

**MINUTES OF THE ASBURY PARK HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 13, 2021**

The session convened at 6:08 pm with the following persons present:

**Present:**

Chairman Gregory Hopson, Sr.

Vice Chairman Frank Syphax

Commissioner Angeline Brown

Commissioner Garrett M. Giberson

Commissioner Charlotte McAllister

Commissioner Carol Torre

Commissioner Donna Troppoli

**Also Present:**

Thomas Sahlin, Executive Director

Qaasim Johnson, Director of Housing

Lester Taylor, Esq., Legal Counsel

Robert Moorman, Legal Counsel Associate

Shemea Marshall, Accounts Supervisor/HR

Sameerah Keith, Resident Service Coordinator

**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

**Cazzeek Brother Mentorship Program**

*Presented by Cazzeek Brothers Rodney Taylor and Rasaja Walker*

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**(Motion to Open Public Participation moved by Commissioner Brown and seconded by  
Commissioner Giberson.)**

**Kevin Dawson, Robinson Towers Resident** – Concerns about pest control.

**Leslie Marcus, Lincoln Village Resident** – Concerns about pest control, possible transfer of unit, maintenance issues, and replacement of stove.

**Al Rowley, Robinson Towers Resident** – Concerns about pest control.

**Rashonda Evans, Lincoln Village Resident** – Concerns about pest control.

**Thomas McCain, Robinson Towers Resident** – Concerns of peeling paint on walls in unit (bedroom).

**Paul Lewis, Robinson Towers Resident** - Concerns about pest control.

**Paul Dawson, Robinson Towers Resident** - Concerns about pest control and cleanliness of garbage chutes.

**Patricia Curry, Robinson Towers Resident** – Concerns about possible mold in unit.

**Leon Fraiser, Robinson Towers Resident** – Concerns about residents cleaning up after pets inside of building.

**Bertha Durant, Robinson Towers Resident** - Concerns about pest control, cleanliness of garbage chutes, and intercom system issues/upgrade.

**Jean Belot, Lincoln Village Resident** – Concerns about pest control, exterior door (won't lock), presenting security issue, and states stairs are cutting into wheelchair wheels.

**Lester Taylor, Esq.** – Chairman, if I may respectfully, the public has expressed their concerns. I would just remind the board that some of these issues are exempt from discussion in public under the Open Public Meetings Act, under the section that deals with Safety and Security of residents. I think that it is fair to say that the board, as a whole, is concerned and has heard the concerns of their residents. They will take it under advisement with the administration. I would also caution the board not to get into any particular personnel related discussions against any individuals who are employees of the Housing Authority, so that it does not bother their rights.

**(Motion to close Public Participation moved Commissioner Brown and seconded by Chairman Hopson.)**

#### **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD AUGUST 9, 2021**

(Approval of the minutes was moved by Commissioner Giberson and seconded by Vice Chair Syphax.)

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

Opposed- None

Absent- None

Abstain- Commissioner McAllister

#### **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD AUGUST 9, 2021**

(Approval of the minutes was moved by Commissioner Giberson and seconded by Commissioner Brown.)

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

Opposed- None

Absent- None

Abstain- Commissioner McAllister

#### **RESOLUTION 09-01-2021 - RESOLUTION APPROVING EXPENDITURES FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2021, INCLUDING SECTION 8 EXPENDITURES**

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

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

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

Opposed- None

Absent- None

Abstain- None

**RESOLUTION 09-02-2021 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONTRACT AWARD FOR AUDITING SERVICES FOR FISCAL YEAR END MARCH 31, 2021 TO HYMANSON, PARNES & GIAMPAOLO, WITH AN OPTION TO RENEW FOR ONE ADDITIONAL YEAR**

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

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

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

Opposed- None

Absent- None

Abstain- None

**RESOLUTION 09-03-2021 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF A FEE ACCOUNTANT SERVICES CONTRACT TO POLCARI & CO., WITH AN OPTION TO RENEW FOR ONE ADDITIONAL YEAR**

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

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

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

Opposed- None

Absent- None

Abstain- None

**RESOLUTION 09-04-2021 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING LEGAL SERVICES CONTRACT TO LAW OFFICE OF FLORIO, PERRUCCI, STEINHARDT, CAPPELLI, TIPTON, AND TAYLOR LLC, WITH AN OPTION TO RENEW FOR ONE (1) YEAR**

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

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

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

Opposed- Commissioner Brown

Absent- None

Abstain- None

**RESOLUTION 09-05-2021 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO ADVANCED KIOSKS FOR RESIDENT SELF SERVICE KIOSKS IN LUMLEY HOMES A & B, ROBINSON TOWERS, COMSTOCK COURT, ASBURY PARK VILLAGE, AND WASHINGTON VILLAGE**

(Acceptance of this Resolution was moved by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Syphax.)

