

MINUTES... REGULAR MEETING... NOVEMBER 14, 2022

The members of the Bethlehem Housing Authority met in a regular session Monday, November 14, 2022 at 4:00 P.M. (HYBRID Meeting). Those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

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.

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 17, 2022 were presented. Mrs. Acevedo made a motion to accept the minutes of October 17, 2022 12, 2022. Mrs. McLendon seconded the motion.

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

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

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

Nothing reported under Courtesy of the floor.

Under Old Business Mr. Schuster reported that on November 2nd, BHA had a follow up meeting with the Monocacy residents who were present at our last Board meeting. We had a similar type of attendance as far as numbers. They met to discuss concerns related to Monocacy Towers that were raised at the October 2022 board meeting. The meeting was very productive and residents voiced their concerns and offered suggestions which we are implementing.

Mrs. Linares asked if there are any concerns or issues at Litzenberger, and if they have a tenant council. Mr. Schuster stated that they do not have a tenant council at Litzenberger, but they did have a tenant meeting with the tenants earlier this year.

Mr. John Ritter added that they met with the Litzenberger tenants and there were a few questions that came up and one of the big things was putting a table outside where they can all gather which we provided to them. They also want new air conditioning in the Community room. Overall, everyone seems very happy.

Chairperson Linares was happy to hear that. She reported that at the Bartholomew House the residents seem to be very happy there too.

Under Chairperson's report, Mrs. Linares that after talking to Mr. Marc Rittle, they'd like to have a board executive session. She suggested to schedule the meeting on a Monday. The Board agreed to have the meeting on Monday, November 28th, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. at the Monocacy Tower Conference Room.

Under the Executive Director's report Mr. Jay Schuster reported one item. BHA's application to HUD to proceed with the conversion of our former Marvine Recreation building, is on hold. HUD is delaying our application until they revise some of the requirements under a term they call RAD notice with explanation. So, they are not prepared to accept our application as of yet. They revised the requirements, and Mr. Kichline was in communication with them about this.

Mr. Curt Kichline replied that they're hoping to have the new regulations out by January 1, 2023. Chairperson Linares asked by new regulation is it something HUD came up with. Mr. Curt Kichline and Mr. Jay Schuster replied yes.

Nothing under Committee Reports - Scholarship Committee, Finance Committee or Personnel Committee.

Chairperson Linares asked if Dominic Albanese finalized us on the baseball field plans. Mr. John Ritter replied just verbally. Mrs. Chairperson Linares asked if he has all the necessary documents such as insurance. Mr. John Ritter replied he has everything in place, we're just waiting for him to send it to us.

Under the Resident Advisory Committee, Mr. Jay Schuster reported that the next public Resident Advisory Board meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, November 17th at 1:00 P.M. at the Monocacy Community room. At that time our goals and objectives for BHA's Five Year Plan will be discussed in detail. This will be an in person meeting and we'll be finalizing our goals for the next Five Year Plan. We'll also entertain any questions or comments from the Resident Advisory Board members and then we will finalized our plan and submit it to the Mayor for his approval and then it will be sent on to HUD.

Under the Deputy's Executive Director's Mr. John Ritter reported two items. Our monthly meeting with the BHA Community Police officers will be held on Wednesday, November 16th, 2022 at 9:00 A.M. At that time they'll review any drug or criminal activity occurring on our properties. Secondly, we received our PHAS which stands for Public Housing Assessment System. Last year, we were a Standard Performer having a score of 89, and for fiscal year of 2022 we were a High Performer with a score of 94. So having a higher score puts us into the level of a high performer, which could increase our capital funds for Fiscal year 2023. In addition, as a high performer it's less paperwork reporting to HUD as well.

Chairperson Linares replied Congratulations.

Nothing to report under Resolutions.

Under New Business. Mr. Jay Schuster had one item. For consideration and approval, Jay referred to the letter he gave the board stating with the pending of his retirement with only several weeks away, there's a need for a seamless transfer of the authority of the office of the Executive Director. "Mr. John Ritter years of service and responsible conditions including Deputy Executive Director make him in my opinion the most qualified candidate." Although he's aware that the Board of Commissioners will make the final choice in accordance with the States Civil Service regulations, it is his recommendation that he serve as Interim Director until that permanent choice is made.

In addition to serving in the capacity as the Interim Executive Director he recommended that his salary be increased to \$125,000 annually, when permanent Board approval is determined in the near future, salary figures can be negotiated at that time.

Chairperson Linares stated she is in agreement with Mr. Schuster, for Interim Executive Director until we make a permanent choice, but not sure about the salary.

Attorney Matz stated that his appointment as Interim Executive Director the salary would raise to that level. It would be subject to change as it relates to a decision on appointing somebody in that role, whether it's he or otherwise. It doesn't hold the Commissioners to a salary of anything beyond that point, it just fills the gap of having a title that fits that need that would be consistent with his role. He's a Deputy so he would come in as a result of the absence of the Executive Director. Chairperson Linares thanked Attorney Matz.

Mr. Jay Schuster mentioned the item about negotiation to the Board if they make the decision to make Mr. John Ritter the permanent Director then the salary would logically have to be reviewed and increased because that salary is well below the average salaries of Directors' in our area.

Mr. Marc Rittle agreed with the salary for the title of Interim, and once a Director is chosen that's a different position and we'll discuss what those salaries are for the people who have them.

Mr. Marc Rittle made a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. John Ritter with a salary of a \$125,000 commencing his role as Interim Executive Director effective the 2nd of December of 2022. Mrs. McLendon seconded.

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

Mrs. Valerie McLendon stated that Mr. Ritter has been doing a great job in every position he's been in since she's been on the Board. Chairperson Linares agreed.

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, December 12, 2022 at 4:00 P.M. at the Monocacy Tower, community room. She wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

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

J. D. Schuster

Jay D. Schuster
Executive Director