

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL REORGANIZATION MEETING FOR  
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BRIDGETON  
HELD ON MARCH 25, 2021**

A virtual reorganization meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Bridgeton was held on Thursday March 25, 2021 at 5:00 PM.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Chairperson Martin and upon roll call, those present were Commissioner Kathryn MacFarland, Commissioner Tawana Childers, Commissioner James Cowles, Commissioner Diana Sandoval and new Resident Commissioner Shaneece Francis. Commissioner Deborah Williams joined the meeting in progress. Also present were Attorney Robert Pryor, Executive Director Joanne Sbrana and Assistant Executive Director James Howell.

Chairperson Martin asked the Board if all members had received a copy of the minutes from the February 25, 2021 meeting. All members had reviewed the minutes. Commissioner Childers had a question regarding the section discussing a security guard as there seemed to be no clear resolution. Director Sbrana interjected that research had been done into the security issue which would be discussed later in the meeting. Commissioner Childers made a motion that the minutes be accepted. Commissioner MacFarland seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously accepted after a show of hands.

**Report of Secretary/Treasurer**

Director Sbrana presented the list of bills for payment. After ensuring that all members had received a copy of the list of bills, Sbrana noted that the larger items had explanations written next to them. Chairperson Martin asked if an explanation can be given on the report of what each vendor does. Commissioner Childers pointed out that a list with a copy of checks is included in the information packet each Board member gets. Commissioner MacFarland made a motion that the list of bills be paid. Commissioner Sandoval seconded. Upon an oral vote, the motion unanimously passed.

Director Sbrana presented a financial report to the Board. AMP I (Maplewood Garden) generated a total of \$75,775.00 for the month in income and cost \$71,830.45 in expenses. AMP II (Senior/Disabled Sites) generated \$142,178.45 for

the month while costing \$160,083.97 in expenses. AMP III (HOPE VI) collected \$32,814.00 in subsidy which was transferred to HOPE VI. Central Office garnered \$34,2098.62 in income and cost \$26,024.60 in expenses. Section 8 generated \$10,748.73 for the month and cost \$7,897.62 in expenses. Commissioner Childers made a motion to accept the financial report and Commissioner MacFarland seconded the motion. Upon voting, the report was unanimously accepted.

## **Reorganization**

Attorney Pryor took control of the meeting as it went into the reorganization session. Nominations were taken for the position of Chairperson. Commissioner Cowles nominated Esaul Martin for the position. Commissioner Childers seconded the motion. Attorney Pryor asked if Martin were interested in the position to which he replied yes. With no other nominations, a vote was taken of the members and Martin was unanimously voted to remain as Chairperson.

The floor was next open for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairperson. Commissioner Martin nominated Tawanna Childers to the seat. Commissioner Cowles seconded the motion. When asked if she would be interested in the position, Childers replied yes. With no other nominations, a vote was taken and Commissioner Childers was elected unanimously to the position of Vice-Chairperson.

Attorney Pryor next opened the floor for the selection of Committee Chairs. Director Sbrana made a suggestion that perhaps committees can be formed and set as they are needed. When there is a need for whatever committee, the person designated can decide if they wish to serve as the Chair. It was suggested that the Procurement Committee be dissolved by Sbrana. The Authority has a staff person trained for this. In addition, some purchases would have to go through a professional such as an Architect/Engineer. The Board agreed.

Commissioner MacFarland volunteered to serve on the Budget Committee along with Chairperson Martin.

Vice-Chairperson Childers and Chairperson Martin will serve as the Personnel Committee.

As the annual audit is normally presented by the auditor, the Board felt that the Audit Committee could be dissolved.

The AD/HOC Committee was next discussed and it was noted that traditionally, the Resident Commissioner had often served on this committee. Vice-Chairperson Childers said that the AD/HOC Committee should remain intact and that she would continue to serve on it along with Commissioner Williams.

Chairperson Martin offered new Commissioners to join a committee. Vice-Chair Childers pointed out that new Commissioners could join a committee at any time. Chairperson Martin suggested that members could sit in on committee meetings. He also suggested that committees send out e-mails when meetings are scheduled.

Commissioner Cowles made a motion that the Reorganization section of the meeting be closed. Commissioner MacFarland seconded the motion and after an oral vote, the session was closed.

