

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners**  
January 9, 2017

The Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Bridgeport met in a Special Meeting at 150 Highland Avenue, Bridgeport, CT, on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of December 2016, the place, date and hour duly established for the holding of such meetings Chairperson Andrews called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

The Recording Secretary stated that this meeting is being conducted in conformity with the Open Public Meeting Act. Notice of this Special Meeting was faxed to the City Clerk Office.

**Present:**

Chairperson Cowlis Andrews  
Vice Chairperson Hadassah Nightingale  
Commissioner Richard Garcia

**Absent:**

**Commissioner** Theresa Ramos

**Also Present:**

James A. Slaughter, Interim Executive Director  
Sean Bagot, Senior Legal and Compliance Analyst  
David Ghio, Interim Director of Planning, Modernization & Development  
Caroline Sanchez, Contract Specialist  
Rafael Villegas, Chief of Security  
Jeff Zimmerman, Director of Information Technology  
Deborah Woodson, Executive Operations Administrator/Meeting Recorder

**Asset Management Staff:**

Tiffany Maldonado, Director of Asset Management  
Monica Ratley, Harborview Terrace  
Sharon Nelson, Scattered Sites  
Irma Ross, Marina Village  
Loretta Fuller, PT Barnum  
Maria Rivera, Fireside Apartments  
Mayra Ramirez, Trumball Gardens  
Vicky Ocasio, C.F. Greene Homes  
Diedre Perry, Resident Selection

Motion was made by:           Commissioner Garcia  
Seconded:                       Commissioner Nightingale

[James Slaughter] Roll Call:

Commissioner Nightingale   Present

Commissioner Garcia	Present
Commissioner Andrews	Present
Commissioner Ramos	Not Present

[James Slaughter] Chairperson we have a Quorum.

Chairperson opened the floor for Public Comments

[Commissioner Andrews] Do we have a list of for public comments?

[James Slaughter] We do not, but we can certainly open the floor to those who want to speak to the board.

[Commissioner Andrews] Let's proceed with the Public Comments

### **Public Comment #1**

[Bette Cook, RAB President] Good Afternoon, I have several things that I would like to talk about concerning all the sites. First, I would like to bring to your attention that Managers are renting apartments that are not complete. And when residents complain about something going wrong, you don't want to hear it. All units should be completed and a walk through should be done. The managers need to walk through these apartments and inspect them to make sure that they are complete and ready to be rented. Let them know what you are going to do and what you are not going to do. We have had tenants that have had the cops called on them two or three times at scattered sites. There was an incident at the scattered sites and one of the residents called the police. A resident that goes off when she doesn't take her medication and her son lives with her. Her son beat her up once and should not be on housing property. This woman went knocking on the ladies apartment on the first floor. The lady called the cops twice and the third time; she was taken to the hospital, brought home and was taken back to the hospital for further observation. Not only is she a danger to herself, but she is a danger to the tenants.

[Bette Cook, RAB President] I called Mr. Slaughter after a new resident complained to me about his apartment not being ready and there were no blinds and people could see inside of his unit.

[James Slaughter] Confirmed that he went to Strafford Avenue after receiving a call from Ms. Cook regarding a unit that was not complete but had been rented. There were no blinds on the windows.

[Commissioner Andrews] Who is the manager at the scattered sites?

[James Slaughter] Sharon Nelson.

[Commissioner Andrews] Can you tell us why the apartment was rented and it was not complete?

[Sharon Nelson] I had informed the new tenant that the blinds had to be ordered and he was okay with that. The blinds have since then been installed and the tenant is satisfied with his apartment.

## **Public Comment #2**

[Karen Bracey, Trumbull Gardens] Someone got killed in Trumbull a few years ago and we were promised security. The housing authority can people \$120,000 a year and can't take care of its residents. I would like to address problems we are having and have been having for years, which is lack of heat and this is a danger to our residents. I would like to thank my site manager Mayra and Jed my foreman for taking care of the incident that occurred on Thanksgiving Eve.

[Commissioner Andrews] Who is your site manager?/

[Karen Bracey] Mayra Ramirez is my site manager and my foreman is Jed.

