

Board of Commissioners – Housing Authority of the Town of Morristown
Board Meeting Minutes
200 South Street, 4thFlr, Morristown, NJ 07960
October 2, 2023 – 6:00 pm

Board of Commissioners

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

Housing Authority

Keith Kinard, Executive Director
Allison Durham, Deputy Director
Paul Miller, Esq., MHA General Counsel Office

Town of Morristown Officials

Mayor Timothy Dougherty - Absent
Councilman Robert Iannaccone

Orbach Affordable Housing Solutions LLC

Jay Reinhard, President
Jaime Birman, Director of Operations
Marjorie Viruet, Community Management

Call to Order

Chairperson Ballard called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. The meeting was properly noticed under the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act. Roll call was taken and Chairwoman Ballard, Commissioners Oweis, Turbiner, McCoy, and Lutz were present. Commissioners Lindsey and Commissioner Zabala were absent. The flag was observed.

Pledge of Allegiance - Moment of Silence Observed

Approval of Meeting Minutes Summary–April 24, 2023 & June 7, 2023 (Special Meeting)

Upon a motion by Commissioner Turbiner and seconded by Commissioner Oweis, the July 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes Summary was approved. Chairwoman Ballard, Commissioners Oweis, Turbiner, McCoy and Lutz voted in favor.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Kinard reported on the following items:

1. OAHs/MPD/MHA Meeting: Mr. Kinard advised the board of a post summer follow-up meeting held between management and Police recently. Discussions at the meeting centered around July 4th activities at Manahan Village; enforcement of trespassing signs, and review of the eviction process. OAHs will outline in writing to MPD what is needed to be enforced on the property under its trespassing and/or loitering restrictions. MPD will continue to identify police incident reports

related to sites and forward to management for review and action where warranted.

2. Chairwoman Ballard mentioned receiving calls from residents about an increased presence of non-residents in and out of the buildings at 31 and 39 Early. Mr. Kinard noted that during the extensive renovations an unfortunate consequence is the presence of a lot of non-residents every day. This can be dozens of construction workers, inspectors, and the typical inflow of guests of tenants. Notwithstanding, the crew and site management needs to be mindful of securing the building at the end of each work day. Mr. Birman mentioned that management is in the process of installing a new access door system to help enhance security at the senior buildings located at 31 and 39 Early Street.
3. Resident Complaints – Mr. Kinard provided an update to the board on the complaints received at the previous board meeting: The complaints were largely addressed by the contractor and property management, the Mayor conducted a tour with MHA and OAHS staff, along with a number of residents. A daily cleaning regiment has been put in place for the common space areas, the air quality reports noted work was conducted within the required EPA parameters and compliant with regulations. We continue to follow up on a weekly basis.
4. Commissioner Turbiner noted that Margaret Brady’s family reported her apartment was loaded with bed bugs. Ms. Viruet responded that prior to the family alerting the office they had no knowledge of the issue; however, once notified, the office does make arrangements for treatment and will also help with preparing the apartment for remediation, if needed. Ms. Viruet further noted that pest control occurs monthly at all sites.
5. Commissioner McCoy asked for the after-hours maintenance number for the sites, as he has been asked several times by residents who claim not to have it or had difficulty reaching anyone in the office. Ms. Viruet stated 833-480-9628 for Manahan and 855-213-6813 for Seniors and that notices are being sent weekly to the residents reminding them of the numbers and placed by the elevators in each vertical building. Mr. Kinard suggested that a refrigerator magnet should be considered to give to residents with the emergency number and critical information noted.

Board Committee Reports

No reports. New Board Committees will be formed at the Annual Board Meeting in October. The Deputy Director will send an email to Commissioners prior to the next meeting outlining the Committees to request volunteers for each.

Old Business

None

Resolutions

- 2023-014 Resolution: Schedule of Bills as of August 31 and September 20, 2023.

