

# Housing Authority of the City of Vineland

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**Thursday, April 21, 2011**  
**7:30 p.m.**

The Regular Meeting of the Housing Authority of the City of Vineland was called to order by Chairman Robert A. D'Orazio on Thursday, April 21, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at the office of the Authority located at 191 W. Chestnut Avenue, Vineland, New Jersey 08360. The following Commissioners were present:

Commissioner Joseph Asselta  
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon  
Commissioner Beatrice Corbin **(Absent)**  
Commissioner Carmen Nydia Diaz  
Commissioner Vickie Burk  
Chairman Robert A. D'Orazio

Also present were Jacqueline Jones, Executive Director, Wendy Hughes, Assistant Executive Director, Charles W. Gabage, Esquire – Solicitor and Dan Avena and Linda Cavallo from the VHA's fee accounting firm.

Chairman D'Orazio read the Sunshine Law.

The Chairman entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on March 17, 2011. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta and seconded by Commissioner Burk. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Joseph Asselta (Yes)  
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon (Abstain)  
Commissioner Beatrice Corbin (Absent)  
Commissioner Carmen Nydia Diaz (Yes)  
Commissioner Vickie Burk (Yes)  
Chairman Robert A. D'Orazio (Yes)

Chairman D'Orazio apologized for not introducing the Board's new commissioner. The Board has a new commissioner appointed by City Council. Chairman D'Orazio welcomed Elizabeth Gordon to the Board and requested she introduce herself. Commissioner Gordon stated she is a retired pharmacist. She is a widow and lives with three spoiled cats that she has rescued. She has step children and grandchildren. Commissioner Gordon's interest includes teaching adults how to read and write.

Chairman D'Orazio called for the Financial Report from Avena's office. Ms. Cavallo reviewed the Financial Report for the six months ending March 31, 2011, by reviewing the numerous line item figures.

Chairman D'Orazio requested the Executive Administrative Report. Mrs. Jones reported a new project listed in her report - Scattered Site Homes – South West Avenue & Oxford Streets. She

would like to discuss the condition of these homes. These homes have been off-line. South West Boulevard has been vacant and unoccupied for a little over 4 years. Oxford Street was taken off-line about 8 months ago for some mold issues, water issues in the basement and the overall general condition of the outside of the home. Mrs. Jones would like to rehab these two homes and put them back online. To say that they need everything would be putting it mildly. The Oxford Street home has very badly done spackle-siding job, which is falling off and water is getting behind the spackle. There is also a car port that needs to be removed due to its bad condition. All of the concrete is cracked and crumbling. The basement needs a perimeter drain. The bathroom and kitchen in both of these properties are in need of repair. The house on South West Boulevard has a flat roof and needs to be pitched and the heating system must be replaced. There was a conversation on whether to sell these homes or what to do with these homes and going through a process to have HUD allow selling the homes is quite an extensive process. The VHA wouldn't make any money to sell these houses. Mrs. Jones would like to rehabilitate them and put them back online to get some families in them. There is a big push with HUD right now, which is part of a five year initiative to get all vacant units across the country back online. A lot of housing authorities have a lot of units off-line. They take them off-line and they do not do anything with them. HUD now has initiated a very aggressive effort to find out why these units are off-line. There is a lot of paperwork and discussion about keeping them off-line and what the VHA is doing about getting them back online. It just happens that this coincides with the VHA wanting to start working on these two homes. Mrs. Jones feels the VHA can pay for the rehabilitation of these homes out of Homeownership Account. The VHA's architect has given us some figures and we think we can rehab both for \$190,000 including the architect, project management as well as construction. It is the intention not to put this project out for bid but rather run them as a general contractor ourselves because the VHA could do a lot better as far pricing and make the dollars go further. There is a resolution in the revised agenda that addresses this for the Board's consideration.

There is a draft of the 2010 audit ready. An appointment needs to be scheduled to do the exit interview.

