

# Housing Authority of the City of Vineland

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**Thursday, June 18, 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, June 18, 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	<b>(Absent)</b>
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	<b>(Absent)</b>
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	

Also present were Jacqueline Jones, Executive Director, Wendy Hughes, Assistant Executive Director, Charles W. Gabage, Esquire – Solicitor, Dan Avena and Linda Cavallo – Accountants, Michael Watson, Esquire 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 May 21, 2015. A motion was made by Commissioner Asselta and 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	(Absent)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for the Financial Report from Fee Accountant. Linda Cavallo reviewed the Financial Report for the eight months ended May 31, 2015.

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa requested the Executive Administrative Report. Mrs. Jones stated Mike Watson from Brown & Connery is in attendance this evening. Mr. Watson will be reporting to the Board about proposed changes in the Personnel Policy and retirement health benefits as well as the Union Contract. He will also make a statement prior to the Board entering executive session for Resolution #2015-26 to explain the purpose of the executive session.

The VHA audit has been completed for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2014. The accountants, Ms. Hughes and Ms. Jones met with the Auditors last week to do the exit interview. The Auditors will attend the July Board Meeting to present the audit. They had two issues, which

will be in the Management Letter. One of the issues is that 1 file out of 40 files had a miscalculation. Mrs. Jones stated it was really 1 file out of 120 files that they checked because they check them in groups of 40. Mrs. Jones believes it was at least 120 files, but she is going to find out the exact number. The other issue was that 4 out of 40 files they checked for inspections, 4 of the inspections were not re-inspected in 30 days and that was also something that fell through the cracks on VHA's end. The VHA's inspector had an emergency eye issue and those 4 inspections did not get completed in the 30 days that they were supposed to. Overall it was a good audit. There were no findings. One of their suggestions is they want the Executive Director to document the meetings with the fee accountants every month. Mrs. Jones stated the last 8 years it was okay that she did not document the meetings, but now it has been suggested.

Mrs. Jones stated the budget for year ending 2016 has been a challenge. It is almost complete and there is a budget meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10 a.m. at the accountant's office. Commissioners Gordon, Chapman and Ruiz Mesa will be attending the budget meeting as part of the Budget Committee.

In regards to Capital Projects - the parking lot replacement project at Kidston and Olivio has been wrapped up. The project went well and the VHA even received compliments from the tenants. The sewer issue at Asselta Acres is being working on with the VHA's engineer and we will also pursue the grants Commissioner Chapman mentioned at last month's meeting. The VHA has been told the sewer issue is something we have to deal with but it is not critical and not an emergency situation.

Last month it was reported bids were out for replacement of maintenance vehicles. The bids that were received were all were rejected. The VHA will put out the bid again and will hopefully bring back the results at next month's meeting.

Melrose Court is moving along, but not as quickly as we would like. There are some delays which always happened, but we are hoping they get back on track quickly. An email was sent stating the dedication ceremony would be held on Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> and we have moved that to Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>. The VHA's consultant advised us that if it is held on a Saturday we will not have the attendance of the officials that we would like to attend. We are anticipating the date of the dedication to be on Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> starting at 11 a.m. and finished by 1ish.

### **Old Business:**

**New Business:** Mrs. Jones reported the VHA is requesting a review of its health benefit experience to see if we could shop the same coverage for a lesser cost. Mrs. Jones anticipates there is going to be some changes in the health benefits from the State of New Jersey because of underfunding of the pension and the high cost of the health benefits. Mrs. Jones read that one of the possibilities is there going to change the health benefits so they are not as expensive for employers and not as good of coverage, but will also cost the employee possibly more in deductibles and co-pays. The VHA is just going to shop around. Being in the pool of the State of NJ may not really be beneficial. The VHA is not looking to be self-insured and is not looking at anything like that, but maybe getting a more favorable rate because of the VHA's experiences. It may not work because of its experiences this past year, but we can always shop again next year.

Mrs. Jones also reported the VHA has an existing shared services agreement with Clementon Housing Authority to manage their Section 8 Department and it is going well. The VHA has been approached to expand the shared services agreement to include qualified purchasing agent type services that Ron Miller is qualified to do and also IT services. Clementon H.A. is a small housing

authority consisting of 70 units. With the Board's permission, Mrs. Jones will pursue expanding the shared services agreement as far as preparing a quotation for Clementon. A motion from Commissioner Chapman was made for the Executive Director to pursue expanding the shared services agreement with Clementon Housing Authority; seconded by Commissioner Asselta.

