MINUTES . . . REGULAR MEETING . . . JANUARY 13, 2020

The members of the Bethlehem Housing Authority met in regular session Monday, January 13, 2020 at 4:30 P.M., at the Monocacy Tower, Community Room, 645 Main Street, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT	ABSENT
Mr. Joseph E. Long, Chairman	Mrs. Valerie McLendon
Mrs. Iris Linares	Mr. Greg Solderitch
Mr. Rogelio Ortiz	

Also present were: William W. Matz, Jr., Esq., Solicitor; Jay D. Schuster, Secretary-Treasurer; Diana Moreno, Assistant Secretary; Staff Members and members of the general public.

Reorganization of the Board

The election of officers was turned over to Attorney Matz.

Solicitor Matz first reiterated the format for the election of board officers for the year 2020. He stated that all nominations would be from the floor; each nomination shall be processed separately beginning with the chairperson followed by the vice chairperson; no second would be required although one may be made as a form of endorsement; nominations are closed when no further nominations are made.

Nominations for Chairman and Vice Chairman for the BHA Board of Commissioners for the ensuing year January 13, 2020 to January 11, 2021 were opened.

Attorney Matz called for nominations for Chairperson of the Board.

Mrs. Linares made a motion to nominate Commissioner Joseph E. Long for Chairperson.
Mr. Ortiz seconded the motion.

There being no further nominations for chairman, Mr. Schuster took the vote for Joseph Long for Chairperson.

Roll Call: Ayes – Linares/Ortiz/Long; Nays – None.

Atty Matz opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman of the Board.

Mr. Long made a motion to nominate Iris Linares for Vice Chairman.

Atty Matz stated that since there are no further nominations made for this position, he would ask for a roll call.

Roll Call: Ayes – Linares/Ortiz/Long; Nays – None.

Atty. Matz stated that the election of new officers for the coming year is now closed and approved.

Mr. Long thanked his fellow commissioners for their support for his position of Chair for the Board.

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 9, 2019 were presented. Ms. Linares made a motion to accept the minutes of December 9, 2019. She also thanked the board for nominating her for Vice Chairperson. Mr. Ortiz seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes – Linares/Ortiz/Long; Nays – None.

Mr. Ortiz made a motion to approve the monthly bills for December 2019.
Mrs. Linares seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes – Linares/Ortiz/Long; Nays – None.

Chairman Long reported on the 2020 Commissioners' conference he attended in Arizona. He stated after attending, he was so thankful and appreciated everything the staff does for the Housing Authority. He noted that he wasn't shocked, that we are lightyears ahead of many of the housing authorities, not only in the state of PA but throughout the entire country. He said when you listen to some of these other board members and you talk to them, we have an excellent housing authority and he is very proud of the job everybody does here. It makes their job easier. He said we are just so far ahead of what's going on within the housing authorities. When he heard the ratings of some of the other authorities coming in below 90%, he was baffled on how anybody can be below 98-99% which is where we generally are, and that's because of the job that the staff does and he really appreciates that. In addition, they talked about teamwork. They were trying to explain how this and that works, and teamwork and getting along, and I'm thinking we already have that. BHA already has everything they were talking about. Its things we do, that are already in place.

He continue to say that they went to other functions that talked about the regular housing authority and non-profits, and how you could incorporate non-profits. Not with the housing authority but separate from the housing authority. "It's a pretty complicated thing to set up and get going, but it's something to think about. They also talked about the financials for the commissioners. He's been on this board for a while, and he still not used to the SEMAP, and the "housing authority language" it's a total different language than what he speaks. The instructors there were using the same language that the housing authorities use. Just listening to what they say, it's just amazing. Again, he came back to the point that we have a good housing authority, we are in good shape, and he just appreciates every one of us.

