

Housing Authority of the City of Vineland

REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, April 15, 2021
5:00 p.m.

The Regular Meeting of the Housing Authority of the City of Vineland was called to order via video teleconference by Chairman Ruiz-Mesa on Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. at the office of the Authority located at 191 W. Chestnut Avenue, Vineland, New Jersey 08360.

The following Commissioners were present:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	
Commissioner Rudolph Luisi	
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena	(absent)
Commissioner Gary Forosisky	
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	

Also present were Jacqueline Jones, Executive Director, Wendy Hughes, Assistant Executive Director, Charles W. Gabage, Esquire – Solicitor, Linda Cavallo – Accountant and Gloria Pomaes Executive Assistant.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa read the Sunshine Law.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on March 18, 2021. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta and seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Rudolph Luisi	(Yes)
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena	(Absent)
Commissioner Gary Forosisky	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for the Financial Report from the Fee Accountant. Linda Cavallo reviewed the Financial Report for the six months ending March 31, 2021.

Executive Director's Report:

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa requested the Executive Administrative Report. Mrs. Jones provided an update on her written report. She stated consultant, Rick Ginnetti from the Brooke Group will provide an update on the Kidston and Olivio renovations as well as the Scattered Site disposition process.

Mrs. Jones reported the VHA intended to have COVID vaccine clinic on Tuesday at the Brown Center as well as Olivio Towers. Unfortunately, that morning the CDC and the FDA put a halt to the use of the J&J vaccine and the clinic was cancelled. Mrs. Jones received a call back this morning from Walmart and the clinic will be rescheduled with the Moderna vaccine for the end of April and again in May. The Authority is now able to reach out to anyone who is 18 years of age and older to hopefully get a better response. The first effort was to the VHA's elderly/disabled

population consisting of approximately 460 post cards to announce the clinic for Vineland, Buena and Ocean City. There was no response from Buena. Two responses were two received from Ocean City. Thirty responses were received from Vineland. The VHA's nurse, Donna did an outreach via phone and was able to get fifty participants including 4-5 employees. Not a real high response, but the VHA will try to get more cooperation with getting a vaccine since we are able to offer it to a wider range of ages now.

Mrs. Jones stated everything is a smooth as it can be right now regarding operations and dealing with the pandemic. The VHA has seen a couple additional cases in the last few weeks with employees contracting the virus. CDC guidelines are still in effect in the administrative, maintenance and congregate departments. The VHA is going to start introducing more people back into the office and try to get back to somewhat of a normal schedule in the next few months.

Committee Report: None.

Old Business: Rick Ginnetti provided an update on Kidston and Olivio Towers. RAD transaction closed in November. The Authority has been working on bidding out the various construction projects. The replacement of the roof at Olivio and Kidston is underway. Olivio Tower's roof is finished except for the metal capping and Kidston Towers is about 50% complete. The entire roof project should be completed within the next 30 days. The lighting in units and the parking area is 90% complete. The electrical lighting should be complete in 30-60 days. Two major projects out for bid are the exterior for the replacement of all the windows at Olivio except for the community room windows and the replacement of the common area windows and elevator area windows at Kidston that were not replaced a few years ago when Kidston's windows were replaced. This same bid package includes repointing the brick work at Kidston. This bid is due the beginning of May. The other project is the interior and plumbing at Kidston and Olivio. The plumbing consists of replacing all the plumbing in all the risers as well as replacing the bathrooms at Kidston. The common area kitchens at both Olivio and Kidston being modified. The common area bathrooms will be modernized and be made fully accessible. This bid package is due back in May. While the units are being worked on in Kidston, the residents will have to temporarily move. The Authority has been meeting with the residents in the G & H risers which will empty about 24 units. The ground floor units will be emptied as well. There will be no water in these units for 4-6 weeks. The residents will be given the option to temporarily relocate or permanently relocate off site. It is their choice. Everyone has the right to return to the building if they want to, but a lot of residents seem to want to move to some of the other housing authority properties. Once these units are done in these two risers they will be used as temporary "hotel suites" for the other residents of the building to continue until the next two risers and so forth. This project will probably take 12-14 months to complete. All the expenses involved with this relocation and temporary moves are all in the budget and part of the approved relocation plan the board approved several months ago. While the Kidston units are vacant, the interiors will be painted. If there is money remaining, additional work may be done such as the elevators.

Commissioner Forosisky asked if the kitchens were being redone. Rick Ginnetti stated the kitchens are not being done at this time. The kitchens are in pretty good shape. The reason the bathrooms are being done is because the tubs need to be ripped out to get to the risers. The kitchens can be done during turnover if they need to be redone.

