like for the board of commissioners to back Booker T. Washington with City Hall about getting a tall net installed by the railroad track which is in the back parking lot of the building, (the annex building). My car window was broken by a flying ball and it was parked. I had to replace the glass window. It has been three weeks since I've been to the Mayor's office from a public meeting and although they are going to pay for it, my car was parked and I just came from church and if a resident didn't informed me, I wouldn't have never known where it came from and no cared to notified me. We definitely need a net; they have broken a total of twenty five windows within a past fifteen to twenty year period. Commissioner Abdullah stated, what do you mean by net? It is a tall net like the one by 440 and Duncan Avenue in which the balls are caught and stopped. It was an inconvenience to me, it was raining and I had to go outside and put plastic until I was able to repair the glass. My sons were unavailable to help they were working with police department. I also went and stopped the game in the field letting them know what had happened. I am asking for your support in the doing this. Moving along, Booker T. Washington has asked a while back to Mrs. Patricia Madison regarding the nit for the mice which are too many and tenants are complaining about the mice. What is the status with using peppermint oil or utilizing an exterminator?

Patricia Madison: a while ago the residents had suggested a peppermint oil that would detour the mice from coming and I have done some research with that and especially with Rutgers University it was stated that it would not really work so instead what was done at that time we had the exterminating company come out and they bated all the basements, than they try to abate each apartment. Notices were sent out to the residents; very few apartments were they able to get into in the whole site. I had also sent staff to plaster and fill up the wholes. Mrs. Robin Stewart stated you do not have a plasterer to go around to all of Booker T. Patricia replied you do not need a plasterer. Mrs. Stewart replied, we need a plasterer bad do we not manager! The manager stated we have a plasterer. Mrs. Stewart asked are you behind plastering jobs and do you have more men? The manager replied, we are on it are you asking about pulling the cabinets off the walls? Mrs. Stewart replied no I left that subject alone a long time ago. I am requesting for someone to come down and try something else to get rid of the mice instead of ignoring it. Mr. Walton responded with okay. It has been an issue for a while Commissioner Abdulla stated that she remembers six months ago half the residents not just from Booker T but from Marion and Curries Woods. There is a tremendous amount of mice running around all the complexes just like in the schools. Patricia you recall

besides the peppermint oil you were also going to try to get the exterminator out to put some decon (destroys the mice). I had a problem with one my houses I owned and we do not have the mice problem any longer it is called icon. You put them in the little tray and before the mice can get to smell it they go away. It does work however, you have constantly use it and it is a tremendous amount of money. But the icon is good but this has not been a two month or three month issue, this has been ongoing and I know you have addressed it.

Patricia: I will tell you and to be honest with you we have constantly sent our own in house exterminators, the exterminating companies outside and with the construction of the warehouse that is near the property across, it have caused a lot of issues to come up again. It seems like whatever we are doing with outside third party companies the mice are still getting in so I can't tell you what the solution is we can go to the professionals. If we are still having this problem I can look into this icon food. Commissioner Abdullah replied it is called i-con it is really good. Patricia stated we are willing to try anything Mrs. Stewart replied, please because the mice keep coming back. I will be here next month again if the problem persists. Patricia, okay. Mrs. Stewart, the next item I would like to discuss is to find funding for one or two trips per site this summer. This is July did you work on supplying us with a bus so we can plan on something for the kids. Commissioner Abdulla ask where will the kids go? Mrs. Stewart stated you have Bear Mountain, Zoo, Wildwood, Skating and Camel Back Park. At least one trip on a nice bus.

Mr. Walton replied, what I am going to request is that we coordinate with the Tenant Affairs Board. I am aware that we cannot use the tenant association funds for these types of activities as I have stated at previous board meetings. The lack of HUD funding prevents the housing authority from conducting these activities. The funds that we have being used to address the pressing issues at the properties. It is so unfortunate that we can't use those funds to do those things needed for the kids. Mrs. Stewart replied I found the funds. Marvin stated you found the funds? Mrs. Stewart replied I am going to tell you where they are? They are from the rentals per site (community room) it is just a suggestion. Marvin state we certainly appreciate that but you understand, because of the major physical needs we have at the properties any funds that we have coming in from the community room rentals as well as any funds we receive from HUD, we are using to address those issues at the properties first and foremost. However, I am willing to work with the tenant associations to identify at least one major activity for the summer and we will see if we can allocate some funds to assist with getting that accomplished. However, we are going to be consistent with that, any funds that we receive we need to address those pressing issues, like you mentioned you have issues with the mice. I am going to visit the site and see about the mice problem. There are a number of companies out there that we can bring in to do an assessment and figure out how we can rid the property of the mice issue. My primary concern is making sure that the environment in which you live is safe, decent and sanitary so that you can live a decent life. That is where I am putting all the resources that we have to use first. Mrs. Stewart replied, by thanking Mr. Walton very much.

