

**MINUTES OF THE ASBURY PARK HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING HELD AUGUST 12, 2019.**

The session convened at 6:06pm with the following persons present:

Present:

Chairman Gregory Hopson, Sr.
Vice Chairman Frank Syphax
Commissioner Angeline Brown
Commissioner Donna Troppoli
Commissioner Carol Torre

Absent:

Commissioner Charlotte McAllister

Also Present:

Thomas Sahlin, Executive Director
Qaasim Johnson, Director of Housing
Edwin McDonald, Director of Maintenance
Lester Taylor, Esq., Legal Counsel

Required Public Notice read by: Thomas Sahlin

NOTICE: In accordance with the Local Public Meetings Act of 1975 and as amended, advanced notice of the meeting including the Agenda, was sent to the local newspapers, delivered to the City Clerk's Office, and posted at all Asbury Park Housing Authority Offices at least (48) hours prior to convening the meeting.

Salute to the Flag led by: Thomas Sahlin

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

**(Motion to Open Public participation moved by Chairman Hopson and seconded by
Commissioner Troppoli.)**

Thomas Sahlin – As it is customary, we will open up to Public Participation. Please be advised that there is a three minute rule for speaking. Please give your name and address.

Bertha Durant, Robinson Towers – Cleanliness of building and elevator; not enough handicap parking.

Thomas Sahlin – The elevator modernization is underway. After the permits are filed, they will be onsite, taking the elevators down and rebuilding them. In regards to janitorial issues, I've met with our Director of Maintenance. We are making some adjustments in that area because we realize there are some short falls there.

Bertha Durant – What about extermination? Will they be coming around more than monthly?

Thomas Sahlin – We are fine tuning their schedule. We've run into a few housekeeping issues. We are working with those residents to gain control over the issues. In regards to the street parking, I will talk to someone over at city hall in regards to handicap parking.

Kevin Dawson, Robinson Towers – Slop Sinks, Garbage disposals, and the cleanliness of the building. Also, the appearance of the building is not welcoming.

Thomas Sahlin – We are working with the maintenance staff and making some changes to make things better. We just have to make sure we do not create gaps in time and work. It is the responsibilities of the maintenances staff and we are taking care of it.

Edna Bowens, Robinson Towers – The day room was not open during the time when there was a heat wave. Everybody cannot afford air conditioners. The seniors did not have access to the air conditioning in the day room.

Thomas Sahlin – We have the on call maintenance staff on the weekend set up to open the day and laundry rooms.

Edna Bowens – No one is opening the day rooms at all.

Thomas Sahlin - Thanks for bringing that to our attention.

Timothy Clayton, Asbury Park Village – Concerns with trespassing, safety of the residents, drug activity, trash on the premises, and landscaping concerns.

Qaasim Johnson – When it comes to the activity at any site, your first line of defense should be to call the local Police Department. If you see anything that you deem to be illegal, if you are intimidated by any situation, reach out to the Police Department. The more of a paper trail that is created, helps us on this end for those troubling residents. If we don't have anything to substantiate the claim, we can't inforce our rules and regulations.

Thomas Sahlin – The misconception is that when someone calls the police, they are required to give their name and address but that is not the case. I know that a lot of people are fearful of retaliation because of the gang activity over at the Asbury Park Village. Until we have a police report, our ability to take action is very limited. We are in constant contact with the Local Police Department, no matter the hour. Whenever there is an incident, we are notified right away. But, until that first step is taken and the police intervene, it very difficult to take action and have is stick in a legal sense.

Crystal McClain, Robinson Towers – Concerned about the elevators and safety; the resident directory Update.

Stephanie Esdaile – I created an electronic file for the updated residents. I am waiting for one move in and it will be updated by the end of the week.

Thomas Sahlin – It will be updated monthly, moving forward.

Thomas Sahlin – With elevator number 2 going down, the elevator maintenance came out to trouble shoot the issue and for safety reasons they took it out of service due to the sensors and rollers. We will continue to do the repairs to the elevators until the new company comes in.

Glenda Walker, Robinson Towers – Concerned about the Updated Resident Directory, bicycle restrictions, and access to the laundry room and social room on the weekends. No one is opening the social room on the weekend. I will volunteer to do it.

Thomas Sahlin – We have given very clear directives to our staff that that was supposed to be taken place and now that you’ve brought it to my attention that it is not happening, we will deal with it.

