

**JACKSONVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY
VIRTUAL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 2020, 2:00 P.M.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Charles Griggs, Harriet Brock, Jonathan McGowan, Roslyn Phillips, Susan Verbeck

STAFF PRESENT: Dwayne Alexander, Heather Brigida, Nella Castiov, Satonia Hart, Cathy Hunt, Daniel Mitchell, Evann Morris, Colene Orsini, Dennis Lohr, Rhonda Lattimore, Taffini Reed

ADVISORS PRESENT: Lawsikia Hodges – Office of General Counsel

City Councilman: Garrett Dennis

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Charles Griggs called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Dwayne Alexander recited an opening statement for virtual public meeting. (Opening statement available by request)

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Barbara Sanchez, Brentwood Resident complimented the leadership and capabilities of Mr. Alexander, Interim CEO. Ms. Sanchez further inquired, "What is Mr. Alexander not doing in the eyes of the board?" Resident Sarah Wilson-Kraft expressed that she would like to take the opportunity to support Mr. Alexander and was curious why he has not been permanently hired for the position? Does the residence have a voice in this matter? Chairman Griggs responded that our search is no reflection on Mr. Alexander's performance. What we are doing is following a process because of the transition that this organization has been through, because of the many needs of the community and because we are spending taxpayer dollars we owe it to ourselves to have a fair process for choosing a new leader within this organization. If we did not have any confidence in Mr. Alexander's performance he would not be the interim CEO. He is doing a great job but we have to stay true to the process of having a search for this position.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

The Chair requested a motion to approve the minutes of April 20, 2020. Jonathan McGowan made a motion to approve the minutes as written; Harriet Brock seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved by the Board of Commissioners.

COST & ADM. COMMITTEE:

Agency Financial Overview: Dennis Lohr, CFO

Dennis Lohr provided financial standings ending April 30, 2020. Commissioner Jonathan McGowan indicated there was discussion regarding updating the budget. Dennis Lohr advised the new budget was approved during the last board meeting. Mr. Lohr indicated a lot of expenses that are trending higher have to do with COVID-19. We are taking preventive measures for the protection of not only our residents but our employees Commissioner McGowan further asked if there would be another budget adjustment? Dennis Lohr responded

the increases were normal budget fluctuations and HUD is providing money to cover the extra COVID expenses for Public Housing and Section 8. Chairman Griggs requested that some time down the road we would revisit what was expensed on COVID responses. Dennis Lohr responded that we are tracking all of our COVID -19 expenses separately as part of our backup for HUD.

Presentation of Resolutions:

Commissioner Susan Verbeck indicated the Cost & Administrative Committee met on Thursday, May 14, 2020, unfortunately there was no quorum therefore there were no recommendations and the resolutions are being brought directly to the board.

Resolution 2020-JHA-15: To approve the renewal of the JHA-Wide Refuse Services contracts, Contract #C16-014 and BP16-004 to Republic Services final renewal June 1, 2020 thru May 31, 2021, for a maximum indebtedness of \$586,434.00. Commissioner Harriet Brock made a motion to renew the contract; Commissioner Roslyn Phillips seconded the motion to approve. The Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the resolution.

Resolution 2020-JHA-16: To approve the Outsourced IT Infrastructure Services contract renewal for Contract #C20-006 to Level 3 Communications dba Century Link beginning June 1, 2020 expiring May 31, 2021 with a maximum indebtedness for fiscal year 2020 of \$175,000.000. Commissioner Phillips made a motion to approve the resolution; Commissioner Brock seconded the motion. The Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the resolution.

Resolution 2020-JHA-17: To approve the Capital Fund Grant in the amount of \$5,759,843.00. The JHA will utilize said grant funds in accordance with applicable HUD regulations. The Chair asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Brock made a motion and Commissioner McGowan seconded the motion. The Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the resolution.

Resolution 2020-JHA-18: To approve the acceptance of a Lead Based Capital Fund Program Grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in the amount of \$1,000,000.00 for the fiscal year 2019. The JHA will utilize said grant funds in accordance with applicable HUD regulations and requirements. Commissioner Phillips made a motion and Commissioner McGowan seconded. Commissioner Phillips asked a question through the Chair to Dwayne Alexander if there was a list of properties that will be improved with the funds that are being received for this lead based abatement? Dwayne Alexander responded yes we do, and for the most part Riviera would be the only property affected by the grant. The Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the resolution.

Resolution 2020-JHA-19: To approve the updated Job Description for JHA's CEO position. The Job Description was submitted by Gans, Gans & Associates to the Executive Search Committee along with discussions on how the committee might move forward with the search. The Board Members were presented with copies of the Job Description and the Search Committee Procedures prior to the meeting today. Be it resolved by the Jacksonville Housing Authority that we held a meeting on May 11, 2020 and in consultation with Gans, Gans & Associates

approved the updated CEO Job Description which is submitted for Board approval today. Commissioner Phillips made the motion and was seconded by Commissioner Verbeck.