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

Sonya Coleman I am very happy with what is going on so far and I do not have much to say, however, I would like to comment with the rest regarding the mice. The long pipes in the apartment which are going from one apartment into the other from top to bottom have a space in between there and mice are crawling up and down or going up that is how they are getting in. I have placed steel wool and broken glass between the spaces and anywhere where there was a hole, I used some plaster. When the kitchen cabinets were replaced with shorter ones the wall was left exposed and soft which allowed the mice to eat thru the wall allowing them inside the apartments and in between the walls traveling in and out. Mr. Walton replied, so the mice are inside the units? Mrs. Coleman replied, yes they are eating right thru the wall.

Marvin: we going to look into that because like I said there are a number of vendors

Mrs. Stewart replied they get into the cove base as well and her son stated that is where they are coming from.

Marvin replied: I will be visiting the property tomorrow and doing an assessment. We get an extermination contractor that is experienced to provide us with a possible solution to addressing the problem because no one wants to live in those conditions. I will definitely take a look at that.

Last but certainly not least Mrs. Ethel Jones

Ethel Jones: we have a trap wall in our units and that is where these mice are probably coming from that can be the problem too. I am so glad that we have the men down there to do some of the work and there are some residents out there with them and I am happy it is working out pretty good and I am happy that you are giving us an update, it is a difference because it keeps us inform on what is going on because the seniors would get annoyed not knowing who is coming on the site doing what. I would like to let you know that we doing a lot with our children with no money, we have the lunch program and a young lady doing arts and crafts, movie night. We also had two teen parties as well as a black and white affair. We provided a nice tea party for the seniors. The next party is based on super heroes and we would like to invite the commissioners and staff of Jersey City housing authority to show the residents that you interact. The manager participated in a past event playing musical chairs. We would also like to do something with Jersey City Police officers to interact with the community and children. Thank you very much.

Marvin asked Vice Chair Jones I would like to give the representative of Booker T. Washington and update on the boilers. I am going to refer to my staff Mr. Steven Cea who newly joined the agency as the new Director of Development and he is going to give you and update as to where we are with the boilers.

Mr. Cea: good evening, I was present today as some of you were aware. The housing authority is on schedule. As a matter of fact we are ahead of schedule with the physical stuff the units are being cleared out of asbestos, tiles and they are getting prepped for us to be able to install the new furnace. In fact, one of our contractors has agreed to do work before they even get paid so that we are not delaying the process. That is the good news the bad news is we are dealing with the hmfa and they just take their time and they do not care about the boilers or anything they really don't. Their attorney that are helping us is pushing forward. It is my understanding that the closing for the financing is supposed to take place at the end of July. We try for the beginning of July but there were delays on the attorney side.

Commissioner Abdullah: This has to be ready by the winter we are not going to go thru with the resident like we did with Maria Maio its going to be cold and they need heat.

Mr. Cea: No and this is the plan, the executive director wanted all the furnaces in before the winter started, unfortunately that cannot be done. But there is a solution; the problem is there is one continuous loop throughout the entire project with one furnace. The furnace is on its last leg, the problem with the furnace is that it is been stressed because of so many buildings.

Mrs. Stewart: 8 & 9 are not part of that because when we had heat & water issues and someone from the office had to come down and turn it on manually.

Mr. Cea: but it is all on one loop. The problem is that 8 & 9 are the last buildings. Here is the solution received from the contractor the other day. It is anticipated that buildings 8 & 9 will be completed before the end of October 2015, 8 & 9 are the most important. The next building which is the building that has the furnace is 4. Those three are going to be complete before December 2015. 8 & 9 before October and 4 by the beginning of December. That should alleviate all of the major stress giving us adequate heat. That being said that does mean we do not want new furnaces because that one furnace is really shot, it's working but not efficient, not effective, and so after that buildings 1 & 3 will be completed during the winter. Now how this works I'm not sure but I will question the contractor because I want to make sure the residents have heat. You can't turn off a furnace; we are going to figure that all out. But the contractor stated it is not a problem the heat goes off for half an hour while they switch it. I want to see that in practice with our architecture. The last ones come in April, May and June. By next year they will all be done. But by this year we should have adequate heat. I was promise this by the experts, by Simmons and promise by the contractor. The contractor we have has assured me that this will work. Logistically, if I tried to put them all in at once you can wind up with no heat anywhere and that is a major problem. So the way they are preceding now is a fail-safe. You put one in if there is a problem there you still have the rest to get heat. The next one goes in and you still have a problem you can still work it out so that everyone still has heat. If you do them all once and there is a problem nobody has heat and that is a real issue. Logistically that is why they have to been done this way.

Mrs. Ethel Jones: I can understand, however 1 & 3 are going to be an issue because those buildings are full of seniors.

Mr. Cea: I was told once 8 & 9 are on their own separate lines and 4 that 1 & 3 will work better. But 1 & 3 are the next one in line after 4

Maria Serrano: as a Booker T. Resident I live right next door how much noise is going to be replacing the boiler?

Mr. Cea: New boilers are a lot quieter than old ones and they are a lot smaller and much more efficient. It is not what you anticipate like those big boilers in the basement.

Mrs. Stewart: Will they give us ample notice before they begin to turn the boilers on?

Mr. Cea: Yes, you will be given more than adequate notice.

Ethel Jones: Mr. Walton my last question, when they proceed with building 8 & 9 once completed I would like permission to enter and see the job completed and assure it is also sound proof like it was stated.

Mr. Walton: Okay, we will do a tour.

Mr. Cea: I will make a note of that to address that issue with the contractor regarding the sound proofing.

Mr. Walton: for the record, I want to make sure we are clear I made an attempt to try to get them all completed before the winter. I went up in the chain of command with the contractor and they were realistic with me and explained that it is just totally impossible. Even if we had someone working in each building at the same time it still cannot be completed. I attempted to do that because I do not want the resident going through what they went thru last year. I wasn't present but I did read the minutes from the previous board meetings and it was totally unacceptable. But we are going to do all we can and I think is a very good plan that is in place because once we remove the stress, and I believe 8 & 9 were contributing to the majority of the stress, but once we get them on their own boilers, I am sure you are going to see the difference totally on 1 & 3 on temporary basis until we can put the new boilers in those buildings. Okay.

Mrs. Coleman: My question is the nobs on the radiator do not work. We need to make sure that the valves are working too so the resident do not complain. When the guy came to fix it he took the pin out.

Patricia: what we normally do before the heating season begins is test the heat. Please if it is not working at that time let us know! Once the heat is on it makes it difficult to fix. You do not have the pin out, they can adjust that pin. But once the

heating season commencing and we do the testing that is the time to let us know than we can address all issues. They should be working.

Mr. Walton: that concludes the public speaking of the board meeting.

Vice Chair Jones:

We will move on to start the Agenda 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...

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

Commissioner Abdullah I make a motion...Moved by Commissioner Abdullah, second by Commissioner Kitchens 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 Kukla, yes, Commissioner Fuentes, yes and Vice Chair Jones, yes.

Vice Chair Jones:

Do I have a motion to place Items #2 - #8 which are all the remaining items on this evening's agenda, and moved to consent agenda.

Vice Chair Jones read items 2-8 for the record.

ITEM #2: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING JUNE 2015.

No questions or comments

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 JULY, 2015

Commissioner Kitchens had a comment regarding accounts payable.

ITEM #4: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO DELL MARKETING, LP FOR THE PURCHASE OF COMPUTERS, TABLETS AND LAPTOP.

No questions or comments

ITEM #5: RESOLUTION CONFIRMING AN AWARD OF AN EMERGENCY CONTRACT TO TOYAL DISASTER RECOVERY, INC. FOR THE REMOVAL OF DEBRIS AND REMEDIATION OF BASEMENTS AT MARION GARDENS.

No questions or comments

ITEM #6: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL TRAVEL BY JCHA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF TO ATTEND DESIGNATED TRAINING WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES.

No questions or comments

ITEM #7: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION FOR PROJECT BASED VOUCHERS UNDER RENTAL ASSISTANCE DEMONSTRATION FOR THE UNIICO TOWERS PROJECT.

No questions or comments

ITEM #8: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A LONG TERM LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF JERSEY CITY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE SPACE AND INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL SPACE IN BUILDING #8 AT MARION GARDENS FOR AN INITIAL TEN YEAR PERIOD.