Annette Harrell, Asbury Park Village – Concerned with the constant changes in the Board of Commissioners and no problems from the past are being fixed, safety issues, hoarders, problems with Unit 309, subleasing of apartments unlawfully, maintenance issues, pest issues, and drug activity.

Edwin McDonald – We are trying.

Annette Harrell – You’re not trying enough. You have to do better than try. You have to fix the problems. That’s why housing is the way it is. People are not getting it right. It takes a whole, not just one person. Everyone has to be on the same page.

Commissioner Brown – With the Tenant Associations, did all residents receive that notice?

Thomas Sahlin - Yes.

Annette Harrell - I received the letter but I did not sign anything because I feel like I’m not getting the assistance that I need so I’m not going to join anything yet until I feel as though it’s deserved. I believe that if I’m going to give service, I should receive the service that required for us residents. It should be even and fair. I’m undecided for other reasons, it has nothing to do with housing.

Commissioner Brown – I have spoken to this Board already and they are on it. In fact, Monmouth County Prosecutors were out there today. I spoke to them a few weeks ago. Asbury Park Police Department is on it too. It’s only a matter of time.

Thomas Sahlin - I would just like to comment on the criminal activity. There are a lot of police officers in Asbury Park, some better than others. You also have some very dedicated officers and the once I am referring to are the ones we are on the phone with 1am-2am talking about things. We also cannot comment on the legal status of certain units. A few weeks ago, we had 14 people at the satellite office from the Monmouth County Prosecutors office. All hands are on deck now. The MCPO is realizing there is a problem at the Asbury Park Village and in that general area.

Qaasim Johnson - There is no question that there is an issue. There are some systemic societal issues that have been there for a long time. It’s not solely on the APHA to fix those issues. While we play a role because we are a part of this community as everyone in this room does, we have to recognize that in order for change to happen, it has to come from within. It doesn’t matter how many different policies and procedures we put in place and how much police work gets done. Until the mindset of the people in the community shifts and changes, we are going to continue to deal with these same issues. So, people like you that have made up your mind that “I’m done and not going to tolerate it”, we can begin to voice and be active in the community as you’re doing now, assisting those that don’t have the right mindset. Until we get people to stand up and say “enough is enough”, we are going to continue to deal with these issues. Tom, myself, and the current Board know the issues that are there. We are doing everything in our power to eradicate them. Unfortunately, whenever you are dealing with any government entity, things take time. And we can’t not just snap our fingers and say “This is the trouble unit” and it’s fixed tomorrow. It just doesn’t work that way. Everyone has rights that we have to abide by because the last thing we would want is for someone to think that the APHA is wrongly evicting people.

Lester Taylor, Esq. – Respectfully Ms. Harrell, we’ve heard your comments and a lot of others have voiced similar concerns. The administration and Board is responding and will be responsive.

Commissioner Brown - Do we still offer to send people to get treatment for Substance Abuse? We did not put them out. They had to go to a Drug treatment facility and they also had to keep a certain status after treatment in order to keep their apartment.

Thomas Sahlin - Was that an outside drug treatment program or was it funded by the Housing Authority?

Commissioner Brown - I believe we paid for it. But you would have to go to the residents and let them know we have that available. I know at one time we did. Also, there was a time when we helped women that were battered. If we are going to be a community, we have to look at what we can do and what we can't do. So we were able to help women sustain their apartment but they had to attend Battered Women Programs.

Thomas Sahlin - Some of the things you are speaking of, they are societal problems. A big part of that is partnering with the Social Service Agencies that already exist that specialize in these things.

Commissioner Brown - That's why we need a Resident Coordinator, as I've said many times before. That's what this person would do. We need to go back and see if we can find when we did offer these programs. I don't see where it would hurt.

Al Rowley, Robinson Towers - Wanted to thank the Board for the letter to residents advising who the Administrative staff is and their numbers, would like to volunteer to give out numbers for the food bank every first Wednesday of the month, and gaining access to the social room on hot days.

Qaasim Johnson – The issue has been this: There has been a lot of unorganized chaos when the food bank comes. So, to keep the safety of our residents in mind, Ms. Mildred has volunteered to give the numbers out. When people come down, they receive their tickets. The person who was in line already, they give their number, get their food and go on. Whatever is left over, those that did not receive a number is able to help themselves at that time. That is the only way to keep order.

Commissioner Brown - Is that in writing?

