

**MINUTES . . . REGULAR MEETING . . . DECEMBER 12, 2022**

The members of the Bethlehem Housing Authority met in a regular session Monday, December 12, 2022 at 4:00 P.M. (HYBRID Meeting). Those present and absent were as follows:

**PRESENT**

**ABSENT**

Mrs. Iris Linares, Chairperson  
Mrs. Valerie McLendon, Vice Chairperson  
Mrs. Susan Acevedo  
Mr. Rogelio Ortiz  
Mr. J. Marc Rittle

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

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 12, 2022 were presented. Mr. Ortiz made a motion to accept the minutes of December 12, 2022. Mrs. Acevedo seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes - McLendon/Acevedo/Ortiz/Rittle/Linares; Nays - None

Mrs. McLendon made a motion to approve the monthly bills for November 2022.  
Mrs. Acevedo seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes - McLendon/Acevedo/Ortiz/Rittle/Linares; Nays - None

Nothing reported under Courtesy of the floor.

Under Old Business Mr. Ritter reported one item. Discussion back in our September Board Meeting inquiring about OPEB'S (Other Post Employee Benefits). Richard has put out an RFP, its governmental accounting standard which requires Housing Authorities to comply with GASB-75 for any OPEB related benefits. GASB-75 requires an actuarial study be done every 2 years to determine cost to BHA to provide the OPEB - benefits and the cost to be included in our annual financial statement. We received one response to the RFP, Conrad Siegel located in Harrisburg, PA. Conrad Siegel prepares GASB-74/75 evaluations for over 450 public entities. The cost for the initial two year study is \$8,100.00, which includes a 3,000 one-time benefit cost up front. Richard checked the references and they come highly recommended. BHA will be contracting Conrad Siegel.

Mrs. Linares asked if this is to determine when an employee retires whether they can collect benefits until the age of 75. Mr. Ritter replied from the ages of 62-65. As well as looking into what former executive director, Jay Schuster was asking about the GASB-75 for retired BHA employees to the age of 75. Mr. Linares asked if that's just employees not spouses. Mr. Ritter said correct. Mr. Richard Synder stated what this will do is give us the actual cost, what we have to set aside to have a better understanding from a financial standpoint on how it will affect the authority.

Mr. Ortiz made a motion to approve the contract to Conrad Siegel for the GASB-75 study. Mrs. Rittle seconded.

Roll Call: Ayes - McLendon/Acevedo/Ortiz/Rittle/Linares; Nays - None

Nothing reported under Chairperson's report.

Under the Interim Executive Director's report, Mr. Ritter reported a few items. First, our monthly meeting with the BHA Community police officers will be held on Wednesday December 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:00. At that time we'll be reviewing any drug and criminal activity occurring on our properties. Secondly, we've been struggling with our Family Development Office, FDO. We've had a very major staff shortage over the past two years and we're falling behind in some of our daily duties and re-exams, so they're really struggling. So, they also put an RFP out, it's out currently for competitive pricing to outsource some of our re-exams. It went out on the 9<sup>th</sup>, we haven't heard anything back but down the road we may be looking to hire them on a one-year contract, second year extension if we still need them at that point. We need to bail out the FDO office that is having a hard time. We've been down anywhere between 4-2 clerks at any given time in the past two years. So, you'll see that coming up in the near future. Lastly, in lieu of the Christmas party this year and to avoid COVID outbreaks again, we're going to play it safe. We will give the afternoon of Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> off, a half day and a \$25.00 gift card from Walmart Stores to all BHA staff.

Chairperson Linares asked about a recent incident at Pembroke. Mr. John Lamana reported that the victim is not from housing, but the shooter was and he's in custody and the investigation is ongoing. He will report more information on a later date.

**UNDER RESOLUTION - APPROVING OF THE ANNUAL ADUIT OF FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2022.**

Mrs. McLendon made a motion to approve the annual audit of fiscal year ending March 31, 2022. Mr. Ortiz Acevedo seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes - McLendon/Acevedo/Ortiz/Rittle/Linares; Nays - None

**RESOLUTION NO. 2555 OF 2022 - APPROVING OF THE ANNUAL FIVE YEAR PLAN 2023.**  
NOTE: (Resolution is entered separately as a part of these minutes.)

Mrs. Linares made a motion to approve the annual Five Year Plan 2023. Mrs. Acevedo seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes - McLendon/Acevedo/Ortiz/Rittle/Linares; Nays - None

Under New Business, Chairperson Linares recommended to the board that in lieu of the BHA Christmas luncheon that we give all BHA staff a gift card and a half day off on Christmas Eve.

Mr. Linares made a motion to approve a gift card and half day on Christmas to all employees. Mrs. McLendon seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes - Acevedo/McLendon/Ortiz/Linares; Nays - None

Nothing under Committee Reports - Scholarship Committee or Finance Committee.

Under Personnel Committee, Chairperson Linares said they're working on the Executive Director assignment.

Under the Resident Advisory, Mr. Ortiz reported that on Thanksgiving they gave out over 200 turkeys with the trimmings. They also have a Christmas party coming up Thursday, the 15<sup>th</sup> of December and they will be giving out over 90 bikes through the bike program. He added that if

any one is interested in more information to give him a call. Mrs. McLendon commented that Turkeys' were also given to Parkridge tenants. Mrs. Linares thanked Mr. Ortiz.

Under New Business, John Ritter gave the floor to Paula Johnson, Executive Director of the Northeast Community Center. Paula Johnson reported that recently they had the ribbon cutting for their new food pantry. They expanded due to grant they received that the BHA Board did approved probably about a year ago. She thanked the board and was there to ask for yet another approval for a grant project.

NECC was selected by the Helen and R.K Laros Foundation as a grant recipient. She had written a grant in the amount of \$34,000.00 and it was approved by the Trustees to support upgrades to the reception and administrative area of the Fink Building. So, in addition to creating a more secure and appropriate reception area the grand funds will also allow them to install a water fountain, bottle filler and a touchless faucet in all of their rest rooms. She added that it has been about 6 years ago that they did their very first renovation since she's been there, it was about \$150,000.00 in renovations to their men's, women's, for the staff/ADA approved bathrooms and reading room. It was a huge renovation and that improved the building wonderfully.

In addition, they just completed their second renovation which was \$110,000.00 food pantry, which is just incredible and they very happy. "It's just wonderful for the community and so we just feel this will be an excellent addition to the building as well." Now that they have the new food pantry space, they have a new entrance to the food pantry, with its own separate operating entity. They have a new 6 foot ADA approved ramp to enter the food pantry, and there'll be adding an awning, The awning will be put on and now when the Second Harvest Food Pantry comes every other week they can just roll the pallet jack up and into the food pantry, which is incredible for their volunteers that they don't have to be lugging thousands of pounds of boxes in bad weather conditions.

The renovations will improve functionality of their foyer area for their staff, and clients. The entrance is currently hindered by a small unnecessary wall that will inhibit a proper reception and client waiting area. It will improve the safety, security and privacy of the staff and clients that come in to speak with their administrative assistant, who will hopefully be hired soon because it will allow the proper space and time to hire a full time administrative assistant. It will improve the quality and aesthetics of the building for clients, staff and donors who come into the building. And it will allow them to continue to meet their agency's mission of meeting the needs of the Marvine-Pembroke community.

Shawn Carry Construction is the contractor who completed the renovations for them, within that very close Lowe's timeline of about 6 months, it's the same type of timeline the R.K. Laros Foundation says that the grant funds must be spent which is by June. She was excited to be there to request the permission because it's imperative for their contractor to be able to put in for permits to the City of Bethlehem an order materials now, as we all know the supply chain is backed up and terrible.

Mr. Ritter requested a motion from the board so they can move forward on getting estimates and permits that are needed as it's time sensitive project.

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12/12/2022

**Mr. Ortiz made a motion to authorize the Northeast Community Center to proceed with the renovations to upgrade the reception and administrative area of the Fink Building. Mr. Rittle seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call: Ayes - McLendon/Acevedo/Ortiz/Rittle/Linares; Nays - None**

**Nothing reported Under Miscellaneous Reports, Other Business - Board Members, Solicitors, and Staff or Public Comments.**

**Chairperson Linares noted that the next regular board meeting will be held on Monday, January 16, 2023 at 4:00 P.M. at the Monocacy Tower, community room.**

**There being no further business to transact, Mrs. Linares declared the meeting adjourned.**

*John Ritter*

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**John Ritter  
Interim Executive Director**