The following vote was taken:

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

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

**Resolution #2015-20**  
**Resolution to Approve Monthly Expenses**

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa stated he reviewed all the bills and recommended payment in the sum of \$1,334,084.66. 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	(Absent)
Commissioner Daniel Peretti	(Absent)
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa	(Yes)

**Resolution #2015-21**  
**PHA Certification of Compliance with the PHA Annual Plan and  
Related Regulations Board Resolution to Accompany the PHA Plan**

Mrs. Jones explained every year every housing authority has to prepare an Annual Plan and submit it to HUD. It lists the authority's goals and objects for the next year. Included with that process is a meeting, which is held with the Resident Advisory Board that consists of the officers of the Resident Councils. The meeting is held to explain the authority's sources of income and discuss any suggestions they may have for Capital Improvements. Changes in Authority policies are also discussed, if any. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2015-21. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Asselta. The following vote was taken:

Commissioner Chris Chapman	(Yes)
Commissioner Elizabeth Gordon	(Yes)
Commissioner Brian Asselta	(Yes)
Commissioner Alexis Cartagena	(Yes)
Commissioner Nicholas Fiocchi	(Absent)

Commissioner Daniel Peretti (Absent)  
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa (Yes)

**Resolution #2015-22**

**A Resolution to Amend the Public Housing Admissions and Occupancy (ACOP and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Administration Plan (Admin Plan))**

Mrs. Jones explained the ACOP are the rules that govern the Public Housing Program and the Admin Plan are the rules that govern the Section 8 HCV program. They are similar, but are not exactly the same. There were a couple of rules that were passed that needed to be incorporated into these policies. Mrs. Jones briefly explained the changes to the Equal Access Rule and Violence Against Women Act. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2015-22. 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 (Absent)  
Commissioner Daniel Peretti (Absent)  
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa (Yes)

**Resolution #2015-23**

**Resolution Authorizing Payment under the Capital Fund Appropriations Program for Pavement Repair & Restoration at Kidston & Olivio Towers to Rick Slade Construction**

Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2015-23 for payment to Rick Slade Construction in the amount of \$202,263.47. 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 (Absent)  
Commissioner Daniel Peretti (Absent)  
Chairman Mario Ruiz-Mesa (Yes)

**Resolution #2015-24**

**Resolution Approving Revised Personnel Policy & Employee Manual**

Mrs. Jones explained the personnel policy and employee manual had not been updated in years. Wendy Hughes, Gloria Pomales and herself reviewed the document to make revisions. It was then given to Mike Watson the VHA's labor council who made additional revisions. Mr. Watson explained the goal was to make the Personnel Policy and Employee Manual more streamline and clearer for both the employees and the supervisors. He briefly explained the different sections of the manual. In revising the manual, all recent updates in Federal and State law as well as the Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund recommendations for employee policies and manuals were included into the existing manual. Mr. Watson briefly reviewed the changes to the manual, which included distribution of the manual every three years unless you are a new

employee; substantial updates were made in regards to disability, harassment and general discrimination; call out and requesting leaving procedures; the transitional duties policy was removed; there were prior policies that this Board and past Boards had adopted via resolution that were not in the policy and these were included; the employee review; discipline and grievance procedure were also streamlined and finally a Communications Media Policy was added. Mr. Watson stated the Revised Personnel Policy and Employee Manual is updated, streamlined, current and open for amendment as time goes on because laws will change. Mr. Watson also commented in regards to ADA and the law against discrimination with people with disabilities, the VHA is required to make reasonable accommodations when it is not a hardship on the authority. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2015-24. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Cartagena. The following vote was taken:

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

**Resolution #2015-25**  
**Resolution Amending Health, Dental and Prescription Coverage Policy – Retired Employees Hired on or after June 18, 2015**

Mr. Watson explained this resolution will eliminate retiree paid medical benefits for anyone who is hired on or after June 18, 2015. This does not affect current employees or existing retirees. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2015-25. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Cartagena. The following vote was taken:

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

**Resolution #2015-26**  
**Resolution Authorizing Executive Session**

Mr. Watson stated the Board is going to be presented with Resolution 2015-26 which is a resolution to go into Executive Session. The Board is being advised this particular subject is in regards to terms and conditions of a proposed collective bargaining agreement with Communications Workers of America Local 1085 and falls within the statutory exception under the Open Public Meetings Act. Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2015-26. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Asselta. The following vote was taken:

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

The Regular Meeting closed for Executive Session at 7:45 p.m.

The Regular Meeting reopened at 7:50 p.m.

Mr. Watson stated the Board is out of Executive Session. Minutes of the Executive Session were kept. Those minutes will be available for the public if and when it is determined that the privileges of the Open Public Meetings Act exceptions no longer apply to this particular situation. Mr. Watson requested the Chairman present Resolution #2015-27 for Board approval.

**Resolution #2015-27**  
**Resolution Approving the Union Contract between the Communication Workers of America (CWA) and the Housing Authority of the City of Vineland**  
**January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2017**

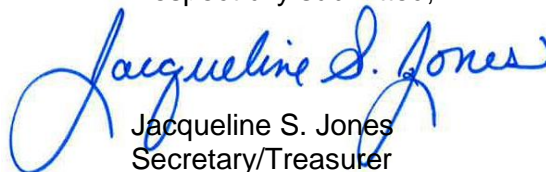
Chairman Ruiz-Mesa called for a motion to approve Resolution #2015-27. A motion was made by Commissioner Chapman; seconded by Commissioner Cartagena. The following vote was taken:

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

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 Asselta; seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The vote was carried unanimously by the Board Members present. The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
 Jacqueline S. Jones  
 Secretary/Treasurer