[Karen Bracey] We have been doing without a/c and heat at the gym. This problem has been going on for 5 – 6 years and has been reported to the Executive Office. Since there has been no heat, our children are running around, playing basketball and they have to wear gloves and hoodies. Housing finds money for everything else; let's find some money for that.

Since I have been president of Trumbull Gardens Resident Association, I have also seen managers putting residents in apartments that are not completely fixed. I would like to know how you justify putting residents that are living on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor with children and there are no screens on the window for safety.

[Commissioner Andrews] I would like a direct response to your question.

[Karen Bracey] Again, I don't see why we can't get screens, yet, the housing authority can give someone a \$10,000 raise.

I would like to know where the (US) money is going?? Does it go to the general fund?? Where is the money going? We have bins that are used to collect used clothing. Where is the money going? Mayra do you know??

[Mayra Ramirez] Responded No.

[Karen Bracey] It's a big box and people put their clothes in there. We have four of them. Money was to go to Trumbull Gardens. What is that money being used for?

[Karen Bracey] Lastly, I am not going to sit here and allow Reggie Walker to get hired by PCC to run our gym. I will raise so much hell if he is hired to run that gym. I will call all the news stations. I have been running Trumbull Gardens without getting paid and I am fine with that. I am thankful that my kids have a safe place to go,

[Commissioner Andrews] What is US?? We didn't see anything on the Finance report.

[Commissioner Andrews] At the last meeting there were issues regarding the doors and locks, has this been resolved? I was told that the locks had been installed and that cameras were on the way.

[Jeff Zimmerman] The back door should be closed at all times and only used as a means of egress for emergencies. We need to look at installing cameras in the lobby and the funds could be used on our Capital Funds.

[Commissioner Andrews] Where do we stand with the key fobs?

[Mayra Ramirez] I am in the process now of programming the key fobs and should be done by the end of the month. At that point, the key fobs will be given to the residents.

[Commissioner Andrews] So are you telling me before our next board meeting, the building should be secure?

[Mayra Ramirez] Yes.

[Bette Cook, RAB President] May I speak ? I want to address concerns regarding Bernadette Brooks. She moved out of PT Barnum to scattered sites. And now they are trying to make her move back to PT Barnum.

### **Public Comment #3**

[Bernadette Brooks, 293 Nichols Street] I have been living in PT for 9 years. I submitted a doctor's note that says I can't do stairs. I have a child with autism and another child with a physical disability and my family just wants to live in a safe environment. We moved from PT because we had a conflict with my neighbor and for the safety of my children. I don't like how some of the managers talk down to me, like they think they are better than me. I already spoke with Tiffany, and me and her are on good terms. I am tired of managers talking down to me

[Commissioner Andrews] I understand, that has happened to me too. We are going to fix all that.

[Diedre Perry, Resident Selection] Ms. Brooks put in a Reasonable Accommodation request in on 12/8/2016 for a one-level unit. She currently resides in Scattered Sites in a multi-level unit. Her third party verification states that both her and her husband should be in a first floor unit or somewhere where there are elevators. Based on the response from her doctor her request was approved on 12/20/16 by Seon. On 12/23/16 she was offered a unit in PT Barnum which would be the only place where we have a unit to meet her accommodation.

On 1/5/2017 Ms. Brooks submitted another RA request, which is currently pending.

Are there any further comments?

**Public Comment #4**

[Ed Eaton, City Developer] I was the first minority developer in the City of Bridgeport. I have assisted with homeownership funding for Public Housing Authorities and Churches. I would like to assist in providing new housing. I would like to work with the housing authority to explore new ways of utilizing funding to help the housing authority. I know that HUD is constantly cutting back on funds and I would like to discuss this matter at another time with the Board of Commissioners and the Executive Director. I would be glad to answer any questions you may have. By way of background, I grew up in the Strafford Housing Authority. I have a lot more information that I could share with you tonight, but I don't want to take up all of your time.

[Commissioner Andrews] Are there are other public?? If not, we are going to close the Public Comment Period.

[Comm. Andrews] Is there a motion on the floor to approve the minutes?