The Federal Budget issue is not good news. The VHA will receive approximately \$45,000 less than last year in the Operating Fund. For the Capital Fund, the VHA will receive approximately \$177,000 less. The Voucher renewals will be increased by \$46,000. Administrative fees for the Voucher Program will be reduced by \$8,000. The Authority wasn't getting enough money to run the program before so now it will be even more difficult.

While on the subject of money, Mrs. Jones would like to start talking about the VHA's security cost. The VHA budgeted \$65,000 for security costs. The VHA issues an RFP and we award to a contractor who comes out from 6 p.m. – 2 a.m daily to patrol Tarkiln Acres and D'Orazio Terrace. None of the other sites have security with the exception of Kidston Towers. Right now the VHA has security at Kidston for specific issues that it is trying to track down. In this year's budget the VHA put the security expense in management improvements in the Capital Fund not the Operating Fund because the Operating Fund could not support the cost. The Capital Fund is going to take a \$177,000 hit in reduced funding this year. Mrs. Jones would like to propose for the board to think and talk about in the next couple of months as the Authority starts to get into the budgeting phase to possibly eliminate or drastically reduce the security expense. The Authority is going to do a little investigation now and get the calls for service from the Police Department to see if this is really necessary. Other housing authorities in the area do not have the security. For example, Millville Housing Authority had a security force and completely eliminated it last year because they could not afford it any more. Mrs. Jones asked if anyone had any questions or comments. Commissioner Diaz asked what the cost was for the security. The budgeted cost is \$65,000 and

this budgeted cost was just for Tarkiln Acres and D'Orazio Terrace. Commissioner Gordon asked if the Millville Housing Authority has had problems since eliminating the security. Mrs. Jones stated she does not know that they had anything different happening then they had before. She hasn't heard that they have. Commissioner Diaz asked how long the VHA provided security. Chairman D'Orazio stated forever. Mrs. Jones stated long before her. It is unknown if there was a particular reason why the VHA started providing security. Mrs. Jones stated there haven't been any major incidents reported from the security guards since she has been at the VHA. Mrs. Jones explained how the security guards perform their rounds and the VHA is not convinced that they are that effective. Again the bid was only awarded for two sites, which are Tarkiln and D'Orazio. Mrs. Jones does not know if that's because Asselta has cameras, but no one is watching the cameras. The cameras are there to enable us to go back and view tapes if something has occurred. Parkview does not have any cameras or security. The residents appear to be very good at policing themselves. Kidston and Olivio never had any security. The VHA has had an increase in young disabled move in at Kidston. Kidston has a high percentage of zero bedrooms units. They are smaller and considered a studio. Where as Olivio are one bedroom units. It appears that young disabled will take the first unit you offer them because they really need a unit where a senior may wait for the next unit. The result has been that there are some active young disabled in Kidston and the VHA is working on figuring out who is doing what in order to proceed with evictions if that is what the VHA needs to do. The VHA has hired, through the current security company, a guard to sit there in the evening hours to monitor what is going on. Other than that there hasn't been any report of crime. It is just the feeling that people are getting with the young disabled in the building. The security will continue there until we get it under control to some degree. Mrs. Jones would like to be able to have the calls for service next month to see what crimes have occurred. Mrs. Jones recalls two crimes. The big screen TV was taken right off the wall at Kidston. Then not too long after that the flat screen was taken off the wall and walked right out the front door at Olivio. We have since secured the TV's so this can not happen again. The amount of security guards on hand and their hours were briefly discussed. The majority of housing authorities do not provide security.

