

Housing Authority of the City of Vineland

REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, January 19, 2023
6:00 p.m.

The Regular Meeting of the Housing Authority of the City of Vineland was called to order by Chairman Ruiz-Mesa on Thursday, January 19, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the office of the Authority located at 191 W. Chestnut Avenue, Vineland, New Jersey 08360.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa turned the meeting over to solicitor, Harry Furman. Mr. Furman swore in new Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez.

The following Commissioners were present:

Commissioner Chris Chapman
Commissioner Daniel Peretti (*Absent*)
Commissioner Brian Asselta (*Absent*)
Commissioner Michael Green
Commissioner Albert Porter
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa

Also present were Jacqueline Jones, Executive Director, Wendy Hughes, Assistant Executive Director, Harry Furman, Esquire – Solicitor, Linda Cavallo – Accountant and Gloria Pomales, Executive Assistant.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa read the Sunshine Law.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa changed the order of business and moved to Committee Reports.

Committee Report: Commissioner Chapman reported re-organization committee consisting of himself, Chairman Ruiz-Mesa and Commissioner Asselta met and the committee propose to nominate again Mario Ruiz-Mesa as Chairman and Daniel Peretti as Vice-Chairman. He turned the meeting over to Mr. Furman. Mr. Furman stated the nominations as Commissioner Chapman reported are accepted and he opened the meeting for additional nominations. Seeing none, he closed the nominations and entertained for a motion for election of the nominations reported by Commissioner Chapman. A motion was made by Commissioner Porter; seconded by Commissioner Green. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman
Commissioner Daniel Peretti (*Absent*)
Commissioner Brian Asselta (*Absent*)
Commissioner Michael Green
Commissioner Albert Porter
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on December 15, 2022. Tabled for next month.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for the Financial Report from the Fee Accountant. Linda Cavallo reviewed the Financial Report for the three months ending December 31, 2022. Chairman Chapman commented that no money was spend on resident meals. Mrs. Jones stated that for

years Wheat Road Cold Cuts was providing daily meals for the VHA's Seniors and VHA Staff would deliver the meals. Wheat Road Cold Cuts was not interested in providing the meals anymore. Pat Harrison, who runs the program for the VHA, solicited numerous vendors and no one wanted to be involved in it. Mrs. Jones believes these vendors were concerned about a State inspection in their kitchen. The need was approximately 20 meals a day. The solution was to have the Seniors signed up for Meals on Wheels, which happens to be operated out of the VHA's Brown Center. The VHA staff continues to deliver these meals to the Congregate residents. Therefore, the VHA is not paying for meals and this will be adjusted with the State. The State will fund the VHA for the labor to pickup the meals and deliver them. This program is shrinking possibly due to more self-sufficient Seniors. The program consists of meals, light housekeeping, shopping and laundry. The cost is based on the resident's income and is very affordable. Currently, the meals are free to the residents through Meals on Wheels.

Commissioner Porter asked for clarification on the Tenant Services line item. Mrs. Jones reported the tenant services is always budgeted for the Corbin Center in case of any programs for the children. According to HUD's regulations the Authority needs to spend a minimum of \$25 on each resident for some sort of resident services program. The VHA provides a holiday party every year and this is how it contributes to the requirement. Mrs. Jones stated there is an organized holiday party for Tarkiln, D'Orazio, Kidston and Olivio. It is difficult to reach out to the families, but there is a food drive for the families. VHA Staff picks up the food items and makes packages for the families. Tenant Services can be activities such as a Life Skills Program or a summer program.

Executive Director's Report:

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa requested the Executive Administrative Report. Mrs. Jones reported Kidston and Olivio Towers renovation project update is listed on her written report, but the project is almost finished. The public rest rooms, kitchen water filtration system are being install, a few windows in common areas and replacing the front canopy entrance and letters at Olivio Towers. All of the plumbing piping inside going to all the units of Kidston was replaced. The residents of the last riser are now moving back into their own apartments. The Authority is done moving residents around. There were some issues regulating the hot water, but this has been resolved. The Community Room at Kidston was updated and we are currently looking for new furniture.

The Authority is going to start working on some projects that were put on hold. The spec stage for Tarkiln Acres roof replacement has begun. The elevator refurbishment at Olivio Towers will be a big job and is in process. The Authority has an elevator consultant to assist with the specs and to evaluate the bids when they are submitted. A few years ago elevators at Kidston Towers were refurbished.

Over the last couple of months, there were discussions on how to keep some of the Scattered Sites and then sell the ones on the outskirts of the city. The Authority is in the process of evaluating the homes that the Authority will keep and determining if some of the residents in those homes have to move. The reason they would have to move is if they are over housed. If they are elderly/disabled they may be offered a unit in one of the Authority's other projects or we can offer them a voucher. If they are under 62 and not disabled, they may be offered a voucher as well. They would maintain their rental subsidy but in the right size unit based on their family composition. Currently, there are no scattered houses for sale. Next month consultant, Rick Ginnetti, will present to the Board about this project. The Authority will convert all of the scattered sites its keeps to the RAD program because there will be more funding in that program than Public Housing. Once all the Authority sells the Scattered Sites homes that it is not going to keep then the Authority can move on the renovation of D'Orazio Terrace. There is a possibility that some of these houses can be sold in a lot or auctioned. The Authority has to sell them within 20% of the appraisal. Once it is determined which homes the Authority will keep, a full assessment will need be done by an outside company on every home for needed repairs. Before HUD permits

the Authority to change its funding to RAD, they want to make sure the houses are renovated properly. The Authority has renovated a lot of the houses over the years, but there are a couple in dire need. This will be discussed further next month with Rick Ginnetti.