Discussions and questions ensued regarding minimum education and experience requirements. Commissioner Verbeck responded a Bachelor's degree plus five years of progressively responsible management and administrative experience is expected, or an equivalent combination. The application itself has a very detailed list of knowledge, skills and abilities that the committee is looking for. Commissioner Phillips state that the Executive Search Committee wanted to make the search as broad as could be in order to identify candidates that would be best qualified for the position. After discussions it appeared that there was sufficient clarification. The Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the CEO Job Description.

Resolution 2020-JHA-20: To approve the supplemental search procedures for hiring for the CEO position. Since this proposal came from the Executive Search Committee this item does not need a motion or a second. Commissioner McGowan wanted to acknowledge the public comments. Some of the comments indicated that there was no response from the Board. He indicated that the comments were heard and did not go into a void. Commissioner McGowan continued that as much as he likes Mr. Alexander there is a process that needs to be followed that allows transparency and allows us to see who the best options are. We may find that the best option is Mr. Alexander, there is nothing that prevents him from applying for the position, Mr. Alexander meets every qualification of the position. He further indicated having a conversation about who the best person to lead this agency is the best thing that we can do for the residents. Commissioner McGowan offered an apology for not directly responding to the comments from the last Board Meeting. He further commented that he was unaware that a direct response was expected. Through the Chair Commissioner Phillips requested to further add on to what Commissioner McGowan said. The public comment period is for public comments and not necessarily a question and answer period. All of our meetings are public meetings including our committee meetings. If any member of the public who would like to attend those meetings they are welcomed to attend. General Counsel Hodges confirmed that Commissioner Phillips' statement was correct.

Councilman Garrett indicated that Commissioner McGowan's comments are correct about answering questions outside of the Sunshine Law. This process has to be fully transparent. Any indication that it is not may cause whoever is the next CEO legitimacy in question. The second thing that was asked was did Gans, Gans & Associates advertise the position on different platforms? Did Gans, Gans, & Associates share on how they would advertise the position? Chairman Verbeck indicated that Gans, Gans & Associates did share the different platforms they would advertise on until the Job Description was approved today they were not going to put it out on any place except their own database as a draft document. When they are notified of the approval today we will be provided a list of where the position will be advertised. The advertisement would be locally, regionally and nationally. The Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the resolution.

President's Report:

Dwayne Alexander acknowledged the concerns that Commissioner McGowan had regarding funding the cost of the overrides. The Jacksonville Housing Authority received \$1,790,642.00 for Public Housing and for our Section 8 program we received \$980,460.00 which gave us a total of \$2,771,000.00 under the CARES Act for COVID – 19. He indicated that the JHA has been consistent with disinfecting our high rises. After some time we have received our own electric static guns and sprayers so that we can perform the work ourselves. Additionally he acknowledged Ms. Dawn Lockhart and the great partnership that we have with the Farm Share and JTA. They participated with us and a part of the food program of which we were able to provide food for ten of our sites over the last several weeks. Every resident of the ten sites received two bags of groceries and two boxes that contained some snacks. He also acknowledged Feeding Northeast Florida who provided Centennial Towers with a truckload of food that was greatly needed and appreciated by the residents there. The JHA is in the process of sending letters out to the residents who formerly lived at JAX Beach which is now The WAVES. The letters are being sent out sometime Tuesday or Wednesday to establish who would be interested in returning. As mentioned during the last board meeting the JHA is looking to lease the units out in July. The residents at Centennial Towers were sent letters out regarding the relocation program. We are currently strategizing with HOU in how we will position residents when we begin our relocation program. Some of the relocations may be at our vacant units or temporary housing off site. A kickoff meeting will be held today (May 18, 2020) with Job Plus Grant. The JHA received over \$2.3 million dollars under that program and due to COVID – 19 it has been slow getting things going. The official kick off meeting will get that grant on its way. Mr. Alexander indicated that he reported during the last Board Meeting that Bank of America was interested in the deal at Hogan Creek but has subsequently stepped away. Citi Bank was also interested in that deal but they also stepped away. Mr. Alexander expressed excitement that apparently there is some interest from Alliant Capitol LTD so the deal is still alive and it is projected that closing will be sometime in September.

Commissioner Brock acknowledged Shiloh Baptist Church for providing our seniors with hot dinners for Easter and Mother's Day. Senior residents also received from an unknown source lilies for Easter. The Chair asked if the COVID-19 testing concluded by UF Health at our facilities? Dwayne Alexander responded that the testing has not been performed recently because UF ran out of testing kits. The intentions are that when more test kits are received they will do more testing. Commissioner Brock furthered the conversation announcing that of 200 or so residents that were tested there were eleven people that tested positive. Chairman Griggs asked if JHA has the capacity to accommodate all of the residents that wish to return to JAX Beach – WAVES? Dwayne Alexander responded that it is a HUD rule that each of the prior residents are given priority to return. If they choose not to they have that right. Each resident that moved during rehab will be contacted with the opportunity to move back in brand new units.