The Scattered Sites project began in 2016. At that time, the Authority started analyzing the Scattered Sites to see if they were viable for a RAD conversion. The 20-year operation of the Scattered Sites to maintain would be more money than the Authority brought in with all its properties out of the Capital Program. Some of the houses are over 100 years old and there are about 27 on septic systems and 11 or 12 have wells. When you go to HUD for authorization to dispose of properties you need a justification. The Authority used the justification that the cost to maintain them over 20 years was more money than the Authority had and essentially would

bankrupt the Authority. The application to dispose of the homes was submitted in April of 2017 HUD denied the application and stated it was no longer a viable option. They would rather the properties be in worse condition. In March of 2018, HUD sent a notice out stating they changed their disposition ruling. They had a special category for scattered sites that an allowable justification is a long term 20-year plan that indicated it would cost more than they are worth to maintain the scattered sites. HUD contacted the VHA to resubmit the application. The application was resubmitted along with all new required forms. An appraisal of all the sites was previously completed and were required to be appraised again. In January 2020, HUD approved the disposition plan for Scattered Sites. The problem with the approval was some of the conditions of the approval were not acceptable based on what was discussed with the Board and the Residents. Some dealt with the use of the sale proceeds and allowing residents to purchase the sites. HUD rejected this but agreed that the Authority could do whatever needed to be done for the property to pass a city inspection, appraisal inspection or environmental conditions. The most important thing was HUD stated the Authority was not allowed to sell the properties to any of the Authority's residents. The Authority argued this for a year. The Authority felt it was a Fair Housing Violation. In January 2021, HUD decided to allow the Authority to sell the properties to its residents at Fair Market value. The Authority is permitted to provide the residents, pursuant to its homeownership plan, down payment assistance and allowed to let the residents use a Section 8 Tenant Protection Voucher to pay the mortgage payment if the price of the house is such that they cannot afford the mortgage payment. The VHA has to market to the open public. Pursuant to the Relocation Plan and Disposition Plan, the homes will be marketed for a 14-day period. If there are no offers after 14 days, the next offer that meets the VHA's price guideline can be negotiated individually. If there are multiple offers in that 14-day period, the Authority will ask for the highest and best offer. The residents will be provided homeownership counseling. They will be preapproved for their mortgage and will be given \$5,250 for down payment and closing cost assistance pursuant to the relocation regulation. The Authority can help them with their mortgage by using a Section 8 Voucher. The resident will stay in their property if they want to buy it. The Authority will meet with all the residents to discuss their options. The Authority will help the residents prepare for homeownership through homeownership counseling and credit repair.

In April of 2017, the Board approved the relocation plan for the Scattered Sites. The plan needed to be updated to describe the process for homeownership. The plan is essentially the same. One of the things that has changed is the public housing units that converted to RAD. The resident's options for relocation are to accept a Section 8 Voucher, Section 8 Homeownership Voucher or move to another Housing Authority site. If they choose a Section 8 voucher or move to another Housing Authority site moving services will be available to them. The Authority would prefer they move themselves. If the Authority moves them the Authority will have to pay for it. If they choose to move themselves they will receive a fixed payment moving expense check. The Housing Authority will pay for all the utility transfers. If the resident moves with a voucher to a private rental, the housing authority will pay up to one and half month's security deposit. All the residents will have the opportunity to receive supportive services such as credit/budget counseling. HUD will provide vouchers in June, but not all 72 vouchers will be received at once. They will be provided in phases. The Authority had three Zoom meetings in March with the Residents. Two were in English and one in Spanish. The relocation plan was explained advising them a relocation specialist will reach out and set up individual meetings with everyone and go over their options. The residents at that time will give the Authority an idea on what direction they would like to proceed and the Authority will set up an individual family plan for each of them. One last benefit in the relocation plan, is for working adult children living in the residents. If there are vouchers remaining, the working adult children can receive a voucher. No additional benefits are paid to the adult child.

Rick Ginnetti asked if the Board had any questions. No questions from the Board.

New Business: None.

With no other discussion in related matters the Chairman moved to the Resolutions.

Resolution #2021-18
Resolution to Approve Monthly Expenses

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa has reviewed the expenses and recommends them for payment in the sum of \$1,113,208.91. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Rudolph Luisi	(Yes)
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena	(Absent)
Commissioner Gary Forosisky	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2021-19
Resolution to Authorizing Leave of Absence (Edwin Gomez – FMLA)

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2021-19. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa stated the employee has exhausted his accrued time and he applied for FMLA due to health issues. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Rudolph Luisi	(Yes)
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena	(Absent)
Commissioner Gary Forosisky	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2021-20
Resolution Approving Scattered Site Relocation Plan – updated April 2021

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2021-20. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Rudolph Luisi	(Yes)
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena	(Absent)
Commissioner Gary Forosisky	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

There is no need for Executive Session.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa asked for comments from the press and/or public. No additional comments from Board Members.

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Ruiz-Mesa entertained a motion for adjournment of the Regular Meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The vote was carried unanimously by the Board Members present. The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacqueline S. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jacqueline S. Jones
Secretary/Treasurer