

# Housing Authority of the City of Vineland

*REGULAR MEETING*  
**Thursday, February 16, 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, February 19, 2023, at 6:00 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 Daniel Peretti  
Commissioner Brian Asselta  
Commissioner Albert Porter (arrived 6:04 p.m.)  
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, Rick Ginnett, Consultant – The Brooke Group and Gloria Pomales, Executive Assistant.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa read the Sunshine Law.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for the Financial Report from the Fee Accountant. Linda Cavallo reviewed the Financial Report for the four months ending January 31, 2023.

*Commissioner Albert Porter arrived. Commissioner Chapman noted Commissioner Green resigned and explained to Commissioner Porter since he is now present we can approve minutes with Commissioners present.*

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on December 15, 2022. A motion was made by Commissioner Porter and seconded by Commissioner Asselta. The following vote was taken:

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

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on January 19, 2022. A motion was made by Commissioner Porter and seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

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

## **Executive Director's Report:**

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa requested the Executive Administrative Report. Mrs. Jones provided a few updates to her written report. The plumbing project at Kidston and Olivio Towers is substantially completed as it relates to all the resident units. Every unit has a new bathroom and all of the interior plumbing lines to those units have been replaced. There are a few things left in the building regarding water filtration, but this project will not interfere with the tenants other than some shut offs of the water now and then until that project is complete. All residents are back in their existing original units. All of the "hotel" units are in the process of being leased - approximately 18-20 units. There are also some improvements at the towers with the common community room space, community room kitchen and the common bathrooms in both buildings that have been completely refurbished.

Consultant, Rick Ginnetti of the Brooke Group will discuss the Scattered Site Project tonight.

Mrs. Jones stated the VHA has a family self-sufficiency program (FSS) and with the help of the Brooke Group the (FSS) grant was renewed. This grant is up to \$96,978.00 for the year. There were a lot of participants in the program that graduated. The Authority is looking to increase the program beyond the 25 participants it had to at least 50 or more. Mrs. Jones explained on the Financial Statement the Family Self-Sufficiency line item is overspent. It is a good thing for this line item to be overspent because that means these residents in the program are getting better jobs and earning more money. When they earn more money the difference between what the rent was and what it is now goes into a savings account for them. The resident then has 5 years to attain set goals and can use that escrow money at the end for a car, house etc.

Mrs. Jones received a letter from HUD regarding the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher funding the Authority is expected to receive in 2023, although we are already in February. The letter indicates that the Authority can expect to receive 7.7% more than what was spent in 2022. In 2022, the VHA spent \$7 million dollars on housing assistance payments (HAP). The increase is about a half million dollars. Based on the average per unit cost (HAP expense) it appears the Authority can lease up another 70 units in 2023. The Authority will wait until it receives the money before we develop a plan to issue the vouchers.

Commissioner Porter asked about the eviction process. Mrs. Jones explained the eviction process. Discussion regarding process during the Pandemic and repayment agreements.

**Committee Report:** None.

**Old Business:** Consultant, Rick Ginnetti, provided history of the Scattered Site project for the new Commissioners on the Board. Mr. Ginnetti discussed the current status of disposing of the Scattered Sites. Approximately eight scattered site homes have been sold. HUD recently changed its rules in the Rental Assistance Demonstration program (RAD). The HUD rule change is if you are a small housing authority and Vineland is now considered a small housing authority due to converting most of its properties to RAD. HUD changes its notice on RAD indicating small housing authorities can convert under RAD, but instead of using the RAD rents they can take up to 80% of the units and collect rent at 110% of the posted fair market rent. There is an apparent need for family housing units in Vineland. Mr. Ginnetti was requested to do a proforma to see what it would be like if the VHA converted some of the Scattered Site homes to RAD. The Authority would not convert the homes that are far away from the VHA as well as homes with septic systems. The VHA has a HUD approval from the Special Application Center at the HUD for inventory removal. The Authority spoke with HUD in regard to being able to rescind on inventory removal on some of the units. The remaining will go back to the Special Application Center for approval to remove from inventory and then start the processing of converting the others to RAD that the Authority would keep. Mr. Ginnetti discussed potential projected cash flow.

The Authority is down to two public housing projects (D'Orazio and Scattered Sites). Eventually, D'Orazio will be converted. HUD, during a RAD conversion, allows you to convert federal money (Capital Money, ACC reserve) to non-federal money. Any money that remains after the conversion they will take back. This would need to be planned accordingly. The core cost to do this is about \$175,000. It is an expensive conversion because surveys/appraisals will need to be done on approximately 37 scattered site homes. Physical need assessments would need to be completed at each of these scattered sites. This amount also includes consulting fees as well. Based on the needs assessment it will provide the Authority information if any work on the home is needed should be corrected. The Funds for these repairs can come out of the Capital Program or sales proceeds as well as pay off the Capital Fund Bond balance. Mr. Ginnetti recommends this would also allow the Authority to start planning D'Orazio renovations sooner rather than later. The Authority needs to save D'Orazio to convert last to RAD because anything that remains in the Authority's account remaining in the Scattered Site can be used. If you converted D'Orazio prior to converting the Scattered Site then funds would go back to HUD such as the sales proceeds etc. Keeping some of the Scattered Sites will now make some money for the VHA over time and provide its mission of providing affordable housing and family housing in the City of Vineland. The tenant in the homes the VHA will keep will maintain their subsidy in their homes. There are a few vacant units in the homes that VHA will keep. They will be leased up with the residents residing in the scattered site homes from the outskirts that will be sold as soon as possible to enable the VHA to put the homes for disposal up for sale. The residents who remain in the unit that will be sold will be issued vouchers and maintain their subsidy. The VHA is required for them to be housed properly. Some of these residents can move to other VHA properties. One of the first things to be done is to rescind the scattered sites the Authority would like to keep. HUD has changed the rules on how to receive a CHAP (Commitment to Entering into a Housing Assistance Payment) which is the first step in the RAD process. Now HUD wants you to first get physical needs assessment, environmental review update, financial proforma to get to the point where the Authority knows what the conversion plan is. The authority needs to procure the professionals for these items. This will probably take approximately 6 months and then once the CHAP is received from HUD then the financial plan approval will be required. The goal is to get to closing in 12 months.

**New Business:** None.

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

**Resolution #2023-07**  
**Resolution to Approve Monthly Expenses**

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa stated the bills have been reviewed and are recommended for payment in the sum of \$1,779,248.53. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Porter. The following vote was taken:

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

**Resolution #2023-08**  
**Resolution to Appoint Risk Management Consultant**

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-08. Mrs. Jones explained the Authority's insurance company, Joint Insurance Fund, prefers that each housing authority have a Risk Management Consultant. The Risk Management Consultant assists the Authority in the annual review of its coverage and provide a presentation to the Board in regard to all insurance coverage. Annually, the Authority has to assess all its properties and vehicles. The Authority recommends appointing Heist Insurance Agency. The VHA started working with this Agency with the Melrose Court project. The payment for the Risk Management Consultant comes from the Authority's premium. A motion was made by Commissioner Porter; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

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

**Resolution #2023-09**  
**Resolution for the Intention of Providing Management Services  
to the Buena Housing Authority (BHA)**

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-09. Mrs. Jones reported the VHA has had an agreement with the BHA for several years and it is a good working relationship. The only change to the agreement is an added reciprocal agreement for maintenance to enable both Authorities to use each other's maintenance personnel when needed. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Yes)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(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 Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The Board Members unanimously carried the vote present. The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jacqueline S. Jones  
Secretary/Treasurer