

Housing Authority of the City of Vineland

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, September 21, 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, September 21, 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 (Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta
Commissioner Albert Porter
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa

Also present were Jacqueline Jones, Executive Director, Wendy Hughes, Assistant Executive Director, Ron Miller, Director of Affordable Housing, Harry Furman, Esquire – Solicitor, Linda Cavallo – Accountant and Gloria Pomales 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 August 17, 2023. A motion was made by Commissioner Porter and seconded by Commissioner Asselta. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(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 eleven months ending August 31, 2023.

Executive Director's Report:

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa requested the Executive Administrative Report. Mrs. Jones commented on the Section 8 reserves. She had previously mentioned to the Board the Authority received additional funding several months ago that would allow the Authority to lease about 50 additional units. The goal is to lease 50 additional units by the end of December. Currently 15 units have been leased up for the month of October. At this pace, it will be highly likely to hit 50 units by the end of the year. This means the Authority is utilizing about 99% of its funds and helping as many families as it can as well as earning as much administrative fee as well. The problem the Authority is running into right now is the availability of 1-bedroom units in the City. The other program the Authority had vouchers for is called Mainstream Funding. This is for a family who has a person in the family who is disabled. There were 40 to lease up and 36 have been lease up. The Section 8 waiting list will also be opening up. The Authority will be using about 99% of the funds which include its reserves. This means the program does not shrink because if the funds are not used HUD will take them away.

Mrs. Jones introduced Ron Miller and his history with the VHA to the Board Members. Ron will be explaining the construction renovations being proposed to the Board for D'Orazio Terrace. In addition, Ron will provide an update on the renovation projects.

Ron provided an update on the Kidston/Olivio elevator refurbishment project. He stated it is ongoing and it is in the submittals phase currently. Some of the submittals have been released and some equipment has been ordered. Electrical equipment is currently scarce. Car #2 at Olivio Towers is currently down. It needs motor repairs and the bearings need to be replaced. It is covered under the contract. It is being overseen by the elevator consultant.

The exterior project for windows and brick work at Kidston and Olivio has been closed out and completed at 100%. The punch list for interior project for plumbing work is currently being closed out and the water filtration system will remain open. The general contractor is actually going to hire the water company the Authority uses for its service to finish the project because of all the delays and it will get started in the next 3-4 weeks.

Ron reported there was one bidder on the Fire Pump last month. The bid was rejected because it was over bid and was authorized to negotiate with the contractor. The Authority has attempted to negotiate with the contractor with limited success. The Authority is going to go outside of the single bidder at this point to two other vendors. A date has been set for the best and final offers. They will be reviewed. The only thing being submitted right now is a schedule of values. Once a fee can be agreed upon, then the rest of the documents will be obtained. It is anticipated to be presented at the October board meeting. Ron has been communicating routinely with the City because the Authority is now past their deadline to get this completed. The City is aware of the reason for the delay.

The D'Orazio Terrace construction renovation will be discussed at the resolution portion of the meeting.

Mrs. Jones updated the Board in regard to the Scattered Sites. There are currently 5 homes listed for sale and a few are under contract. There are concerns in regard to septic systems. If there is an issue during inspection and the recommendation is for it to be replaced, pricing will be obtained and then a credit will be issued to the homeowner against the cost of the house. There are two homes pending appraisal. They will be listed as soon as the appraisals are back and then there will be 19 homes remaining. Sherry Kauffmann, who works with Ron, is working with the residents to relocate them to a home the Authority is keeping or issuing them a voucher and in some cases the family may have been over-housed and they can move into one of the senior developments.

Mrs. Jones reported there is currently one vacancy at Melrose, but all is good with the property.

Commissioner Porter asked how the people on the waiting list be placed. Mrs. Jones stated there are preferences for living or working in the City of Vineland.

Committee Report: Commissioner Chapman reported there are seven (7) professional contracts that need to be awarded of the professional services contracts for fee accountant, auditing, architectural/engineering, consulting, legal and special legal services (general counsel), special legal services (labor relations) and special legal services (landlord/tenant). A single response was received on all of them except for architectural and engineering and special legal services (labor relations). It is the recommendation of the committee to award those specific contracts to Linda M. Avena for accounting, Bowman & Co. for auditing, Brooke Group LLC for consulting, Brown and Connery for special legal labor relations and Gruccio, Pepper, DeSanto & Ruth for special legal landlord/tenant. In regard to general legal counsel, tonight is Mr. Furman's last meeting. The response received for general legal counsel is from Brown & Connery. Commissioner Chapman thanked Mr. Furman for his time and service to the Board. Mr. Furman stated he made determination after a lot of years with Charles Gabage and him filling in on occasion more than 30 years of having been the solicitor for the VHA. He knows from speaking