Mr. Schuster had two brief items. First, he stated that the training was excellent. It was his first formal training as an Executive Director, and financial training in improving our scores. He has some suggestions for the staff, but he thanked the staff for a fantastic job. They also provided some suggestions as to what he can do to work even better with commissioners and suggestions as to reports he can provide and he'll review some of those in the future. He thanked the board for making it possible for him to attend. Second, the monthly meeting with the BHA community police will be held on Wednesday, January 17, 2020. They will be reviewing all of the drug and/or criminal activities occurring in the properties.

For the Scholarship Committee, Ms. Moreno stated that two students came in to request scholarship money for the Spring Semester. Mr. Long said that's good.

For the Finance Committee, Mr. Long had nothing to report.

There was nothing to report for the Finance or Personnel Committee.

For the Resident Advisory Committee, Mr. Ortiz reported that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 12th at 12:30 P.M. The meeting will take place at the Monocacy Tower Community Room and at that they will review the goals and objectives of the new annual plan.

Under Resolutions the board was presented with the Pension Plan Amendment. On January 14, 2019, the board of Commissioners unanimously approved changes to our Personnel policy as it pertains to the BHA Retirement Plan as follows:

Effective January 1, 2019, for all newly hired employees, the Authority will make the following contributions to the pension plan for employees hired after:

January 1, 2019	7% of gross pay
January 1, 2020	8% of gross pay
January 1, 2021	9% of gross pay

Pursuant to this change, BHA's investment advisor, Honor Townsend & Kent, LLC, working in conjunction with the law firm, Cozen O'Connor have now drafted an amendment to our retirement plan with the noted changes.

Mrs. Linares made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ortiz, to approve changes to our Personnel Policy as it pertains to the BHA Retirement Plan.

Roll Call: Ayes – Linares/Ortiz/Long; Nays – None.

RESOLUTION NO.2503 OF 2020 – APPROVING OF CONTRACT FOR MODERNIZING TWO ELEVATORS AT THE LITZENBERGER HOUSE. (NOTE: This resolution is entered separately and made a part of these minutes.)

The Board reviewed the bids received for the elevator modernization at Lizenberger House.

Specifications were picked up by two (3) interested contractors. Bid proposals were submitted by: Otis Elevator Co., Allentown, PA ($457,984.00); Current Elevator Tech., Milford, PA ($467,080.00); and Kencor Elevator, West Chester, PA ($573,700.00).

It was the recommendation of the staff to award the contract for the elevator modernization to Otis Elevator Company.

Mrs. Linares made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ortiz, to award the contract as noted.

Roll Call: Ayes – Linares/Ortiz/Long; Nays – None.

Under New Business Jay introduced Ms. Patricia Quarado, a recruiter for the 2020 Census. Patricia stated she would like the housing authority's assistance in recruiting people. She said they are in

dire need of census takers in Bethlehem. She encourage us to get the word out to our tenants and she supplied posters and materials.

Long stated that elected officials are based on the Census taken every 10 years. The most important thing is the fact that you get the per capita money that comes in to the City of Bethlehem that helps fund the programs that we have here with the Housing Authority or with the City itself. So, the Census is very important.

Patricia noted that we shouldn't be afraid to fill out the census. It's for our own good, and it will benefit the seniors, and people on disability as well. The Census will be mailed out in March. The job will be from 8-12 weeks and it won't start until after they get all the information from the people. The job will consists in going to those homes where forms were not received back.

Mr. Ortiz asked if someone who lives in housing wants to work, would that income affect their rent. Ms. Quarado said it's been waived. It will not be included as income.

Mrs. Linares noted that at the 2020 Commissioners conference, they mentioned the Census and said how important it is, even for HUD.

Mr. Long stated that the important thing is the representation, in the federal or even state government because it's determined by the population. If not everybody is signing up in your City, you could lose a representative and money coming into the City.

Chairperson Long noted that the next regular board meeting will be held on Monday, February 10, 2020 at 4:30 P.M. in the community room of the Monocacy Tower.

There being no further business to transact, Mr. Long declared the meeting adjourned.

Jay D. Schuster
Executive Director