Qaasim Johnson - The food bank suggested it. Mildred has been here and volunteered to organize it. The residents are aware.

Linda Rice- Ramadan, Robinson Towers – Concerned about the pest control, maintenance, and extermination follow ups.

Thomas Sahlin – Thank you.

Geraldine Wright, Robinson Towers – Concerned about pest control issues.

Commissioner Torre - What area are you speaking of?

Geraldine Wright - The common area, by the mailboxes. The bench that is there.

(Motioned to close Public session moved by Vice Chair Syphax, seconded by Commissioner Brown.)

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD JULY 8, 2019.

(Approval of the minutes was moved by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Syphax.)

Ayes- Commissioners Brown, Troppoli, Torre, Chairman Hopson, and Vice Chair Syphax

Opposed- None

Absent- Commissioner McAllister

Abstain- None

RESOLUTION 08-01-2019 - RESOLUTION APPROVING EXPENDITURES FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 2019, INCLUDING SECTION 8 EXPENDITURES.

(Acceptance of this Resolution was moved by Chairman Hopson, seconded by Commissioner Troppoli.)

(There were no further discussions or comments on this Resolution from the Commissioners.)

Ayes- Commissioners Brown, Troppoli, Torre, Chairman Hopson, and Vice Chair Syphax

Opposed- None

Absent- Commissioner McAllister

Abstain- None

RESOLUTION 08-02-2019 - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF A FEE ACCOUNTANT SERVICES CONTRACT TO POLCARI & CO., WITH AND OPTION TO RENEW FOR ONE ADDITIONAL YEAR

(Acceptance of this Resolution was moved by Chairman Hopson, seconded by Commissioner Troppoli.)

(There were no further discussions or comments on this Resolution from the Commissioners.)

Ayes- Commissioners Brown, Troppoli, Torre, Chairman Hopson, and Vice Chair Syphax

Opposed- None

Absent- Commissioner McAllister

Abstain- None

RESOLUTION 08-03-2019 - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF AN AUDITING SERVICES CONTRACT FISCAL YEAR END MARCH 31, 2020 TO HYMANSON, PARNES & GIAMPAOLO CONTRACT, WITH AND OPTION TO RENEW FOR ONE ADDITIONAL YEAR

(Acceptance of this Resolution was moved by Chairman Hopson, seconded by Commissioner Troppoli.)

(There were no further discussions or comments on this Resolution from the Commissioners.)

Ayes- Commissioners Brown, Troppoli, Torre, Chairman Hopson, and Vice Chair Syphax

Opposed- None

Absent- Commissioner McAllister

Abstain- None

RESOLUTION 08-04-2019 - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH THE CITY OF ASBURY PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL POLICE PATROLS AT ALL AUTHORITY'S SITES

(Acceptance of this Resolution was moved by Chairman Hopson, seconded by Commissioner Troppoli.)

(There were no further discussions or comments on this Resolution from the Commissioners.)

Ayes- Commissioners Brown, Troppoli, Torre, Chairman Hopson, and Vice Chair Syphax

Opposed- None

Absent- Commissioner McAllister

Abstain- None

RESOLUTION 08-05-2019 - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT AMENDMENT BETWEEN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ASBURY PARK AND EMG FOR THE PHYSICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR LINCOLN VILLAGE AND ASBURY PARK VILLAGE

(Acceptance of this Resolution was moved by Chairman Hopson, seconded by Commissioner Troppoli.)

(There were no further discussions or comments on this Resolution from the Commissioners.)

Ayes- Commissioners Brown, Troppoli, Torre, Chairman Hopson, and Vice Chair Syphax

Opposed- None

Absent- Commissioner McAllister

Abstain- None

RESOLUTION 08-06-2019 - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ASBURY PARK AND LTW, LLC FOR CCTV SOFTWARE UPGRADE AND THE PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT CAMERAS

(Acceptance of this Resolution was moved by Chairman Hopson, seconded by Commissioner Troppoli.)

(There were no further discussions or comments on this Resolution from the Commissioners.)

Ayes- Commissioners Brown, Troppoli, Torre, Chairman Hopson, and Vice Chair Syphax

Opposed- None

Absent- Commissioner McAllister

Abstain- None

Motion to close, moved by Chairman Hopson, seconded by Vice Chair Syphax.

All in favor.

Meeting Adjourned, 7:15 p.m.



Thomas Sahlin, Executive Director

9-9-19

Date