The members of the Board were presented with Resolution 2109 which would authorize the upgrade of security cameras at Maplewood Gardens. Director Sbrana read the Resolution and informed the Board that bids for the project were received by the Authority and opened on March 8, 2021. The lowest responsible bid was from the firm Integrated Systems and Services with a base bid of \$159,870. Sbrana noted that the bid had been reviewed by the Authority's Architect/Engineer. Commissioner Cowles made a motion that the Resolution be accepted. Commissioner Francis seconded the motion. Upon a unanimous vote from the Board, Resolution 2109 was passed.

The members of the Board were presented with Resolution 2110 which authorized the write off of former tenant accounts. Director Sbrana read the Resolution and informed the Board that the tenants on the attached list had moved or passed on but had a remaining balance on their account. Commissioner Cowles asked if all former residents listed were deceased. Sbrana noted that all had passed on except for one who had moved in with his son. Commissioner Childers made a motion that the Resolution be accepted. Commissioner MacFarland seconded the motion. Upon voting, Resolution 2110 was unanimously passed by the Board.

## **Public Portion**

The Board was addressed by Bridgeton City Council President Ed Bethea who gave congratulations to the new Board members as well as the current ones. Bethea also informed the Board that a City Council Liaison Marian King would be joining the meetings. Bethea's announced that the coming Saturday, March 27, the City of

Bridgeton would be sponsoring a city-wide cleanup day. As part of the Clean Up campaign, a poster contest was held for local school children.

LaTonya Harper of 46 Birch also addressed the Board. Her main concern was security at Maplewood and she noted that many of the issues that occur at the site are from people who do not live there.

### **Old Business**

The Board discussed the prospect of a security guard for High Rise. Director Sbrana informed the Board that she reached out to some other Authorities to examine how they treated security at their buildings. Some employed retired police officers as guards. Some gave a stipend to tenants who acted as security. Sbrana also noted that security camera footage has been viewed and some security issues at the High Rise have been weeded out. Many issues have been handled in house with more extreme cases being sent to Attorney Pryor for action. A “wall of shame” was even considered to be posted in the High Rise to help residents identify problem individuals. Sbrana also noted that more people have been coming forward to report issues. Commissioner Childers asked where had the other Authorities pulled money from for guards. Sbrana answered that they had not said from where but she noted that the Authority could not use Capital Funds. Commissioner MacFarland noted that a decision should be made whether the guards will be armed or not. Sbrana noted that the guards at other Authorities were unarmed. Pryor also pointed out that there would be insurance issues with armed guards.

Commissioner Childers asked about the \$200 stipend that can be made to commissioners that had been discussed at a previous meeting. Director Sbrana explained that this was a payment that could go towards assisting a resident council or a tenant performing some service in behalf of the Authority.

Director Sbrana noted that letters had been sent out to the parole offices around the State regarding not accepting Authority addresses as to be used as sites for parolees to be released to. The Parole Offices were also asked to inform the Authority should one of its sites come up as a requested address.

Commissioner Childers asked if surveys had been sent out to Housing Authority residents. Surveys had been sent and a meeting to review them was set for April 8.

### **New Business**

Chairperson Martin congratulated the appointees to the Board.

Commissioner Childers asked whether the trash removal from Maplewood Garden was separated into trash and recyclables or whether it was just trash. Director Sbrana explained that currently the Cumberland County Improvement Authority has chosen to remove trash and recyclables commingled because in the past there were ongoing issues with separating the two. Childers observed that that there seemed to be less and smaller trash receptacles and wondered if more could be added at the site. The idea of having dumpsters elsewhere was discussed in the past but truck would be unable to get to them if located elsewhere. Dumpsters would have to be manually rolled to trucks thereby increasing the cost of waste removal. Chairperson Martin asked if the Authority were being fined for the trash and recyclables being loaded together but that does not happen. Director Sbrana will have Maintenance Supervisor Wayne Holt look into options of increasing dumpster amounts.

Commissioner Childers announced that she had received her certificate of completion for her Commissioner Training.

With no further business to discuss, Commissioner Cowles motioned that the meeting be adjourned and Commissioner MacFarland seconded. The meeting closed at 6:18 PM.