Mrs. Jones reported on West Avenue where D'Orazio Terrace is located the VHA owns some land purchased several years ago. There is some funding available for Supportive Housing. Supportive Housing is for individuals that may be disabled and can live on their own, but may need some services. For example, to make sure they are taking their medication, paying their bills, etc. It is really one of the only funding sources available for additional housing right now. Mrs. Jones is putting this idea out there to see what the Board's thoughts are on this type of endeavor. Technically, the VHA is already housing people that may require supportive services. It really isn't that much different of a population than we are already serving. It is just that there is funding available to build and it wouldn't be huge project. It would be maybe 60 units or less. Attached to this funding is social services funding. The VHA would partner with an agency that has this type of expertise and part of the funding would go to those services. The VHA would own building. The VHA would need vouchers for each resident to subsidize their rent. The VHA could either take that from its existing group of vouchers, which is going to have a 2% increase in funding so their might be some money available there for that or the VHA may be able to get a hold of additional vouchers through the State or HUD. Commissioner Diaz asked if the VHA would be aiming this for seniors or families. Mrs. Jones stated it wouldn't be family. Supportive Housing mostly targets the younger disabled. This would be really anybody under 62 and disabled. Mrs. Jones stated the long term idea on this could be to ask HUD to designate Kidston and Olivio for elderly only or near elderly only because right now they are opened to elderly, disabled and handicapped of all ages and this is never a good mix. In order to be able to ask for a designation of elderly only or near elderly only the VHA has to be able to say we have another complex where young disabled can live so we are not excluding them. Commissioner Asselta agreed regarding the need for young

disabled. Chairman D'Orazio asked if there is any idea of how many people that are currently in the high rise that this would help pull out. Mrs. Jones stated out of 103 units possibly a dozen. Mrs. Jones commented regarding disabled veterans. She stated sometimes we forget that disabled veterans are a population we service. For an example, if you are a disabled veteran that lives in Vineland they move right to the top of the waiting list because they get points for being a veteran, for living in Vineland and they receive points for being disabled. The purpose of this was to make sure the veterans got right to the top of the waiting list per the Occupancy Policy. Mrs. Jones stated she can investigate further regarding Supportive Housing to see if there are some possibilities. She would need to get a current survey on the property which should run between \$600-900. This would be the minimal initial investment before going to the next step. Mrs. Jones can bring this information back to the Board next month with some more updates on what is happening at the State level as far as that funding goes. Chairman D'Orazio asked if the funding was for a limited amount of time. Mrs. Jones stated generally they are. There is a federal option what is called Notice of Funding Availability, which is very competitive and there is a timeframe. Mrs. Jones believes the deadline is in a couple of months to get that application in. There is some other funding at the State level just for Supportive Housing that is in the housing bucket. That may be a better bucket to go after anyway because it is a small pool and the VHA already has the land. VHA will look at all aspects to see what avenue may be better. Solicitor Gabage stated many meetings ago there was discussion about maybe using that site to tie in with D'Orazio for renovation and he wondered if that was tabled now. Mrs. Jones stated not really. One of the things on the table is doing something with the D'Orazio Community Center regardless of whatever happens with the land next door. One of the ideas discussed was possibly tearing the community center down and have a common community center over on the new site that both sites can use. Mrs. Jones stated she just doesn't any money available for a major redevelopment for the authority. It would be a 9% tax credit deal through the State of New Jersey and to get to the 9% the VHA would have to have two tax credit deals before the 9%. The VHA doesn't even have one. This route would take years and may not ever happen. Another factor is the VHA doesn't know what the City will approve. Density is an issue. D'Orazio was built around 1967 so there are all new zoning rules. It will all depend on how interested the City is on making this happen. With the developmental centers closing you would think they would pay attention to this. Mrs. Jones is willing to give this a shot if the Board wants her to move forward. The Board agreed.

Mrs. Jones reported the State Comptroller did a study on local governments on how transparent they are regarding financial information. The study revealed that approximately 70% local governments were not transparent and didn't have information that was easily accessible by the public. There is a bill out there that is going to be passed that will mandate posting information on our website regarding financial information and meeting minutes. The VHA already has a website, but it will need more information on it. They are looking for mission and responsibilities as well as photos. We have these items already on the VHA's website. They are looking for 3 years of budgets, 3 years of financial statements that are submitted to HUD, 3 years of audits, monthly agenda and meeting minutes, any special notices, list of policies and procedures and where they can be obtained, list of Board Members and list of staff with their contact information. Mrs. Jones would like to suggest the VHA start working on this. She has spoken to Ron the VHA's IT person about it and it would not be a huge job to add these items to our web site. It is about getting our information in PDF, which is not a problem and then putting links up on the VHA's website. This is all public information and in updating the VHA's website it makes it easier for people to get to.