Approval of the Special Meeting Minutes from December 14, 2016

Motion was made by: Commissioner Garcia  
Seconded: Commissioner Nightingale

Roll Call:

Commissioner Nightingale Aye  
Commissioner Garcia Aye  
Commissioner Andrews Aye

Motion Carried: 3 – 0

Approval of the Special Meeting Minutes from December 21, 2016

Motion was made by: Commissioner Garcia  
Seconded: Commissioner Nightingale

Roll Call:

Commissioner Nightingale Aye  
Commissioner Garcia Aye  
Commissioner Andrews Aye

Motion Carried: 3 – 0

Secretary's Report:

[James Slaughter] What I provided for you is a list of activities for December 2016. I would like to highlight three issues that we have.

1. OIG Audit Meeting:

We are going to be engaging in a series of conference calls with HUD staff from the Hartford Field Office, PCC Department Directors and Becky Gligo of Nan McKay. We will be working on some of the issues that have been raised in the OIG Audit. We are working very cooperatively with HUD staff to address those items. Staff has already started working on their responses to the OIG Audit. Commencing January 17<sup>th</sup> we will begin a series of conference calls or in person.

[Commissioner Andrews] Please make sure that you communicate something to the Board so that we understand where this is going. I think that is a great idea!

2. The policing plan for C.F. Greene Homes

We are working very closely with the City and have engaged in weekly conference calls to discuss pilot program providing supplemental police services to Greene Homes. What you have tonight is an exceptional agreement subject to approval by the City and HUD. We are working out the terms of the agreement for the police to provide security services at a couple of our family properties.

[Commissioner Andrews] So we are looking to model this also at Trumbull and PT Barnum.

3. Staff Training

We started with the Reasonable accommodations training that has already been provided to the Asset Management, HCV and Planning and Development Staff. Everyone participated in the training provided to staff. This was a good initial step

4. Commissioner's Training

As part of the January Recovery Agreement, Commissioners must participate in training that has been mandated by HUD. We need to know your availability to that you can be set up for training, during the day or evening. We will certainly work around your schedule.

- Leading the Way Training
- Roles and Responsibilities of the Board
- Fiduciary duties of the Board
- Procurement
- Ethics
- Employee Relations
- Financial Management
- Public Housing Programs

Reminder: HR gave the board some documents that need to be read, signed and returned. They include Disclosure Form, Emergency Information etc.

This highlights my report. If you have any other questions, I will be glad to answer any other questions.

[Commissioner Andrews] Do we need a motion to accept the Executive Director's report? /

[Seon Bagot] No, it's not necessary.

[Commissioner Andrews] Discussion of Bills and Communication/Reports

### **Finance and IT**

[Commissioner Andrews] I have a question regarding Finance.

[James Slaughter] Unfortunately, our CFO had a family emergency and could not be here this evening.

[Commissioner Andrews] I think we are okay with the budget. We are trending.

[Commissioner Andrews] Commissioner Garcia do you have any questions regarding the budget?

[Commissioner Garcia] No. I am good.

Report Stood

### **PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION:**

Report Stood

### **Procurement:**

[Commissioner Andrews] I saw something about a Collection Agency??

[Caroline Sanchez] We were looking at collections in terms of uncollected rents.

[Commissioner Andrews] Why not go to small claims Court. Whether it's Southwest or ABCD, those are fights that you don't want to have. More specifically, because they service our tenants. We want to work with our tenants and not go the Debt Collection route. We don't even know where some of the leases are, so to go after someone for debts owed. We need to develop better relationships with our tenants.

[James Slaughter] We are having conversations with Southwest and ABCD and setting up budgets.

[Commissioner Andrews] Some of our folks don't make a lot of money and get hit with daycare costs. Let's understand the global aspect of what we are doing. So before we get involved with any collection agencies, let's talk to our residents.

### **Property/ Asset Management**

[Tiffany Maldonado] We are working in the right direction. I have only been in this position for three and one half weeks. The numbers are going down as far as our TAR's. We are moving in the right direction.

[Commissioner Garcia] Seon I am looking at your report on the Pre - Termination Notices. I don't see anything for rent collection?

[Seon Bagot] We set up repayment agreements with residents that owe us rent. If they violate the terms of the agreement we process them for eviction. There was a small dip in the numbers due to the holidays. The Marshall was not evicting families during the holidays. Now that the holidays are over we are back in full force with the evictions.