The waiting list has been opening and closing periodically depending on vacancies and need for applicants. The Authority likes to keep the waiting list relatively small because it is then fresh and it permit the staff to communicate with the applicants more efficiently. Currently, there are 275 people on the elderly/disabled list. There has been difficulty renting units as quickly as prior to the pandemic. More than ever, people are not responding to the Authority. There are also a couple of other Senior projects in town. They are newer but are not deeply subsidized like the Authority's. They are tax credit properties and are "affordable" rent, but this does not mean they are affordable to Seniors. The waiting list will be reopened. Mrs. Jones briefly discussed preferences. Commissioner Chapman verified letters are physically being mailed to the applicants and if there is the ability to offer them a multitude of ways to connect with them. Mrs. Jones stated in order to apply now applicants need to have an email address. If someone does not have an email address and they call requesting an application, a hard copy is provided to them. Mrs. Jones briefly discussed the process of communicating and requesting information from the applicants. There are also applicants who are the waiting list and turn down units. Because the waiting list does not have a lot of people with the Vineland preference these people keep coming up again. Applicants are turning down units for various reasons. They do not want to stop smoking or they say the units are too small and their furniture will not fit in the unit. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa asked if the apartments at the old Newcomb Hospital are open. Mrs. Jones stated some of the applicants that applied for the Authority's housing are now being contacted by that development because they are starting to lease up. Mrs. Jones stated the Authority's applicants generally are not in the income level to afford those units.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

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

Resolution #2023-01
Resolution to Approve Monthly Expenses

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa stated the bills have been reviewed and are recommended for payment in the sum of \$1,760,311.92. The increase is due to an intercompany check to clear some interfund transfers, the pilot was paid to the City, half of the JIF insurance bill as well as payment to software vendor. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Porter. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Absent)
Commissioner Michael Green	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2023-02

Resolution Designating Official Newspaper for the Vineland Housing Authority

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-02. Mrs. Jones stated this resolution is passed every year for the Authority to designate its advertising papers. A motion was made by Commissioner Porter; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Absent)
Commissioner Michael Green	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Commissioner Porter excused himself from the meeting.

Resolution #2023-03

Rescinding Resolution #2022-63

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-03. Mrs. Jones stated the Authority entered into a service agreement with Omega Pest Management who the Authority has used for a couple years and have been satisfied. They have been sold to Terminix and then Terminix was sold to Rentokill. The new company will not execute the contract. Mr. Furman explained Omega never entered and signed the contract but in the interim sold to Terminix. Terminix stated they did not go through the RFP but have all the necessary qualifications and will fulfill the contract. The Authority was unable to get the contract signed, but then Terminix was sold to Rentokill. Mr. Furman is leery into setting a precedence where the Board enters into an RFP process in good faith and awards a contract that the bidder doesn't sign that and a subsequent purchaser will get the benefit of the RFP originally. Rentokill wants to provide their service their way and not follow the RFP or sign the contract. Mr. Furman recommends putting the Pest Control Services out to bid again. In the meantime, the Authority will get pricing without a bid in the interim or get services on an emergency basis. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Green. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Absent)
Commissioner Michael Green	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Absent)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2023-04
**Authorizing Shared Services Agreement with the City of Vineland
for the Acquisition of Rock Salt**

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-04. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Green. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Absent)
Commissioner Michael Green	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Absent)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Commissioner Porter returned to the meeting.

Resolution #2023-05
**Approving One-Time Compensation Bonus Payments to Certain Authority Employees
Based on Increased Hours and Responsibilities in Connection with the Authority's
Shared Services Agreements, Management Agreements and Housing Assistance
Payment Agreements**

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-05. For the purpose of the new commissioners, Chairman Ruiz-Mesa stated in addition to managing the Vineland Housing Authority Mrs. Jones with her staff also manages the Cape May, Ocean City and Buena Housing Authorities, which brings income to the VHA. Mrs. Jones stated the VHA has had Shared Services Agreements since 2008. A few years ago, the bonus program was instituted. The reason it was instituted is because when the VHA took on the additional housing authorities it did not change anyone's base pay. The reason for that is if the VHA lost any of these Shared Services Agreements with any of these housing authorities it would not have to worry about going back and adjusting an employee's base pay. A motion was made by Commissioner Porter; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Absent)
Commissioner Michael Green	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2023-06
Granting an Official Leave of Absence (Workman's Compensation)

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-06. Mrs. Jones explained this employee is out on workman's comp and a resolution is required to provide to the employee to enable him to pay his life insurance through the Pension System. A motion was made by Commissioner Porter; seconded by Commissioner Green. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Absent)
Commissioner Michael Green	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(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 press or public comments. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa asked for comments from Board Members. No comments.

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Ruiz-Mesa entertained a motion for adjournment of the Regular Meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Green. The Board Members unanimously carried the vote present. The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jacqueline S. Jones
Secretary/Treasurer