

**MINUTES . . . REGULAR MEETING . . . JUNE 8, 2020**

The members of the Bethlehem Housing Authority met in a regular session Monday, June 8, 2020 at 4:30 P.M., Teleconference (Virtual Meeting). Those present and absent were as follows:

**PRESENT**

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

**ABSENT**

Also present were: William W. Matz, Jr., Esq., Solicitor; Jay D. Schuster, Acting Executive Director; Diana Moreno, Assistant Secretary; Housing Authority Staff Members; members of the general public.

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 18, 2020 were presented. Mr. Solderitch made a motion to accept the minutes of May 18, 2020. Mrs. McLendon seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes -Linares/ McLendon/ Ortiz/Solderitch/Long; Nays - None.

Mrs. Linares made a motion to approve the monthly bills for May 2020.  
Mr. Solderitch seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes -Linares/ McLendon/ Ortiz/Solderitch/Long; Nays - None.

Under Old Business Long asked if we have any new cases of COVID-19? Mr. Schuster commented that there were several more reported. John Ritter said a few more were reported, not many. Chairman asked in the high rises or developments. John said more in the family developments.

Mrs. Linares spoke to a tenant on Election Day while working at Bartholomew who contracted the virus, he was doing well.

Under Chairman's report, Chairman Long once again commended the staff for doing an outstanding job in spite of all the disadvantages that are around us today. He appreciates everything we're doing, and to pass that along to all BHA staff. Mr. Schuster will make sure to let the staff know.

Under the Executive Director's Report, Jay had a three items. First, twice a year we write off uncollected debts, but we continue to collect those debts through the Credit Bureau and sending out letters. He reported that Section 8 has collected over \$11,000 in repayment agreements since the beginning of the year. That is really good, because I think they are trying to get housed again. So it's important we keep reporting delinquent accounts. Long commented they have to pay off their debt before they can apply to come back to public housing. Jay agreed.

Secondly, we're making some necessary physical changes to the Monocacy 4<sup>th</sup> floor lobby area, to accommodate the resident and applicant traffic flow. It's also going to serve to protect the Authority from any possible liability risks.

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There will be changes to where the receptionist is, and how things flow when you get off the elevator. We've all been passing one another, resident and staff, and that has to be changed. The changes are going to be paid for from the additional CARES Act funding that we got that has to be used by December 31<sup>st</sup>. So we won't have a problem accomplishing that. We just have a preliminary plan right now. Mr. Kichline will be happy to answer any questions that anyone would have, today or going forward.

Linares asked was that mandated to do because of the pandemic?

Schuster responded it's come up because of the virus. When this all started, HUD asked if we could actually relocate the entire Main Office because of the interaction with tenants and staff on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Rather than do that, we moved four tenants out of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. But we still have a problem due to the elevator use, access to the building, and how things flow there. HUD has never said you have to do this, but to reopen in a safe way, it wouldn't be possible to reopen because of that situation there. Also what Joe Long brought to our attention, regarding distancing and interviewing people, our waiting area, none of it will work under the current circumstances.

Mr. Kichline said that we're in the preliminary stage, but one of the key things will be the elevator lobby will be separated. So if residents get off the elevator, they can't just mill around and go up hallways. If they get off at the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, it's to go out of the building. So that's the biggest thing, and because of the distancing, some of the offices will be spread out a little bit. So at this point we're not finalized on everything, but the main point is having the lobby divided so that there is a staff side and a resident/applicant/visitor side.

Chairman Long said so we'll have two hallways when tenants come off of the elevator, put a doorway there, and a doorway on the other hallway, then it'll create a foyer on the outside of the elevator, so nobody will be able to access any of the other offices, tenants when they come in and out. They wouldn't have the ability to walk up and down those isles or access anything with the offices, without going through a door.

Mr. Kichline said that staff that's in one hallway, will have to go through that common area/lobby to get to the offices that are in the other hallway.

Chairman Long understood that. But said it does isolate the tenants from the staff. So the only time you'd come in contact with tenants, is when they would come from one hallway to the other hallway, which would be minimal.

Mr. Kichline commented that once he gets a preliminary plan, then he will present it to the board members.

Mr. Schuster concluded that our monthly meeting with the BHA Community Police officers will be held on Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> and they'll review any drug and criminal activities occurring on our properties. It will be a teleconference meeting. Virtual meetings are working well.

On the Resident Advisory Committee, Roy reported that they just finished 13 weeks of passing out breakfast and lunch from the school district. They will be on a one week break and will continue from June 15<sup>th</sup> to August 7<sup>th</sup>. They'll be serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner provided by the school board, school district, and YMCA. Nikki from the backpack pals of Bethlehem, we'll be giving them 100 bags of groceries to Lynfield Community Center every two weeks to pass out to those who are in need, and people in other communities like Parkridge. They continue to partnership with the Feed Bethlehem Project with Grace Church, Lynfield Community Center is scheduled for every

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second Saturday of the month. Distributors will begin in August and end in October. They'll be picking up the produce in New Jersey on Saturday mornings and bringing it to the site. John Ritter and his wife are a big help to them, they have been volunteering up at the Community Center. They appreciate all their help.