Commissioner Turbiner mentioned the existence of several outstanding bills for Magic Touch Construction, and Mr. Kinard responded that the agency is catching up with several outstanding invoices not paid or resolved during the transition from the old CFO to new CFO. Commissioner Oweis motioned and Commissioner Turbiner seconded the approval of the Schedule of Bills resolution. Chairwoman Ballard, Commissioners Oweis, Turbiner, McCoy, and Lutz voted yes.

Public Comments

Tawanna Cotten – 30 Flagler Street, stated she is glad to hear the organization is working with the Police Department on loitering and other issues at Manahan Village. Ms. Cotton comments included the following: asked if a conflict resolution training can be offered to the tenants; mentioned that there is a lot of unaffiliated male presence during the day on site; that many new people have moved into apartments at Manahan; residents are afraid with the large number of young men hanging out and the seniors are scared; is the police substation at the Center going to happen? Residents would feel safer if it did. At her building, the front main door is always propped open, maybe a notice to residents about not propping it open noting some consequences if found open; a lot of unleashed dogs at the site; a letter about cleaning up after dogs should be sent. Also, the parking lot numbers are faded/maybe the word “reserved” would be better than just a number on the spaces; packages are being stolen from Amazon, etc. they are being dropped in the wrong location for apartments 9 and 10 for the walkup buildings; will there be better signs for where apartment 9 and 10 are located, as they are all not in the front of the building. The removal of the kitchen equipment from the resident center would be devastating, it could be a teaching kitchen for food handler classes or used in partnership with the Town for something. Commissioner Turbiner mentioned the health center that she works with has a contract with SNAP who may be happy to provide meal prep. classes from the building. Commissioners Lutz mentioned creating lockers for Manahan residents for packages. Commissioner Lutz also mentioned looking into the texting resident messages versus sending out paper notices. Ms. Viruet mentioned that tenants would have to register in order for it to work, they cannot be signed up by the agency. Mr. Kinard asked Ms. Cotten to contact him directly to discuss the various items she has mentioned.

Mayor’s Comments

None

Council Liaison’s Comments –Robert Iannaccone

Councilman Iannaccone stated the following: there needs to be a consistent presence of OAHS staff for residents (seniors, family and tenant voucher holders) to be able to address their issues directly to them. Mr. Iannaccone also asked if there is a possibility of a tenant association to be representatives at meetings with OAHS. This would focus the attention on the entity that is charged with property management and be more efficient. What is the next steps for MHA? Will there be more vouchers for affordable living in Morristown, what is the new function of MHA? Also, it is important to note that sometimes Board committees at agencies include non-Board members/outside professionals to be brought in solely for their subject matter expertise. This may be something that this Board wants to look into.

New Business

Pauline James, MHA Chief Financial Officer reviewed the Budget to Actual report representing 11 months of activities for the agency. She noted that although revenue is slightly above expenses at the end of the August 2023, September’s activities will present more of a balanced budget showing revenues and expenses being closer in numbers. Commissioner Turbiner asked if the shortfall amount of \$3.6 million from HUD will plug MHA’s \$1.1 gap; Mr. Kinard responded that it is a partial replenishment but also represents restricted funds due to MHA for the fiscal year that must be used to pay landlords under the housing voucher program. Commissioner Turbiner also noted that interest income increased slightly from \$211K at the end of June to \$212K at the end of August and asked if interest rates plummeted. Ms. James responded no, that the interest change reflected is directly from the bank and is appropriate for that time frame. Mr. Iannaccone stated that we really need to look for the right outside financial experts so the agency knows what it should do with this money. Mr. Kinard clarified to Mr. Iannaccone that it was always contemplated that the interest earned is to be utilized by the MHA to supplement its operations over the next 30 or so years as HUD’s funding is specific to subsidy payments to landlords with a smaller amount being allowed to be used for business operations as administration fees.

Adjournment

With no further business, Commissioner Ballard motion and Commissioner Oweis seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. All Commissioners voted yes to adjourn at 7:05 pm.