Commissioner Diaz questioned the elderly/disabled waiting list (763) as to how it is updated. Mrs. Jones stated the list is audited annually, which is called purging. Everyone on the list receives a letter with 10 days to respond. If they do not respond they are removed from the list. Sometimes the letters come back with a bad address because they have not advised the VHA of an updated

address. This is done to make sure we have current and good information. Commissioner Diaz questioned why it was such a high number. Mrs. Jones indicated there is a huge need for housing and about 30-40% of those on the list are disabled.

Mrs. Jones reported the two bedroom waiting list was opened a few weeks ago. It had been closed for years because the two bedroom list is the longest list. Mrs. Jones was just reviewing it yesterday and it is over 100 already. The Section 8 waiting list has been closed since 2002. The Section 8 waiting list also gets purged every year.

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

**Resolution #2011-21**  
**Resolution to Approve Monthly Expenses**

Chairman D’Orazio called for a report from Commissioner Asselta. Commissioner Asselta reported he reviewed all the bills and recommended payment in the sum of \$543,118.99. Commissioner D’Orazio called for a motion to approve the monthly expenses. A motion was made by Commissioner Burk; seconded by Commissioner Asselta. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Joseph Asselta	(Yes)
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon	(Yes)
Commissioner Beatrice Corbin	(Absent)
Commissioner Carmen Nydia Diaz	(Yes) – abstained on ck# 4448
Commissioner Vickie Burk	(Yes)
Chairman Robert A. D’Orazio	(Yes)

**Resolution #2011-22**  
**Resolution Authorizing Payment under the Capital Funds Appropriations Program to  
Charles J. Collins/Architect**

Chairman D’Orazio called for a motion to approve payment to Charles J. Collins/Architect in the sum of \$5,046.83. A motion was made by Commissioner Burk; seconded by Commissioner Asselta. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Joseph Asselta	(Yes)
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon	(Yes)
Commissioner Beatrice Corbin	(Absent)
Commissioner Carmen Nydia Diaz	(Yes)
Commissioner Vickie Burk	(Yes)
Chairman Robert A. D’Orazio	(Yes)

**Resolution #2011-23 Executive Session**

Chairman D’Orazio entered a motion to hold an Executive Session. A motion died for lack of need.

**Resolution #2011-24**  
**Resolution Authorizing Expenditures with Homeownership Funds for Public Housing Programs – 204 W. Oxford Street and 774 S.W. Boulevard**

Chairman D’Orazio called for a motion to approve Resolution #2011-24. A motion was made by Commissioner Burk; seconded by Commissioner Asselta. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Joseph Asselta	(Yes)
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon	(Yes)
Commissioner Beatrice Corbin	(Absent)
Commissioner Carmen Nydia Diaz	(Yes)
Commissioner Vickie Burk	(Yes)
Chairman Robert A. D’Orazio	(Yes)

**Resolution #2011-25**  
**Resolution to Dispose of Furniture and Equipment Utilizing the Disposition Policy**

Chairman D’Orazio called for a motion to approve Resolution #2011-25. A motion was made by Commissioner Burk; seconded by Commissioner Diaz. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Joseph Asselta	(Yes)
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon	(Yes)
Commissioner Beatrice Corbin	(Absent)
Commissioner Carmen Nydia Diaz	(Yes)
Commissioner Vickie Burk	(Yes)
Chairman Robert A. D’Orazio	(Yes)

No comments from press, public and/or Board Members. Brief discussion on possible re-organization meeting, but based on financial standing this may not be a good idea. The Board may be getting the Governor’s appointed commissioner soon.

With no further business to discuss, Chairman D’Orazio entertained a motion for adjournment of the Regular Meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Burk. The vote was carried unanimously by the Board Members present.

The Regular Meeting of The Board of Commissioners was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline S. Jones  
Secretary/Treasurer