[James Slaughter] We are working with tenants that are willing to pay their past due rents.

[Seon Bagot] Without the use of a Collection Agency, there are no other avenues to recover rent that is owed to the housing authority. Unless they apply for housing at another PHA, and we will catch them through debts owed.

[Commissioner Garcia] What about small claims?? Are we pursuing them through small claims?

[Seon Bagot] No, we are not pursuing resident in small claims court.

AMPS: Rent Collections:

[Irma Ross – Marina Village] I noticed after the holidays the rent collections have picked up.

[Commissioner Andrews] Are we trending up?

[Diedre Perry, Resident Selection] We used to have a Resident Coordinator who work with the various Social Service Agencies. That position was eliminated two years ago.

[Commissioner Andrews] Can we offer assistance?

[Maria Rivera] I can use assistance with my building at Fireside. I am dealing with Seniors/disabled residents.

[Tiffany Maldonado] We will be applying for the ROSS grant.

[Lorretta Fuller, PT Barnum] I have noticed an increase in the December rent collections; the sheriff has been effective in serving residents with evictions notices. I noticed that one residents saw that other residents being evicted, other residents starting paying their rent. Some of the residents that usually pay after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month are paying earlier.

When a unit becomes available, I inspect that unit with my Assistant Housing Manager and other staff. Before we offer the unit, I inspect that unit with my foreman. The Housing Manager and Assistant Manager are responsible for making sure the unit is ready to rent.

[Maria Rivera, Fireside] My foreman informs me when the unit is ready to be inspected. We inspect the unit together prior to the unit being rented out.

Monica Ratley, Harborview] I do a dry run to make sure that units are complete and ready to be rented.

[Commissioner Andrews] Mr. Slaughter and Tiffany please stay on top of the rent collections and make sure that everyone is following the proper procedures when it comes to renting apartments.

[Sharon Nelson, Scattered Sites] I will admit that I did show a unit that had missing blinds. I advised the tenant that the blinds had been ordered and would be put in. The tenant agreed to take the apartment and wait on the blinds to be installed.

[Betty Cook] This applicant called me to complain about the blinds and the switch plates were taped up.

[Commissioner Andrews] What happened why the unit wasn't complete?

[Sharon Nelson, Scattered Sites] Only the blinds were missing and the applicant has moved in and is satisfied,

[Commissioner Andrews] Are they any other reports?

[Ralph Villeges, Chief of Security] I am still going from site to site checking on the various locations. Harborview could use more lighting.

Report Stood

**Legal:**

Report Stood

[Commissioner Andrews] Are there any more questions on reports? Since there are no more questions or reports. Let's move to the Action Items.

**Action Items:**

1. RESOLUTION APPROVING THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT'S MAINTENANCE PLAN.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Nightingale, Garcia and Andrews  
Nays: None  
Abstention: None

The Motion carried: 3 – 0 - 0

2. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A PILOT PROGRAM BETWEEN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT AND THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT FOR SUPPLEMENTAL POLICE SERVICES IN THE CHARLES F. GREENE HOMES APARTMENT COMPLEX IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$160,000

Roll Call:

Ayes: Nightingale, Garcia and Andrews  
Nays: None  
Abstention: None

The Motion carried: 3 – 0 - 0

3. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXTENSION OF CONTRACT WITH NAN MCKAY AND ASSOCIATES, INC. FOR THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY SUPPORT IN HCV DEPARTMENT FOR THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS FOR A PERIOD OF THREE MONTHS AT THE NOT TO EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$14,672.00.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Nightingale, Garcia and Andrews  
Nays: None  
Abstention: None

The Motion carried: 3 – 0 - 0

4. RESOLUTION WAIVING THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE CALENDAR YEAR 2017 ANNUAL MEETING BE HELD IN JANUARY 2017 AND REQUIRING THAT THE CALENDAR YEAR 2017 ANNUAL MEETING BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 13, 201

Roll Call:

Ayes: Nightingale, Garcia and Andrews  
Nays: None

Abstention:               None

The Motion carried: 3 – 0 – 0

Meeting Adjourned: 6:50 p.m.