

**Housing Finance Authority of
St. Johns County, Florida
Regular Meeting
September 28, 2023**

Minutes

The Housing Finance Authority of St. Johns County met at 3:03 pm in the Kingfisher conference room in the Health & Human Services Building – 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida 32084.

The meeting was called to order at 3:13 p.m. by Michael O'Donnell, Chair

Members Present:

Michael O'Donnell , Chair
Robert Marshall , Vice Chair
Malinda Peeples
Brian Clark
Linda DeGrande

Members Absent:

Erick Saks
Carolina Morrow

Others Present:

Priscilla Howard – Executive Director HFA
Rich Komando, Esq., Bradley, Garrison & Komando, P.A.

Notices regarding the meeting were sent to all members. Quorum was present. No press was in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda: There were two additions to the Agenda – Approval of Budget 2023-2024 and Amended Budget for 2022-2023.

Motion was made by Board Member Marshall to approve the agenda with the two additions; motion seconded by Board Member Peeples. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Public Comment: None

Approval of Minutes: **Motion** made by Board Member Clark to approve June, meeting minutes; motion seconded by Board Member Peeples. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Financial Report

- Mr. O'Connell gave the Financial Report – 3 invoices were paid – Executive Director, Authority Legal Counsel, and CPA. Mr. Maxwell continues to make timely payments. Updated Financial Reports were provided in the Board materials.

- Mr. O’Connell has amended the Budget 2022-2023 because he was made aware that the HFA is due two check from San Marco Heights for \$10,000 Authority Fee and \$110,000 Conversion Fee. Mr. O’Connell explained the other line-item adjustments and the rationale for each. After discussion a motion was made to Approve the Amended Budget

Approval of Amended Budgets: Motion made by Board Member DeGrande to approve amended budget for 2022-2023; motion seconded by Board Member Peoples. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- Mr. O’Connell presented the 2023-2024 Budget. He gave details on the projected income and stated the expenses were the same as last year except for a few one-time expense items.
- .Mr. O’Connell discussed investment accounts – FLCLASS and FL SBA. The interest rate is at 5%, which is more than they can get in a regular bank savings account. For that reason, Mr. O’Connell recommended moving some of the HFA funds into one of the investment accounts. Chair ODonnell asked if money could be moved while the HFA work on an investment policy. Attorney Komando confirmed that it could.

Approval of Opening up an FL SBA investment account: Motion made by Board Member Clark to open an investment account with FL SBA; motion seconded by Board Member DeGrande. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- Mrs. Howard reported for the record that an email was received from the County Attorney’s office that the HFA was not bound by the County’s investment policy and had all the rights to establish their own.

County’s Update

- Mr. Cone reported that at the last Board of County Commission meeting the Health and Human Services provided a joint presentation with growth management and the county attorney’s office on the Live Local Act. There were two main topics: 1) Lands suitable for Affordable Housing (Surplus Lands). The agenda item will be forwarded to the Board. Mr. Cone stated that he is getting some inquiries from developers concerning the land. Mr. Komando asked if the county had established a process to distribute properties pursuant to the Live Local Act. Mr. Cone stated that there is a process, but they are looking to revamp it. Board Member Marshall asked if the HFA could handle the distribution of the surplus lands. Mr. Komando stated that the Act requires that this be done by the county and cannot be delegated. Mrs. Howard stated that the HFA could consider in the future putting in an application for some of the surplus lands to be used to encourage the development of affordable housing. 2) Use Live Local Act to provide tax exemptions to Nonprofit – Commissioner Alaimo brought this proposal to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). The staff were given directions to go back and research the proposal and bring the results back for further discussion.
- Mr. Cone reported that an RFP was being developed for some of the land in West Augustine. He agreed to send a copy to the HFA. Commissioner Alaimo said he is trying to look at every option to bring costs down.
- Board Member Marshall asked what percentage of Surplus lands have utility issues. Mr. Cone reported that close to 90%.
- Mr. Cone confirmed that the Grant Department is looking into the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund at the Department of Commerce. These dollars can be used to improve public infrastructure tied to affordable housing. Mr. