

**HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH OF CLEMENTON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
JANUARY 7, 2015**

Salute to flag.

Chairperson Nicholson called the January 7, 2015 meeting of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Clementon to order at 6:03PM and announced that the meeting has been properly advertised and posted pursuant to N.J.S.A., 10:4-6, the Open Public Meetings Act. The meeting was held in the Community Room of Wooster Towers located at 22 Gibbsboro Road, Clementon, New Jersey. Upon roll call the following were present: Commissioners Casella, Nicholson, Schmidt, and Watson. Also present at this meeting were William J. Harris, Executive Director, Anthony Ogozalek, Jr., Solicitor, Barbara J. Murray, Secretary, and Lia Cater, former Commissioner. Absent: Commissioner Porter.

MINUTES

Chairperson Nicholson asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2014 Board of Commissioners meeting as submitted. Commissioner Schmidt asked for an amendment to the minutes removing Lia Cater from the roll call vote because her term expired prior to the December 3, 2014 meeting and adding her to attending the meeting as Lia Cater, former Commissioner.

Commissioner Watson, seconded by Commissioner Casella, made a motion to amend the minutes of the December 3, 2014 Board of Commissioners Meeting removing Lia Cater's name from the roll call vote due to her term expiring prior to the December 3, 2014 meeting and adding her to attending the meeting as Lia Cater former Commissioner. Voice vote: All ayes.

Commissioner Watson, seconded by Commissioner Casella, made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2014 Board of Commissioners Meeting with the aforesaid changes. Roll call vote: Ayes: Commissioners Casella, Nicholson, Schmidt, and Watson. The motion carried.

BILLS

Commissioner Watson, seconded by Commissioner Casella, made a motion to approve the bills for Public Housing and Section 8 dated December 5, 2014 thru January 8, 2015 with proper certification. Roll call vote: Ayes: Commissioners Casella, Nicholson, Schmidt, and Watson. The motion carried.

Chairperson Nicholson turned the meeting over to Mr. Harris.

MANAGEMENT

New Commissioner Appointment

Mr. Harris advised the Board that William Dougherty, who was appointed by Borough Council to fill the unexpired term of Chris McKelvey, was unable to attend the meeting today and be sworn in due to a family emergency. Hopefully Mr. Dougherty will be in attendance in February.

Occupancy/Tenant Relations

Mr. Harris advised the Board that as of January 5, 2015 69 of our 70 units were leased up; we were notified the same day that another tenant who was in the hospital would not be returning to his apartment.

The following is a list of activities and events that have been provided for our tenants:

- 1) December 11th – Delicate Health Agency conducted a workshop for the tenants
- 2) December 15th – We hosted a Christmas party for our tenants which was attended by about 50 tenants along with the CHA staff. Everyone appeared to enjoy the food that was provided by Anthony & Cleopatra Caterers and the entertainment by a local DJ.
- 3) December 23rd – A local resident, Gil Bovell, and his two children treated the tenants with candy and cookies and also played and sung Christmas songs with the tenants. About 15 tenants participated in this event.
- 4) December 31st – The Tenant's Association hosted a New Year's Eve party in the Community Room.

Mr. Harris also advised the Board that the Perfecting Ministries Church has invited our tenants to make placemats for the clients of the Cathedral Kitchen in Camden in celebration of Martin Luther King Day. This event will take place here in the Community Room at Wooster Towers on January 19th.

Section 8/HCV Program

Mr. Harris advised the Board that the number of Section 8 participants in December remained at 44 households.

Exterior Walls Joint Sealant Replacement Project

The pre-construction meeting with JPS Construction has been scheduled for January 8th and if all the contractor's documents are in order, Habitech Architects will issue a Notice to Proceed.

Common Area Roof-Mounted Heater

Mr. Harris advised the Board that specifications are being prepared by PHM Associates for a replacement unit and that we anticipate going out to bid by the end of January. This project will be funded through our Capital Fund Program.

2015 HUD Budget

Mr. Harris advised the Board that he has received information from HUD that the funding for Public Housing will remain the same as last Federal fiscal year and that for Section 8 there is a 73% pro-ration on administrative fees, which basically means that we will be asked to do more with less money.

Financial Status

Mr. Harris referred to the Profit & Loss Statement as of November 30th which shows that we are operating with a deficit of about \$20,400.00, which is currently being covered by our reserves. Mr. Harris stated that we should be alright for the remainder of this fiscal year but we need to be mindful of our costs; HUD does not want the housing authorities to have a significant reserve on hand.

Mr. Harris advised that our accountant, Joe Kavanaugh, is preparing our operating subsidy calculations which are due at the end of January and will have the information available for review at the February Board Meeting. Mr. Harris noted that nothing is finalized until HUD approves the budget.

Travel Policy Discussion

Mr. Harris advised that along with the three travel policies from other housing authorities that were included in the meeting packet, Commissioner Schmidt has done some research and has information from some other local housing authorities in South Jersey as well.

Commissioner Training

Mr. Harris advised that with regards to the training class that Lia Cater still has to take, we have two options:

- 1) A one-on-one class at a time convenient for both the instructor and Ms. Cater with a cost of \$3000.00.
- 2) Wait for the Spring semester course to be held by Rutgers (which should be offered two times during the semester) with a cost of \$600.00. The Spring course schedule should be out within the next few weeks.

Mr. Harris suggestion is to wait for the Spring course semester and have Ms. Cater take the course then.

A discussion followed.

Solicitor Ogozalek advised that the only decision the Authority has regarding this matter is whether or not the Authority will pay in advance for the course and that will have to be decided by vote. Solicitor Ogozalek further stated that once Ms. Cater completes and passes the course she can then be reappointed by Borough Council if they chose to do so.

Commissioner Watson asked whether or not Mr. Harris should send a letter to Ms. Jenai Johnson at the Borough of Clementon to make them aware of the two open positions on our Board and what we would like to do with regards to Ms. Cater taking the last class. Mr. Harris advised that he sent a letter to Ms. Johnson to which they responded with the appointment of William Dougherty to fill the unexpired term of Chris McKelvey.

HAI Group Life Insurance

Mr. Harris advised that the staff and the Commissioners of the Housing Authority have been offered Group Life Insurance by HAI at no cost to the Authority. Mr. Harris asked that if anyone was interested the only thing they needed to do was to fill in their birth date on the form provided.

OLD BUSINESS

Amendments to Policy & By-Laws

A discussion took place regarding a review of our current travel policy and current By-Laws to propose any amendments necessary for clarification. The Board unanimously agreed that Mr. Harris and Commissioner Schmidt would review the Travel Policy and By-Laws and present their recommendations to the Board at the February meeting.

COMMENTS FROM CHAIRPERSON NICHOLSON

Chairperson Nicholson commented that the reports that Mr. Harris prepares and sends with the Board packets are very informative and that he has brought a lot of good things to Wooster Towers over the past year.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

PUBLIC


Lia Cater said that she intends to stop in at a Borough Council meeting to let them know her intentions of taking the required class and hopefully being reinstated to the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

COMMENT FROM COMMISSIONER SCHMIDT

Commissioner Schmidt wished everyone a Happy New Year and hopes the coming year is a good year for the Housing Authority. Commissioner Schmidt added that the Board has done a lot for the residents here but there is still a lot of work to be done; he looks forward to a productive year for the Authority.

Commissioner Schmidt, seconded by Commissioner Casella, made a motion to adjourn at 7:30PM. Voice vote: All ayes.

Respectfully submitted,



William J. Harris
Secretary

Correction to January 7, 2015
Meeting Minutes

The following text is a summary of certain Board members comments that were omitted from the original draft of the January 7, 2015, meeting minutes as suggested by Commissioner Schmidt:

"The Board then discussed the request by Mr. Harris to pay the \$600 cost for former Commissioner Lia Cater to attend her last required course at Rutgers to be fully qualified as a Commissioner and to be re-appointed by Borough Council.

There was discussion over whether the Council would, in fact, reappoint Ms. Cater even if she did take the course. Chairman Nicholson stated that we were making an exception in requesting that Ms. Cater be re-appointed. He also stated that Commissioner Porter will probably be resigning soon since she moved to Florida. He added that there are other residents in the Borough who are qualified to fill these two vacancies and should be considered.

The Chairman then stated that had had sent an email to all Commissioners before the meeting about his concerns on this re-appointment and conducting Board meetings where one or more Commissioners are participating by phone. In that email he also asked Mr. Harris to retrieve the By-laws on the wording regarding the State requirement for completing the Commissioners courses in 18 months from appointment and what the status is of a Commissioner who failed to do so.

Mr. Harris then read the relevant passage from the By-laws which stated that a Commissioner has been "Deemed to have resigned" if the courses were not completed in the 18-month time frame. He also summarized his conversation with a Deputy Attorney General at the Department of Community Affairs who had stated that the requirement is statutory and cannot be appealed to the Commissioner of DCA as in the case of an administrative regulation.

Commissioner Schmidt then accused the Chairman of playing politics with the Authority and added that we may not be able to survive in the next two years.

Chairman Nicholson responded that his opinion on seeking other individuals to sit on the Board was not a reflection on Ms. Cater or her dedication to the Authority and the community. He then added that everything that the Board does has been questioned since Commissioner Schmidt became a member.

Commissioner Watson asked if Ms. Cater can be reappointed if she passes the fifth course.

Mr. Ogozalek added that this permissible. The legal issue is whether or not the Authority should pay in advance for Ms. Cater to take the course.

Commissioner Casella asked Mr. Ogozalek if other agencies have had to address a similar problem. Mr. Ogozalek was not aware of a similar case with another Housing Authority. Commissioner Casella then commented that he thought Borough Council would support the payment.

Mr. Harris added that we are in fact saving \$2,400 since it would cost the Authority \$3,000 to send a new Commissioner for the training.

Chairman Nicholson reminded everyone that there is no exception to the 18-month rule. Mr. Harris responded that Council do so and that the statute is silent on who is required to pay for the course of a candidate who is not a sitting Commissioner.


Chairman Nicholson then expressed his concern that two Commissioners live out of town and having meetings by phone adds confusion to the proceedings. He then opened the meeting to the public.

Ms. Cater expressed her continued interest in being reappointed to the Board and stated that she had expressed that to members of Borough Council both privately and at a public meeting.

Seeing no other members of the public present, the Chairman then closed the public portion of the meeting.

Commissioner Schmidt then asked to make one comment before adjournment. He wished everyone a Happy New Year and hoped that this would be a good year for the Authority. Due to our financial condition he has contacted individuals in the Borough to seek other revenue streams for the Authority.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William Harris". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

William Harris

Executive Director

March 27, 2015