Commissioner Torre – Did I miss a prior discussion on this?

Chairman Hopson – We have been discussing this for a while.

Commissioner Torre – What is the purpose of this?

Thomas Sahlin - These kiosks are going to be set up in common areas around our sites. There are a number of features and functions for these kiosks. These kiosks are designed for our residents to have 24 hour access to information, pull up their balance and print receipts, and uploading/scanning documentation for annual certifications. We are also having a resident portal created to link directly to our website and creating work orders. It's meant to be a convenience to our residents.

Commissioner Torre – How is this paid for?

Thomas Sahlin - Through the CARES Act.

Commissioner Torre – To me, this does not fit in as a priority to me right now, but I know it isn't costing us anything.

Thomas Sahlin - The CARES Act is additional funding received. It's not part of our Operating or Capital Budget. The amount of face time by our staff to our residents has cut down drastically due to the pandemic. The idea is that our resident can still get information at their convenience when they need it and is meant to make it easier for everybody.

Commissioner Torre – For me, I don't see the priority for that. I am not convinced that a lot of people will use it. I am not sure what the track record is for things like this in senior public housing. Is it only going in the seniors sites?

Thomas Sahlin - No, family sites as well.

Lester Taylor, Esq. – If I may, what is the duration of the contract?

Thomas Sahlin – They should have it done within 45 days.

Lester Taylor, Esq. – What is the estimated cost for the kiosks to the Housing Authority, even though the funds are being paid by the CARES Act?

Thomas Sahlin – In the ballpark of \$113,000.00.

Approximately, how much money did the Housing Authority receive under the CARES Act?

Thomas Sahlin - \$430 some odd thousand.

Lester Taylor, Esq. – So, it's less than %25 of that?

Chairman Hopson and Thomas Sahlin - Correct.

Lester Taylor, Esq. – Thank you.

Commissioner Troppoli – Are we purchasing or leasing the equipment?

Thomas Sahlin - Purchase.

Lester Taylor, Esq. – So, some of the complaints that the board heard from the residents, so the residents will be more efficient, more effective, and faster, they can go right to the kiosks versus having to call somebody and leave a message?

Thomas Sahlin - Yes.

Lester Taylor, Esq. – There will also be a record created of those entries so quite frankly, if a resident comes tonight and said I made a work order at the kiosk, it can be printed out to show when that complaint or concern was raised rather than saying they left a message with someone, leading to more efficient and effective services for the residents?

Thomas Sahlin - Yes.

Commissioner Torre – The only thing I would say is getting to know the problem and acknowledging the people making the request does not solve the problem. As you saw tonight, we have many things we have to think about how we are going to resolve. The resolution costs money and cost resources that we don't necessarily have at the moment. I am not sure, other than enlightening us more, I am not on board at all. I am not saying that down the road it isn't something that might be beneficial. I don't see the benefit of it honestly.

Commissioner Troppoli - How long is the CARES Act money available?

Thomas Sahlin - Until the end of the calendar year, December 31, 2021.

Commissioner Troppoli- Thank you.

Chairman Hopson - Just for clarity sake, there are a list of uses for that money, is that correct?

Thomas Sahlin - Yes.

Chairman Hopson - So, we couldn't say we would take money from the CARES Act and use it in, let's say maintenance?

Thomas Sahlin - No.

Commissioner Giberson - Was there nothing more of a priority to use that money than this?

Thomas Sahlin - Security is a part of that.

Chairman Hopson – Again, the funding has to be expended by the end of December this year. We have stretched security out as much as we possibly could. Once the fiscal year of that money ends, it's done.

Thomas Sahlin - Essentially, it's "use it or lose it".

Commissioner Brown – In the senior buildings, they will be put in the lobbies. At the family sites, they will have to be put in the social rooms. Lincoln Villages doesn't have a social room so where would it be there? Everybody does not have transportation and will not be able to make it to these kiosks in the dead of winter. As far as I'm concerned, it's a two edge sword. Its good one side but not necessarily be good on the other side. The kiosks would help but is not 100% proven fact.

Commissioner Torre - That's also the other issue. The senior population is not so quick to grab onto technology and to use it. So I'm not even convinced that a large amount of people would gravitate and use them. That's my personal opinion.

