

# Housing Authority of the City of Vineland

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**Thursday, May 21, 2015**  
**7:00 p.m.**

The Regular Meeting of the Housing Authority of the City of Vineland was called to order by Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa on Thursday, May 21, 2015 at 7:00 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 Elizabeth Gordon  
Commissioner Brian Asselta  
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena  
Commissioner Nicholas Fiocchi  
Commissioner Daniel Peretti  
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa

Also present were Jacqueline Jones, Executive Director, Wendy Hughes, Assistant Executive Director, Dan Avena and Linda Cavallo – Accountants 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 April 16, 2015. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta and seconded by Commissioner Gordon. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Abstain)
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon	(Yes)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Yes)
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena	(Yes)
Commissioner Nicholas Fiocchi	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for the Financial Report from Avena's office. Linda Cavallo reviewed the Financial Report for the seven months ended April 30, 2015.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa requested the Executive Administrative Report. Mrs. Jones stated the intent was to have the Authority's employment attorney present tonight to discuss the union contract. However, the union did not get back to the Authority on the final sign off of the proposed contract. Basically, in principle both parties have agreed on everything, but there are a couple of words they are going back and forth about. The CWA Local is out of Woodbury Heights, but apparently they have to report back to the National organization that signs off on the contract. The intent now is to bring the contract before the Board next month and at the same time bring some suggested changes to the personnel manual (i.e. personnel policy). Mrs. Jones reported that Wendy, Gloria and she have gone through the personnel policy over the past few months and sent it over to the employment attorney to review as well. He is finalizing some suggestions, but in theory we are all on the same page. Items were clarified in the personnel manual that were not clear as far as some wording. The major change would be to eliminate the benefit of retirement health benefits for anyone hired after this new policy is approved. It is no secret that the pension system in the State of NJ and the health

benefits are very expensive. The health benefits are not an automatic benefit to local governments. Local governments can vote that benefit in or out. The VHA is considered a local government. In 1997 retirement health benefits were voted in as policy here, but back then the economy was good and budgets weren't as tight as they are now. This will not affect the VHA's current obligations. It will just affect anybody hired after a certain date. Those employees will not receive the health benefits upon retirement. The other item in the VHA's policy is if an employee applies for disability retirement under the pension system the employee would also get health benefits. This will be removed as well. Nothing is being changed for existing employees. The only way that could change would be through state statute. A summary of the personnel policy will be provided to the Board next month of the changes being proposed. Mrs. Jones reported Mr. Gabage reviewed the union contract and he had no issues with it if we were going to present tonight.

The Audit will be wrapped up next week. The auditors will be here for a couple of days next week. The following week the exit interview will be conducted and then the audit will be filed with HUD. Mrs. Jones does not expect any issues with the audit.

Mrs. Jones provided an updated on the VHA's Capital Projects. The parking lot pavement replacement project at Kidston and Olivio should be completed next week. The project went fairly well considering the tight space constraints. The complex next door allowed our residents to park on their property. The VHA had to tow a few cars.

Mrs. Jones discussed the sewer line at Asselta Acres. There is a bridge that connects the property and the pipe under the bridge frequently backups. There is also a pipe near the Corbin Center with a similar problem. The sewer is cleaned out four times of year because of grease. The pipes have dips in them and it makes it difficult to clean out. A ballpark estimate to fix this problem is about \$112,000 and this cost does not include the engineer. The VHA is working on getting some estimates and will bring it back to the Board probably next month. It will be paid by the Homeownership money account. Mrs. Jones explained this was money from proceeds from a Homeownership Program where the Authority bought and sold property. The Authority made money from the program and in the 1980's it was invested and it made more money. It has to be spend on furthering affordable housing and this would qualify as one of those expenses.

There are two maintenance vehicles in dire need of replacement. They are used for maintenance purposes as well as snow plowing and spreading of salt. The replacement of these vehicles has been put out for bid because what is on the State Contract does not fit what the Authority needs. The bids are due June 9<sup>th</sup>, and this will be brought back to the Board next month for approval. The Homeownership money account will be used for the purchase of these two vehicles.

Mrs. Jones provided a brief overview of the progress of the Melrose Court Project. The project is moving along with no major issues. Mrs. Jones informed the Board of a Melrose Court dedication event that is in the process of being planned. The tentative date for this event is Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m. Mrs. Jones would like the Board to check their calendar as she would like all members of the Board to attend. It will be a good public relations event for the VHA since it has been 10 years since it has been working on this project. Mrs. Jones explained some plans for the event.

