

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF CAMDEN

VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Camden met for a Virtual Regular Meeting on Wednesday, September 15, 2021, at 5:30 PM, E.S.T.

Mr. Victor Figueroa welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave the virtual meeting instructions in English and in Spanish. Mr. Chuck Valentine began the meeting with an invocation and a Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Those present were as follows:

Present: Commissioner Cameron Hudson
Commissioner Nohemi Soria-Perez
Commissioner Luis Quiñones
Commissioner Deborah Person-Polk

In Attendance: Victor D. Figueroa, Executive Director
Cristal Holmes-Bowie, Esq., of Michael A. Armstrong & Associates, LLC
Sadyhe Bradley, General Counsel
Charles Valentine, Director of Modernization
Edith Pagan, Director of Resident Initiatives
Melody Johnson-Williams, Director of HCV Program
Wanda Riley, Asset Manager
Dwayne Tucker, Interim Finance Director
William Spearman, Operations Manager
Jasmine Kee, Purchasing Specialist
John Kostyal, Human Resources Manager
Rosie Feliciano-Brown, Asst. to the Executive Director
Nathyya Soto, Executive Secretary
Dorixe De Jesus, Executive Secretary Assistant
Melvin Gibson, General Accounts Manager
Michael Dugger, ALP Administrator
Lakita Frederick, Property Manager (Senior High-rise)
Leslie Fisher, Management Assistant
Michelle Washington, Property Manager (Chelton Terrace)
Jahmel Basher, Property Manager (Baldwin's Run – WSMDS)
Michelle L. Farmer, Clerk (Baldwin's Run – WSMDS)
Damita Holmes, Assistant Manager (Roosevelt Manor V – Michaels)
Rich Larson, Novogradac & company LLP
Rhonda Wardlow-Hurley, HACC
Natasha Moore
Bill Williams
T. Smith

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Cristal Holmes-Bowie, Esq., of Michael A. Armstrong & Associates, LLC., stated that the Virtual Regular Meeting of the Housing Authority of the City of Camden, Board of Commissioners for Wednesday, September 15, 2021, was held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, that the notice requirements for it were satisfied and properly given in the Annual Notice which was advertised in the Courier-Post and posted on the Authority's website as well as in common areas of the Authority's various properties. So, then the meeting was called to order.

Commissioner Person-Polk: Roll Call.

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Present
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Here
	Commissioner Quiñones	Present
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Present

Mr. Figueroa stated that there was a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Person-Polk asked for approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, and asked for a motion.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Mr. Figueroa read a letter to him from HUD Secretary, Marica Fudge, congratulating "the HACC and the residents of Ablett Village. Your dedication and hard work on behalf of the people of Camden should be celebrated and emulated by cities across the nation. Housing is a foundation that helps people and communities thrive. Know that HUD will remain committed to ensuring that Camden's ongoing revitalization efforts are realized. I look forward to returning in the future to see Camden's continued rise."

Mr. Figueroa thanked commissioners, staff, stakeholders, elected officials, Mayor's Office, the mayor for the assistance in getting the \$35 million grant for the Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant for Ablett Village and Cramer Hill.

Congratulations was given to Leslie Fisher, Asset Management Assistant, for passing the RAD PBV Specialist training on July 2.

On September 3, a Family Self-Efficiency Program Renewal Grant was submitted, and they were hoping to get those funds for \$100,000. Last year around \$43,000 was received. They are waiting on HUD's response to that.

Flooding at Mickle Tower caused serious damage and stress for the residents on the 7th floor and downward from a broken sprinkler head broken by a resident suffering from mental illness issues that we're now trying to provide resources to. Mr. Figueroa thanked the staff, Asset Management, Wanda, Lakita, Resident Initiatives, Edith and staff. Everyone came together to help the residents. The relocation process was started to the Holiday Inn, Cherry Hill, with 11 residents. Starting on floors 7 and 6 and moving down, taking from 10 to 14 days for repairs. In consultation with insurance company, insurance assessors, CertaPro, and other staff. Residents are cooperating with HACC. Meals are being provided every day. Resident Initiatives and their staff, Assisted Living Program, and the Cathedral Kitchen are helping. Councilwoman Shaneka Boucher took a tour of the building and was happy with what she saw. Commissioner Hudson was thanked for his concern.

Commissioner Hudson thanked Mr. Figueroa for controlling the situation. He said that things were looking better already, going floor to floor, testing water and moisture levels behind the walls, and defining where new drywall will be installed. Residents were satisfied, and thanks to all for helping to move the process along.

Mr. Figueroa stated that the Mayor had called and inquiring as to the progress. Commissioner Person-Polk asked to prepare him a one-page status report ongoing. Mr. Figueroa said he would give a report similar to what the Commissioners get.

Commissioner Person-Polk gave an update of a situation at Baldwin's Run with approximately eight residents. Stated that even though the HACC was taking it over before December, they needed to track the expenses being incurred for repairs neglected by Penrose. Residents complained of ovens, toilets, windows – a lot of issues in the senior building. Trash issue was corrected, but repairs need to be done. Penrose has not been responsive even though they're still responsible, not HACC at this time. Issues with grass cutting and maintenance, including some homeowners too. Seniors were happy to have someone listen to them. Next manager needs a sensitivity to the residents and their needs.

Commissioner Hudson addressed meeting at Chelton, the Willows. Commissioner Person-Polk said it was a good meeting. Reminded that when there's a development company, the people don't know that. She let them know to complain to Ingerman, not HACC. Residents didn't understand that the HACC doesn't run Chelton.

Mr. Figueroa stated that the lawyers were trying to acquire the Baldwin's Run properties. He also mentioned two new staff members under New Hope, Jahmel Bashir and Michelle Farmer. He asked Bill Spearman to follow-up with the complaints Esther gave to Penrose to finish work before the transition

Commissioner Person-Polk asked for a motion to approve the Executive Director's Reports for June, July, and August 2021.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

OLD BUSINESS

No Old Business.

ORAL PRESENTATION

Commissioner Person-Polk announced the Oral Presentation by Rich Larsen and Novogradac & Company.

Richard Larsen displayed his Audit Report with highlighted items for commissioners to see, for the year ended December 31, 2019. The 2020 audit has been started. He stated a finding of an Unmodified Opinion on the Authority's financial statements, the highest level of assurance, and that no modifications needed to be made to conform with generally accepted accounting principles.

Next was the Independent Auditor's Report, required by every municipality in New Jersey, and he explained how it worked. They didn't identify any deficiencies in internal control that were considered to be a material weakness, the highest level of assurance – the best outcome that could be hoped for. Also, they looked at compliance with grants, laws, regulations, contracts, and grants. The results disclosed no instances of noncompliance, again the highest level of assurance and a fantastic outcome.

He also showed the Schedule of Federal Awards, almost \$30 million. Because the Authority spends so much money, you're required to have a Uniform Guidance Audit. The Housing Choice Voucher Program was used to test for compliance with HACCC, and an Unmodified Opinion on the Authority's compliance was given, so no findings, no issues; so fantastic, best outcome. They also tested internal control over compliance, and no deficiencies were found.

So, the three audit reports that were issued, the highest level of assurance was given and there were no findings or no issues that need to be reported to HUD. He stated that they audit about 65 housing authorities across the country, so to have no findings with a large program, especially during COVID and doing things remotely, was a credit to the staff. Nice job.

They found that there was an excess of \$11 million of liquid current assets, of which \$8 million was cash, and only current liabilities of \$1.2 or \$9.8 million of working capital or operating

reserves. HUD checks this every year to REAC (Real Estate Assessment Center). It's 7.5 months of operating reserves, which is very, very good for an authority of this size. Last year the Authority had \$7.4 million of working capital, so a nice job of building reserves, watching expenditures, so a very positive accomplishment.

As far as the accumulated deficit of \$34 million, that is a GASB (Government Accounting Standards Board), they're required to put their unfunded pension liability and unfunded employee benefits liability on the books. That's not something owed tomorrow; it's something owed over 25, 30 years to be paid as people retire. But it had a \$44 million negative effect on the statement whereas that \$34 million negative really would have been a \$10 million positive if that didn't have to be listed. That is calculated by the State of New Jersey.

The annual overhead for the Authority is \$15.7 million for cash out-of-pocket expenses to run the Authority or \$1.3 million per month. Even before capital grants, the Authority had \$900,000 of operating income this year.

After some adjustments, the adjusted net income was over \$2.1 million, bringing about the rise in working capital from \$7.4 to \$9.8 million because of doing well on the P&L. Email him for any concerns or specific things to look at. Thanks again to the staff as most authorities have findings.

Commissioner Person-Polk stated that she like the highlighted boxes, and that she would like her version to be like that, and Mr. Larsen said he would send that version. Mr. Figueroa pointed out that the Mayor noticed the good numbers and pointed out the good findings. Mr. Figueroa commended his staff, Finance, and Melody from Section 8, BDO, Dwayne, Melvin, Desiree.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 21-52 – Commissioner Person-Polk. Resolution 21-52 is a resolution authorizing a Closed Session of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners on Wednesday, September 15, 2021.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked to entertain a motion to accept Resolution 21-52.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Hudson
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:

Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
Commissioner Hudson	Yes
Commissioner Miller	Absent
Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

CLOSED SESSION

Begins: 6:25 p.m.

Entertain a Motion to come out of Closed Session, at 7:15 p.m.

1. Motion – Commissioner Hudson
2. Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez
3. Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Resolution 21-51 – Edith Pagan - Resolution approving a partnership and Memorandum of Understanding between the Housing Authority of the City of Camden and the After-School All-Stars Program to provide comprehensive after-school programs for local youth, utilizing HACC properties, and authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to execute documents and do all things necessary to effectuate the transaction(s).

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the public. Mr. Figueroa stated there were no questions from the public.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the commissioners. Mr. Figueroa stated there were no questions from the commissioners.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked to entertain a motion to accept Resolution 21-51.

Entertain a Motion to accept Resolution 21-51.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Hudson
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Commissioner asked Resolutions 21-53, 21-54, 21-55 be voted as a block-vote.

Resolution 21-53 – Melvin Gibson - Resolution approving the Housing Authority of the City of Camden payment register for the month of June 2021.

Resolution 21-54 – Melvin Gibson - Resolution approving the Housing Authority of the City of Camden payment register for the month of July 2021.

Resolution 21-55 – Melvin Gibson - Resolution approving the Housing Authority of the City of Camden payment register for the month of August 2021.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the public. Mr. Figueroa stated there were no questions from the public.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the commissioners. Mr. Figueroa stated there were no questions from the commissioners.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked for a block-vote of Resolutions 21-53, 21-54, 21-55.

Entertain a Motion to accept Resolution 21-53, 21-54, 21-55.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

(AFTER CLOSED SESSION, RECORDING STARTED LATE)

Resolution 21-56 – Melvin Gibson, General Accounts Manager. Resolution 21-56 is to authorize and approve the write off-of unpaid vacant joint accounts. The total write-off amount would be \$25,398.76 for fiscal year ending 2020.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the public. Mr. Figueroa stated there were no questions from the public.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the commissioners. Mr. Figueroa stated there were no questions from the commissioners.

Entertain a Motion to accept Resolution 21-56.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Resolution 21-57 – Jasmine Kee, Purchasing Specialist for the HACC. Resolution 21-57 is a resolution approving and authorizing to reject the sole bid received for Project #2021-10, Lobby Modernization Project for Kennedy, Mickle, and Westfield Towers and authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to execute documents and to do all things necessary to effectuate the transaction(s).

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the public. Mr. Figueroa stated none from the public.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the commissioners.

Entertain a Motion to accept Resolution 21-57.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Hudson
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Resolution 21-58 – Jasmine Kee, Purchasing Specialist for the HACC. Resolution 21-58 is a resolution approving and authorizing the rejection of bids received and the re-advertisement for Project #2021-11 – Mickle and Westfield Towers Boiler Room Improvements and authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to execute documents and to do all things necessary to effectuate the transaction.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the public. Mr. Figueroa stated no questions from the public(s).

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the commissioners.

Entertain a Motion to accept Resolution 21-58.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Natasha Moore, 634 Clinton Street, Camden, New Jersey. She stated that she had advocated for a young lady who was wrongfully evicted from the Roosevelt Manor in January of 2020. She had been there for 11 years, no problems. Over time, her rent went up. She stated that she's a mother of six children, one disabled, with the two youngest being her grandchildren. She is also a DYFS case. They offered to pay the back rent back in January of 2020, but it was refused by Annette Hilton. COVID was happening, and a lot of offices were closed causing a brick wall. So, Ms. Moore's mother, Lola Moore, visited Wanda Riley on behalf of the renter and was told that if the money was paid, they would grant her housing.

A lengthy conversation ensued between Ms. Riley and Ms. Moore regarding the eviction of Ms. Lauren Hinson.

Mr. Figueroa stated they will look at the situation further and make sure that everything was done properly. They'll reach out to Michael's as well and to her.

Commissioner Hudson mentioned Ms. Ella Baker, Ms. Tracie Powell, Ms. Carol Brummel, and the very successful back-to-school drives. He was a part of two of them. The residents came out and Edith was involved, and Ms. Rhonda Wardlow-Hurley in making sure that the kids put together supplies and bookbags and making sure that families are getting ready for the school year. So just a big, huge shoutout and thank you to them for their hard work.

Commissioner Person-Polk mentioned the meeting at Chelton, the food drive, how the staff at McGuire Gardens helped the seniors on the hot day, giving water, etc. Commissioner Hudson said the food distribution went really well with 100,000 pounds of food given out but could have used some additional promotion as there was some leftover food. Commissioner Person-Polk gave additional thanks for activities taking place and to Mr. Figueroa and staff. Mr. Figueroa stated that they were thankful to do these events this year as last year the back-to-school event couldn't be done.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked to entertain a motion to table Resolution 21-59. Commissioner Hudson stated that we all need to do our due diligence with what's in that resolution.

Entertain a Motion to table Resolution 21-59.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Hudson
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Commissioner Person-Polk would like to entertain a motion to adjourn.

Entertain a Motion to adjourn.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Absent
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Quiñones	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

ADJOURNMENT: 7:53 P.M.

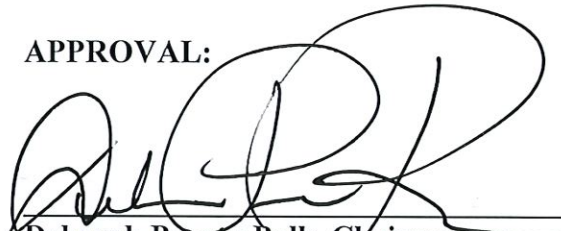
Attested to this 15th day of September 2021.

ATTEST:



Victor D. Figueroa
Executive Director

APPROVAL:



Deborah Person Polk, Chairwoman
Board of Commissioner