No questions or comments

Vice Chair Jones: these are the items being moved to the consent agenda do I have a motion:

Moved by Commissioner Abdullah:

A motion was made by Commissioner Abdullah and seconded by Commissioner Kitchens to move items #2 - #8 onto a 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 Kukla, yes, Commissioner Fuentes, and Vice Chair, Jones, yes.

Vice Chair Jones: Any item on the consent agenda is open for questions or comments or discussion.

Commissioner Kitchens: yes, on item number 3, accounts payable what is East River Energy?

Vice Chair Jones: what is the check number?

Commissioner Kitchens: 2638 and also you go on the second page 2685, 2686, 2687, is this excess utilities?

Mr. Walton: good question, there is a CD that we provide our comptroller is not present today, the representative from accounting would you know what East River is?

Gloria Cousar replied I do not.

Mr. Walton: I have the CD in my office allow me a few minutes during close session I will go and provide you with the information. I can take an educated guess at it but I prefer not to I like to be exact. I have detail to it and can show you.

Commissioner Kitchens: Okay

Commissioner Abdulla: Patricia do you have any comment on this particular item?

Patricia: No I do not have that information with me right now. So I will not be able to respond.

Mr. Walton: I will have an answer for you commissioner once I look at the CD. CD has a detail to show what the check is issued for. I am sure it is for energy I can tell you that.

Commissioner Kitchens: looking at them it is five in total.

Marvin: any other questions?

Vice Chair Jones: do we have any questions or comments on the consent agenda if not we will close. Roll call please:

Mr. Walton took the roll. On Roll Call Vote, Commissioner Abdullah, yes, Commissioner Kitchens, yes, Commissioner Kukla, yes, Commissioner Fuentes, and Vice Chair, Jones, yes.

Vice Chair Jones: do we have a motion to close the consent agenda items 2 thru 8 on this evening meeting agenda... the items were previously read into the record.

Vice Chair Jones: Motion on the consent agenda: Moved by Commissioner Abdullah and seconded by Commissioner Kukla.

Mr. Walton took the roll. On Roll Call Vote, Commissioner Abdullah, yes, Commissioner Kitchens, yes, Commissioner Kukla, yes, Commissioner Fuentes, and Vice Chair, Jones, yes.

Mr. Walton: We have a few items for matters of information. I would like to report to the Board communiqué received by the housing authority since the last Board meeting. The first item I would like to present is a letter received from the HUD Newark's Field Office approving the long term lease agreement with the City of Jersey City. This item is a Resolution for the Board agenda this evening and that is for the administrative building #8 her at the Marion Gardens property. This facility will house the Department of Public Safety and the Office of Emergency Management Homeland Security for the City of Jersey City. Now that the board has approved the resolution it moves on to City Council to be presented as an Ordinance and will require two readings. The plans are to have one reading in July and one reading in August and soon after the Lease Agreement will be executed and they will occupy the building.

The second piece of communiqué received the appointment of our newest Board member, Mr. Hector Fuentes, who introduced himself earlier in the meeting. In addition to that we also received letter from the New Jersey Housing Mortgage and Finance Agency that Mr. Cea spoke about earlier. This Agency is providing the financing the boilers at Booker T. Washington. We put in a request to the Agency to increase the contingency line item in the budget. The request was approved.

The final piece of communiqué is a great announcement to report to the Board that we have five voucher holders in our Housing Choice Voucher Program that have reach that plateau of self-sufficiency. They are graduating from the Family Self-sufficiency Program effective June 2015, and I would like to read their names: Rene Jackson, Tara Rowley, Aida Ayala, Joyce Davis, and Diana Thompson. The Graduates declined the invitation to appear at tonight's Board meeting but in the future we will make it a requirement to have a public graduation and we can present those checks at that time. They are buying things such as cars; some will we be continuing their education; one is opening a boutique and one obtaining their fire safety certification. That concludes my matters information.

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

Item #1 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A CLOSED CAUCUS REGARDING
PERSONNEL MATTER, LITIGATION AND GRANT STRATEGY.

Commissioner Abdullah would like to make a motion:

Vice Chair Jones: Moved by Commissioner Abdullah and second by Commissioner Kukla.

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 Kukla, yes, Commissioner Fuentes, yes, Vice Chair Jones, yes.

Vice Chair Jones: 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 7:00 p.m.