Chairman Long asked are we going to have the two kids working in the summer again. Mr. Ortiz said he has one person, and is waiting to get feedback on the second person. He should have someone soon. They can start on June 15<sup>th</sup> to August 7<sup>th</sup>, that's an 8 week program. Chairman Long said that's great.

Mrs. Linares commented that she found out that Liberty High School is going to have a graduation ceremony. But it's not going to be until July. But she doesn't think anybody ever sent in applications for scholarships. Mrs. Moreno said no applications have been received.

Mrs. McLendon said so that scholarship money just sits there.

Mr. Ortiz comment that he'll post it on Lynfield Scoop, and get the word out to our BHA residents.

Chairman Long stated that as far as scholarships go, our congressional representative has stated that if they know of any kid that would like to go to any of the academies, and has the abilities and the grades, to our military academies, they can get their names in to her office. She would review them and make the appointments for those scholarships. If there's anybody that we have in our developments that would qualify for that.

Mrs. McLendon told Roy, when he puts that out on Lynfield Scoop, to send her a copy so the people in her community can see it? Mr. Ortiz said the majority of people in the Parkrige community, go to Liberty, so he will do that. Mrs. McLendon thanked Roy.

Mr. Ortiz asked Chairman Long, what's the name of that organization? Chairman Long said that's the congressional office, Susan Wild.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2509 OF 2020 - APPROVING OF THE CONCRETE SERVICES CONTRACT.**

**NOTE: (Resolution is entered separately as a part of these minutes.)**

Mrs. Linares made a motion, seconded by McLendon, to approve the concrete services contract.

Roll Call: Ayes -Linares/ McLendon/ Ortiz/Solderitch/Long; Nays - None.

Under New Business Mr. Schuster had two items. He stated that the Boys & Girls Club of Bethlehem wrote BHA a letter. As we do each summer, we provide hours for them to increase their program. Since we're in the yellow phase, they feel they can expand their program. Every summer we assist them. They request that Genesis and Henry Velazquez increase their hours to 20 hours a week each for the duration of their summer programming. This is something we do every year.

Chairman Long asked is that an increase of hours because they normally do 20 hours. Mr. Schuster replied that that's what they do but they have not been doing as much recently. So they're just asking to increase what they've been doing during this shutdown period.

Mrs. McLendon made a motion to approve to increase the two workers hours to 20 hours a week for the duration of the summer program.

Mr. Ortiz seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes -Linares/ McLendon/ Ortiz/Solderitch/Long; Nays - None.

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Secondly, the Boys & Girls Club, contacted Jay. Like Mr. Ortiz has been doing at the Lynfield Community Building, the school district wants to continue to do pre-packaged meals like we've been doing. Roy, is restarting next week, so they asked if we can use the Parkridge building to do a similar thing to help the community. Not that they'd be inside, but they would be staging from the building like Roy is doing. He thinks it's a good thing if we can accomplish that, he wanted to know how the Board felt about it.

Mrs. McLendon asked can we do that without a Council or can Roy be like our go-between. Don't we have to have somebody there from Parkridge? Mr. Schuster suggestion is to utilize Robbie to coordinate that and work with them and the Boys and Girls Club. Chairman Long said that's fine. No motion necessary for that.

Under Miscellaneous Reports, Chairman Long asked if we have anything happening with the First Tee at this time. Jay said nothing at this time. Mr. Long said because they're advertising on TV now and have a lot of ads on Facebook. But he did not realize their headquarters is out of Center and Wall Street. Mr. Schuster stated we do have a contract with First Tee until the end of this year, although there has been no activity. He will reach out to them to see if they have any interest. Chairman Long said he would appreciate that.

Mrs. Lendon asked if the Boys and Girls Club will be providing meals. Jay said it's actually from the school district. Winston at the Boys and Girls club is networking with the school district.

Mr. Ortiz stated he had a meeting with Winston, and several others that do the summer program. So he usually deals with outdoors, like Yosko Park, so he needs a site where he's going to be able to distribute. The company's name is Aramark. They're the new food service supplier for the schools. They can give you up to two, three, four hundred meals a day. They just need someone to be there, so it will be good for Robbie to be there to provide the guidance so everything runs smoothly.

Mrs. McLendon is happy about that. And asked when will it start? Roy said the summer program starts today for 13 weeks. Mr. Schuster stated that he will contact Winston to let him know it was discussed and approved. I'm sure they'll greatly appreciate that because there is a need. Chairman Long thanked Jay and Roy.

Mrs. McLendon commented that Lynfield is doing a great job with feeding their community and all that their doing. Nikki Tesler is just being a blessing to them and to us. She's been over there multiple times in the past few weeks, picking up stuff that they've put aside for Parkridge. The people in the community are very grateful. She knows when that starts up with Robbie that they will be very happy about that.

Chairperson Long noted that the next regular board meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 13, 2020 at 4:30 P.M. (Virtual Meeting)

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

*J.D. Schuster*

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Jay D. Schuster  
Executive Director