

Board of Commissioners – Housing Authority of the Town of Morristown
Board Meeting Minutes
200 South Street-4th Floor, Morristown, NJ 07960
March 27, 2023 – 6:00 pm

Board of Commissioners

Martha Ballard, Chairperson
Luma Oweis, Vice Chairperson
Nohemy Zabala, Commissioner Present Via Phone
Tina Lindsey, Commissioner
Derrick McCoy, Commissioner
Laura Lutz, Commissioner
Eva Turbiner, Commissioner - Absent

Housing Authority

Keith Kinard, Executive Director
Allison Durham, Deputy Director
Frank Borin, Esq., MHA General Counsel Office

Town of Morristown Officials

Mayor Timothy Dougherty – Absent
Mr. Robert Iannaccone, Town Council Liaison

Call to Order

Board Secretary Kinard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was properly noticed under the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act. Roll call was taken and Chairwoman Ballard, Commissioners Oweis, Lindsey, Zabala, McCoy, and Lutz were present. The flag was observed.

Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence Observed

Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 27, 2023

Commissioner Lutz stated there are items she raised at the February 27 meeting but are not written in the meeting minutes summary and asked that they be added. The items to add are: Her attendance at the Bright Discovery meet and greet at the resident center; the lack of tenant attendance at the meet and greet; suggestion to utilize a mass text messaging mobile cell application called Text-em-all to let tenants know about events and other points of interest. Commissioner Lutz further asked for an explanation on the difference between the two law firms that work for MHA. Mr. Kinard noted that one specializes in landlord-tenant cases and performs their work on a hourly fee basis and per filing cost; the other serves as the Agency's General Counsel and handles all other matters for the housing authority and works on a retainer each month. Chairwoman Ballard stated that the minutes will be revised and asked for approval with the revised items in the meeting summary. Upon a motion by Commissioner Oweis and seconded by Commissioner Lutz, the minutes with the revised items stated by Commissioner Lutz of the February 27, 2023 Board Meeting were approved. Chairwoman Ballard, Commissioners Oweis, Lindsey, Zabala, McCoy and Lutz voted in favor.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Kinard reported on the following items:

The change of the weather at this time of the year normally brings about complaints from senior residents on it being too hot or not hot enough in the apartments. It appears that the new air temperature controls

added during the renovations is helping to address individual needs better as they can turn on more heat or cool air in their apartments to their liking. Many of the apartments at 31 Early Street have been renovated. There has been really positive feedback from the 31 Early Street residents so far on the changes in their apartments. The work continues on the second and first floors. The contractor is also conducting work on the lobby and the community room. Residents can still make their way to the laundry room during this work. Exterior façade work also continues at 31 Early Street. At 39 Early, some landscaping and parking area work may begin this month. MHA also anticipates the work in the units to begin at 39 Early in April. HOU is currently working on meeting with each household there to make their relocation to the hotel and back as smooth as possible. At Manahan Village, the contractor has begun work on some of the vacant apartments to create mock-up units to better gauge the extent of the work needed at the site. 29 Ann Street renovation celebration was well attended on March 15 which was hosted by Mayor Tim Dougherty. Mr. Kinard further reviewed the social services calendar of events planned for April at the Marion Sally Resident Center.

Board Committee Reports

Commissioner Lutz inquired on the status of assigning members to Board Committees. Chairwoman Ballard stated that there will be a retreat held in the near future and a discussion on Board Committees will be held then. Mr. Kinard also stated that he will be touching base with the Commissioners on a date for the retreat.

Old Business

Commissioner Lutz asked what normally happens when a vote does not pass a resolution as occurred at a previous Board meeting. Attorney Borin added that there must be four (4) affirmative votes to take action on a resolution as a Housing Authority. Commissioner Lutz further asked if the Board packet could be issued out by the Wednesday prior to Board meetings. Mr. Kinard noted that we are working on getting the packet out by the Wednesday prior to the Board meetings.

Resolutions

- 2023-007 Resolution: Schedule of Bills as of March 25, 2023

Resolution approving Schedule of Bills/Invoice Payments as of March 25, 2023 totaling \$144,079.90. Commissioner Oweis motioned, Seconded by Commissioner Ballard. Chairwoman Ballard, Commissioners Oweis, Lindsey, Zabala, McCoy and Lutz voted Yes.

- 2023-008 Resolution: Leased Office Space Furniture

Resolution approving and authorizing the purchase, delivery and installation of furnishings for the leased office space for the MHA at 200 South Street in an amount of \$65,000 from New Jersey State Contract vendors, National Office Furniture Inc., Affordable Interior Systems and Commercial Furniture Interiors. Mr. Kinard noted that we are utilizing a State of New Jersey contract to furnish the offices in the space. Commissioner Ballard asked how many offices are in the space? Mr. Kinard noted that there are six offices in the space. Commissioner Lutz asked how many staff will fill the leased office space? Mr. Kinard stated at least seven staff members. And some staff will be floating between the leased space and the office at 31 Early Street. Commissioner Lutz asked if this resolution was introduced prior to this meeting before she joined the Board, as she was used to how the planning board handled resolutions; and, did we go out to bid for this work. Mr. Borin said the Housing Authority Board resolution process is different from municipality boards. Housing Authority resolutions get moved, seconded and voted on at the meetings. Mr. Kinard stated that the agency is permitted to utilize State contracts that were already in place and procured by the State. Mr. Borin added that the State previously bids certain contracts and that a local

public entity, without going to public bid, can buy items off the State contract. Commissioner Oweis asked if the vendor then comes in to assess the cost. Mr. Kinard said yes.

Commissioner Ballard motioned, seconded by Commissioner Oweis. Chairwoman Ballard, Commissioners Oweis, Lindsey, McCoy, and Zabala voted Yes. Commissioner Lutz abstained. The Resolution passed.

New Business

None

Public Comments

None

Mayor's Comments

Absent

Council Liaison's Comments –Robert Iannaccone

Councilman Iannaccone stated he was interested in talking more to the MHA General Counsel on the Town's rent control ordinance. Also, Mr. Iannaccone noted that several Council members including himself are concerned about affordable housing in the area. The Council is trying to reintroduce changes to the rent control ordinance to address changes in the Morristown area to make it stronger. He also stated that the Town is committed to increasing the percent of low-to-moderate affordable housing from 15% to 20%. Council is looking at an ordinance now that could accomplish this. The Councilman further stated that the role of the Housing Authority is changing drastically and moving toward the voucher system. The MHA doesn't own, manage or maintain the buildings anymore. He encourages the MHA Board to give consideration to take a more proactive role in the future of affordable housing units in Morristown and advocate for them. He further stated the MHA needs to determine how we define the new role of this Agency because RAD has changed MHA's role and is now managing a voucher system. He believes that this is the group to enhance affordable housing in Morristown and streamline the process with Mr. Kinard's leadership. The Councilman also stated that Prudential is giving away office furniture and will get a contract to MHA. Mr. Kinard stated that two other companies had previously offered to donate office furniture; however, their offers did not come to fruition. Finally, Councilman Iannaccone asked what is the fiscal year for the Housing Authority. Mr. Kinard stated the fiscal year starts October 1.

Commissioner Lindsey asked how large families will be handled when renovations occur at Manahan and if they will all be in one hotel room. Mr. Kinard replied that each household will be seen by the relocation specialists and that the hotel will be able to accommodate large families comfortably.

Adjournment

With no further business all voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm.