



Fort Lee Housing Authority

1403 Teresa Drive
Fort Lee, New Jersey 07024
Tel (201) 947-7400/7401
Fax (201) 947-9710

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH OF FORT LEE

MINUTES OF SCHEDULED MEETING

JULY 10TH, 2024

1. **MEETING** called to order at 6:05 pm by Chairperson, C. Blue, via a Hybrid Meeting on July 10th, 2024.
2. Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act the Chair read the following statement:

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the following matter:

On December 6th, 2023, a notice of this meeting, setting forth the date, time and location of this meeting was posted on the Housing Authority's officially designated public bulletin board at 309 Main Street, Fort Lee, New Jersey, the authority's website and provided to The Record, The Jersey Journal and The Clerk of the Borough of Fort Lee.

The Secretary is hereby directed to enter into the minutes of this Meeting this public announcement.

3. **Roll Call:**

PRESENT: Commissioners C. Blue, J. Blau, S. Bauer, R. Sohmer, D. Steinberg, E. O'Neill, A. Yook

ABSENT:

4. **Minutes:**

Motion made by S. Bauer, seconded by J. Blau, to approve the Minutes of the meeting of June 5, 2024, with one correction noted.

Ayes: C. Blue, S. Bauer, R. Sohmer, D. Steinberg, E. O'Neill, A. Yook, J. Blau
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

August 28, 2024



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5. Executive Director's Report:

Mr. Corriston advised the Board of the following:

- a. As previously discussed regarding a new hire, Sylvia and Mr. Corriston have met and interviewed a candidate with excellent potential who presently works at Bogota Bank. She has great customer service skills and is bilingual. She will be working with Section 8 eligibility and Rent Leveling. Sylvia will remain in charge of Rent Leveling but will be training her. This new hire will also work on special projects. The pay rate for the new hire has not been established yet. Mr. Corriston confirmed that he will notify the Board with regard to same.
- b. We have been working on implementing the HOTMA requirements for the HCV program. Steve has been a great help in reviewing the proposed revisions to the Administrative Plan which we have been revising based upon the form we received under our subscription with Nan McKay.
- c. We will be putting out our updating our Five-Year plan which is due in the Fall. Once that is completed, we will be getting ready to open the Section 8 Waiting List, which has been closed for 5-6 years.
- d. We have had a few tenant issues that we are addressing.

6. RESOLUTIONS:

- a. The Board approved the following resolution:
 1. Payment of Bills

Commissioner Yook asked if checks were being signed with two live signatures. Mr. Corriston confirmed that they are, and that we recently adopted a check writing and reconciliation procedure. No stamped signatures are being used and all statements are provided unopened to Mr. Corriston for review.

The motion for approval was made by R. Sohmer and seconded by J. Blau.

Ayes: Blue, Bauer, O'Neill, Steinberg, Yook, Sohmer, Blau

Nays: None



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2. Resolution for Fee Accounting Services

There was extensive discussion regarding the contract for accounting services. Comm. Blau advised of there were still unanswered questions. He wanted it to be noted that he will not be voting for this action. He stated that it was inappropriate to renew contracts with the auditors and accountants without the investigation being completed. Comm. Blau wants the minutes to reflect that he is taking action to stop the renewal of any and all contracts for the accountants, auditors and attorneys. He indicated that he had been through similar issues with the banking commission and that this is only the beginning of the investigation.

Commissioner Yook wanted the minutes to reflect that she takes issue with the fact that the accountant has not audited the FSS accounts. She stated that she was in favor of not renewing a one-year contract. She said we should consider hiring on a monthly term. Mr. Corriston stated that it can be a month-to-month contract. Commissioner Blau said he is not going to have a standard contract. He said the accountant may be involved in the investigation.

Commissioner Ms. Yook indicated that it seemed he did not perform his job right. Commissioner O'Neill indicated that this is something that the Auditors were responsible for, not the accountant.

Mr. Corriston indicated that the FSS escrow was similar to a security account. In that the funds were in trust for the participants and were not supposed to be used except to give the money to the participants or return it to HUD.

Mr. Corriston indicated that he had the report from the insurance company auditor for review by the Board. He reviewed the salient points of the report with the Board.

Commissioner Blau asked if the people who were getting additional benefits were still getting them. Mr. Corriston indicated that the payments had ceased immediately.

Commissioner Steinberg indicated that she felt that Mr. Furlong should be hired for a year as he was not responsible for what happened. Several members said that they would not approve a one-year contract.

Commissioner Blau said that he'd spoken to an attorney, and reiterated he was not going to support hiring Mr. Furlong. He said we should not renew a one-year contract while the investigation is open.



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Commissioner Bauer suggested we do the contract on a month-to-month basis rather than for one year.

Commissioner Yook said she would not approve a year but may consider a month-to-month contract.

The Board took a vote on whether to approve a one-year contract as proposed by the Agenda.

Ayes: C. Blue, D. Steinberg
Nays: E. O'Neill, A. Yook, J. Blau, S. Bauer, R. Sohmer

Commissioner O'Neill made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bauer to hire Mr. Furlong on a month-to-month basis.

On roll call:

Ayes: E. O'Neill, C. Blue, R. Sohmer, A. Yook, S. Bauer, D. Steinberg
Nay: Blau (Note: Commissioner Blau initially voted "No" but then changed to abstention. He subsequently sent an email requesting that his Abstention be changed to a "No").

3. Resolution for Audit Services:

Mr. Corriston indicated that our previous auditor did not submit a proposal. The only proposal we received was from Novogradac & Company LLP. They work with dozens of Housing Authorities across the US and Puerto Rico including the Bergen County Housing Authority. We would be working with Richard Larson, and he has been in the business for many years. They have never worked here but are aware of what took place. They will be very thorough. Novogradac is a very reputable company. Mr. Larson has been in contact with Mr. Corriston. They have been advised that we want everything reviewed. Their fee is \$1100 more than what we paid last year. The Audit will be for the year 2023.

On roll call:

Ayes: E. O'Neill, C. Blue, R. Sohmer, A. Yook, S. Bauer, D. Steinberg
Nay:
Abstain: J. Blau



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7. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Corriston said he was concerned about comments that there are many unanswered questions about what happened. He said he would be happy to sit down and meet with any Commissioners to answer any questions about the programs and what apparently occurred.

Motion made by S. Bauer and seconded by J. Blau to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 pm.

Ayes:	C. Blue, S. Bauer, R. Sohmer, D. Steinberg, E. O'Neill, A. Yook, J. Blau
Nays:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	

Respectfully submitted,

Terrence Corriston
Executive Director

August 28, 2024