Councilman Dennis mentioned that he attended the Neighborhoods Committee meeting and Dr. Rolle, Interim Director of the Jacksonville Health Department provided a global update regarding COVID. She provided some very good information. She also spoke about public housing. Councilman Dennis suggested that she be requested to participate and speak at the next Board meeting regarding COVID testing and responses.

Chairman Griggs discussed the 2 commissioner vacancies and the inability for some of the committees to have a quorum for the meetings. He spoke to the need for each committee to have three participants. Chairman Griggs requested that someone volunteer to participate in the Asset Management and Cost and Admin Committees. Commissioner Phillips volunteered to participate in the Cost and Admin Committee. Commissioner McGowan indicated that on Monday thru Thursday he usually has conflicts. He asked General Counsel Lawsikia Hodges if phoning or video into the meetings would be allowed? Ms. Hodges elaborated extensively regarding the question. She also advised that under extraordinary circumstances and as long as there are at least two members physically present the third member can participate via phone or video.

Commissioner Phillips through the Chair asked an additional question. She questioned if you are not a member of the committee but you are a commissioner and you attend a meeting could the commissioner count in order to make the quorum? Ms. Hodges advised that under the current bylaws commissioners can act as substitutions. Under the new bylaws it would be normal stand in committees and you would be assigning members to that committee without the substitutions rights. If you are not a member of the committee you could sit in for another member as a substitute for that member.

Chairman Griggs continued to stress the need for volunteers for the two extra committees and the eventual filling of the two commissioner vacancies. He requested another volunteer for the Asset Management Committee member. Commissioner Roslyn Phillips volunteered "temporarily". Commissioner Brock asked General Counsel if a quorum is necessary since the committee is not voting on anything the committee is pretty much just acquiring information. General Counsel Lawsikia Hodges advised that any committee that is making recommendations and taking action must have a quorum. The whole purpose of having more than one committee member is that by the time recommendations reach the Board level enough people have gone into what that recommendation is. Ms. Lawsikia Hodges asked Mr. Dwayne Alexander if there were resolutions and recommendations coming out of the Cost and Admin committee? Dwayne Alexander responded that there are rarely resolutions and that most come out of Finance. Commissioner also responded that in the past there have been resolutions but it depends on the status and the needs of the properties. There have not been any recently but historically there have been resolutions that come out of Cost & Admin.

Chairman Griggs advised that it has been discovered that the committee meetings are inadequately equipped with someone to take minutes consistently. We would like to assign someone from the Board the duty of Secretary so that the minutes can be taken and properly posted. Commissioner Brock volunteered to take minutes. Commissioner Phillips asked if the last meetings were recorded? Since the meetings are recorded could there be a staff person to work with a member of our commission to transcribe the recording and create the minutes? If we could ask Mr. Alexander who that staff person would be assigned to work with Commissioner Brock? Chairman Griggs responded that the policy would be that Commissioner Brock would work with Mr. Alexander to assure that minutes, agendas and exhibits that are a part of the meetings are being posted and distributed to Board Members in a timely manner. General Counsel Lawsikia Hodges was asked to confirm if the information provided was correct. Chairman Griggs congratulated Commissioner Brock on her assignment.

Commissioner Brock requested that the Board of Commissioners approve a one-time bonus to the 187 employees of JHA for all of the hard work during COVID-19. Commissioner Brock elaborated that according to Accounting the bonus could be paid out of non-federal funds. Knowing that the employees have done an excellent job and going over and beyond the call of duty to serve the residents of JHA. Chairman Griggs asked Ms. Brock if the request was addressed to the Cost and Admin chairperson? Her response was no. Chairman Griggs continued that he was neither for or against the suggestion. He did not see how the Board could move on such an item without going through Cost and Admin's committee process. Chairman Griggs recommended that Commissioner Brock submit the item to the Cost and Admin committee for their recommendation.

Through the Chair General Counsel Hodges acknowledged that she and Commissioner Brock had some discussions regarding the one-time bonus. From an operational stand the items should be taken through whatever committees that should be taken through. There are statutory laws that govern bonuses. One-time bonus is very unlikely. The legal threshold would need to be met. Commissioner Brock responded, however it needs to be moved I am asking the Board of Commissioners to look at it and place on their agenda. Chair asked Commissioner Brock if she knew how much the total amount of the bonus would be? Commissioner Phillips suggested that maybe it would be appropriate to refer the request to the Cost and Admin Committee to allow the necessary information to be provided. Councilman Garrett Dennis advised that right now there is a bill going through the city council to scrutinize employee bonuses for the whole consolidated government. Councilman Dennis suggested that we move very cautiously in approving bonuses at this time since the legislation is going through the council now. Councilman Dennis suggested that Commissioner Brock speak with General Counsel Hodges to assure that the proposal does not conflict with the current legislation.

Commissioner Brock asked if board members would be willing to meet with residents once a year. Chairman Griggs responded that he believed that it would be a good idea as long as more than one board member does not attend the meeting otherwise they may potentially be in violation of the Sunshine Law. The request will be entered as new business in the future.

Since there was no further business the meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.