with Charles that he took great pride in terms of his engagement with the VHA Board. Mr. Furman knows the Board found him to be very qualified and capable representative legally to the VHA Board and carried the Board through a lot of different things from year to year. Mr. Furman stated over the course of the past year and half it was an honor for him to be here, but the reality is that he recognized it is time for him to start thinking about walking away from some things. He stated the Board does honorable work and they volunteer to engage into something that is especially important. He hopes the Board continues to do the work that they do. Mr. Furman thanked the Board for dealing with the transition that occurred from Charles's passing. The Board thanked Mr. Furman.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

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

Resolution #2023-40
Resolution to Approve Monthly Expenses

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa stated the bills have been reviewed and are recommended for payment in the sum of \$1,204,083.80. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

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

Resolution #2023-41
Granting Official Leave of Absence (FMLA)

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-41. Mrs. Jones explained this is for an employee who recently ran out of sick time and is out on medical leave. This resolution is required for the Division of Pension. A motion was made by Commissioner Porter; seconded by Commissioner Asselta. The following vote was taken:

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

Resolution #2023-42
**Authorizing Entering into Contract Agreement with All Risk, Inc.
for the Construction Renovations at D'Orazio Terrace – Bldg. #1**

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-42. Ron Miller stated the Board is aware D'Orazio Terrace sustained a fire. It resulted in vacating an entire building because there was contamination in the attic of the building. It is in the best interest to completely renovate the building while it is empty and vacated as the ceilings are also now down in the entire building. As part of this, a few years ago, Mrs. Jones suggested the idea of reconfiguring an efficiency apartment with a separate living area and sleeping area. It is not necessarily a

bedroom. This was done internally with the VHA's maintenance department as a model unit. It happened to be in this building when it burnt down. The Authority would like to take this building and use it as a potential model for the future when the site is redeveloped to convert all the efficiencies to this new model with a separate sleeping area. The Authority would like to reconfigure the efficiency units in this building, install new kitchens and bathrooms, floor joist repairs, floors and obviously dry wall and painting. There is also overlap from the insurance claim. This will work in parallel with the insurance claim and will be separate contracts. The VHA will be responsible for one of the contracts because it operates outside of the claim. The Authority has been working really closely with the adjustor as well as the architect who is not the architect of record that is better suited for this project. The architect is under contract with the remediation company. There is a total of four 1-bedroom units and four 0-bedroom units that are the VHA's responsibility. The other two units in the building are part of the insurance claim. Ron reviewed the cost. Ms. Jones stated the funding will come from the NewHOP account. Years ago, the VHA had a homeownership program and sold the homes. The money from the sale of those homes went into this account and it was invested and it has been used for various affordable housing projects over the years. The proceeds from the sale of the Scattered Sites homes will also go into this account and funds from this account would go to renovate D'Orazio at the time it converts to RAD. It will not hurt the tax credit process because it will increase the value of the property. Brief discussion regarding sprinkler systems and enforced codes from the City. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Asselta. The following vote was taken:

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

Resolution #2023-43

Awarding Management Fee Accountant Services Contract

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-43. 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	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2023-44

Awarding Professional Auditing Services Contract

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-44. 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	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2023-45
Awarding Architectural and Engineering Services Contract

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-45. 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	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2023-46
Awarding Legal Services Contract – General Counsel

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-46. 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	(Abstain)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2023-47
Awarding Special Legal Services Contract – Labor Relations Counsel

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-47. 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	(Abstain)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2023-48
Awarding Special Legal Services Contract – Landlord/Tenant

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-48. 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	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2023-49
Awarding Consulting Services Contract

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-49. 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	(Yes)
Commissioner Albert Porter	(Yes)
Commissioner Iris Acosta-Jimenez	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Resolution #2023-50
Awarding Painting Services Contract

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-50. Mrs. Jones stated this is the existing painter and this is extension 1 of 2 of the contract. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

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

Resolution #2023-51
Resolution for the Intention of Providing Management Services to the Ocean City Housing Authority

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-51. Mrs. Jones briefly explained the contract. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

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

Resolution #2023-52
Resolution for the Intention of Providing Management Services to the Cape May Housing Authority

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2023-52. Mrs. Jones briefly explained the contract. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:


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

There is no need for an Executive Session.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa asked for comments from the press, public or any Board Member. 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 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Jacqueline S. Jones
Secretary/Treasurer