The VHA's budget for fiscal year, which starts October 1, 2015, is in process... The Budget must be finished and submitted to Trenton by July. Mrs. Jones explained the budget is written without knowing how much money we will be receiving from HUD. A budget committee meeting will be held in June and the budget will be brought to the June board meeting for approval.

All the growths and performance issues are being worked on. Gap #1 the disposition of the scattered sites is in progress. The VHA met with the city on disposing of the 72 homes and steps are being

taken to move forward with the disposition. Discussion with the HUD Newark office has taken place and they support the disposition of the scattered sites. Mrs. Jones explained no resident would lose their housing. The residents would be issued a Section 8 Voucher or some of the residents may be able to purchase the homes.

GAP #2 the employee post benefit issue will be addressed in the budget and the updated personnel policy. This will be an ongoing issue. It will never go away because of the VHA's obligation to pay health benefits for retirees, which right now consists of approximately 17-18 employees. We currently have 25 full time staff members and 3 of them do not have any health benefits at all. There are 2 retirements this year. One of them will be replaced as a full time position and the other position will be part time. In maintenance, there is one employee who has become ill and the VHA anticipates a retirement any day on that individual. This maintenance employee will not be replaced at all at this time.

GAP #3 Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD) is being looked at with the VHA's consultant, Rick Ginnetti. This is to convert some of the VHA's units to a different form a funding.

GAP #4 the succession planning of the Executive Director. Commissioner Chapman and Mrs. Jones have been working on this for a number of years. It was previously discussed to do a 360 evaluation of the Executive Director. Mrs. Jones is looking for some companies to perform the 360 evaluation. Mrs. Jones explained the 360 evaluation. The 360 evaluation was going to be looked at for a basis to find Mrs. Jones' replacement in the future.

Commissioner Chapman commented in reference to the sewer lines at Asselta Acres/Corbin Center. He stated the Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) in the State of New Jersey offers quite a few grants/loans for these type of needs. The VHA would be eligible as a local public entity. He recommends the VHA contacting the NJDEP. Commissioner Chapman will forward the contact information to Mrs. Jones.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:** Chairman Ruiz-Mesa assigned commissioners to Committees where the commissioners are no longer here. There are several Committees and most of them are not very active. The Committees will consist of the following:

**Personnel Committee**

Commissioner Chapman, Chair  
Commissioner Ruiz-Mesa  
Commissioner Asselta

**Budget/Audit Committee**

Commissioner Ruiz-Mesa, Chair  
Commissioner Gordon  
Commissioner Chapman

**Procurement/Bills/Contract Committee**

Commissioner Chapman, Chair  
Commissioner Gordon  
Commissioner Ruiz-Mesa

**Resident Services/Initiatives Committee**

Commissioner Gordon, Chair  
Commissioner Cartagena  
Commissioner Asselta

**Insurance Committee**

Commissioner Ruiz-Mesa, Chair  
Commissioner Asselta  
Commissioner Peretti

**Housing Committee**

Commissioner Ruiz-Mesa, Chair  
Commissioner Asselta  
Commissioner Fiocchi

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

**Resolution #2015-17**  
**Resolution to Approve Monthly Expenses**

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa stated he reviewed all the bills and recommended payment in the sum of \$912,399.86. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve the monthly expenses. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon	(Yes)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Yes)
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena	(Yes)
Commissioner Nicholas Fiocchi	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

**Resolution #2015-18**  
**Resolution of Compliance**  
**(Board of Commissioners and Executive Director)**

Mrs. Jones explained every year the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) wants certification that the Board and the Executive Director is in compliance with training. When a housing authority has new commissioners it can put the agency out of compliance. The VHA is technically in compliance because even though it has three new commissioners and they have not finished all their classes they have a certain timeframe to complete them. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2015-18. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon	(Yes)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Yes)
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena	(Yes)
Commissioner Nicholas Fiocchi	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

**Resolution #2015-19**  
**Resolution Establishing Amendment to Capitalization Policy**  
**(This Resolution amends Resolution 2013-87 adopted on November 21, 2013)**

Ms. Hughes explained the intent of the VHA's amendment to the Capitalization Policy was to capitalize anything purchased over \$2,000 and to expense appliances (ranges and refrigerators). When the previous amended was passed this slipped through and it still stated the VHA would capitalize every range and refrigerator. This amendment clarifies that the VHA will only capitalize anything purchase over \$2000 and expense appliances. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2015-19. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon	(Yes)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Yes)
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena	(Yes)
Commissioner Nicholas Fiocchi	(Yes)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Yes)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

There is no need for Executive Session tonight.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa asked for comments from the press and/or public. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa asked for comments from any 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 Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Asselta. The vote was carried unanimously by the Board Members present. The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jacqueline S. Jones  
Secretary/Treasurer