Qaasim Johnson - The research that has gone into for seniors has showed that the use of the equipment increased by over 60% by those of 65 years of age and older. It has been studied by New York City Housing Authority. The kiosks being in housing authorities isn't a new system. It's been around for years now. It does increase the efficiency of the interaction between site managers, as well as the residents. Residents are able to the majority of the things themselves. It also has a portal that will allow for face-to-face interaction in the midst of a pandemic. So, our property managers will set a schedule, the residents will be able to go to that kiosk if they don't have internet or a computer at home, plug in their earbuds and have a face-to-face conversation

with their property manager to resolve any issues they may have to prevent what we are dealing with right now during the pandemic.

Commissioner Torre - Are there any other communities in our area that have these?

Qaasim Johnson - I don't know of anyone in our area taking advantage of the kiosks systems. The closest was Jersey City and we were going to take a ride up to see how they function. But the larger housing authorities across the nation has converted to using the kiosk systems.

Commissioner Troppoli - These will always be operable as long as the community rooms and lobbies are open?

Thomas Sahlin - Yes. That is the primary reason to have them in the common areas. Also, the self-service portal are not just limited to these kiosks. Our developer is working on making it accessible through the internet. So, if you do have a device and don't want to do to a kiosk, you don't have to.

Commissioner Torre - To our attorney, do you see any increased legal liability having these kiosks in our lobbies?

Lester Taylor, Esq. – I think this is no different than the self-checkout line at Shoprite. It makes it easier and more efficient for the residents to make their concerns or recommendations. Making it available during off business hours may be positive as well for those residents that are busy 9a-5p. That's why I indicated my questions to Mr. Sahlin, #1 the duration of the contract and #2 there was no indication that this would be to replace any human, so there will still be humans that will be accessible to the residents for those that may not want to use the system, and it's a source of funds that essentially at no cost to the housing authority. So, if you don't use these funds, you will lose them. It is not advisable from President Biden, the federal government, state, or local government to utilize CARES Act funds for recurring expenses because you can't replace these funds next year. So, this sounds like a one-time hit. Do it and if it works, great. But once the contract runs its course, you are not liable for any future expenses.

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

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

Opposed- None

Absent- Commissioner Torre

Abstain- None

**RESOLUTION 09-06-2021 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APHA TO ENTER INTO A LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH WESTSIDE CITIZENS UNITED FOR THE UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL ROOMS AT VARIOUS APHA SITES FOR THE TRI-CITY YOUTH COURT PROGRAM**

(Acceptance of this Resolution was moved by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Giberson.)

Commissioner Troppoli – I would like to propose a minor change we mentioned during the Finance Committee meeting. The resolution states that this will be a three year agreement. Seeing that although this is probably a valid and enduring program, we have not been involved with the Tri-City Youth Court before. I would suggest that we make the resolution for one year, with an option to renew after we have a years' experience with the program.

Chairman Hopson - I don't see a problem with that.

Lester Taylor, Esq. - As long as you're ok with it, you can vote on it as amended.

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

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

Opposed- None

Absent- None

Abstain- None

**RESOLUTION 09-07-2021 - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A RIGHT OF ENTRY AGREEMENT WITH VERIZON WIRELESS CONCERNING ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING AT COMSTOCK COURT, NJ 7-5**

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

Chairman Hopson – Are all of our I’s dotted and T’s crossed?

Lester Taylor, Esq. - My firm, partners and associates have been working diligently with Mr. Sahlin and his team and I am confident from a legal standpoint that we are in a good position.

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

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

Opposed- None

Absent- None

Abstain- None

For the record, the purpose for the Executive Session is to discuss contractual matters typically related to attorney client privilege and/or legal contract and minutes will be taken and released to the public if and when the need for confidentiality no longer exists and action will be taken when the board come back to public session.

**(Motion to Close Public Session and Open Executive Session moved by Commissioner McAllister, seconded by Commissioner Troppoli.)**

**(Motion to Close Public Session and Open Executive Session moved by Commissioner McAllister, seconded by Commissioner Troppoli.)**

**(Motion to Re-Open Public Session moved by Chairman Hopson, seconded by Commissioner Brown.)**

**Motion to close Board of Commissioner’s Meeting of September 2021, moved by Commissioner Giberson, seconded by Commissioner Brown.**

All in favor.

Meeting Adjourned, 8:15 pm

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Thomas Sahlin, Executive Director

Date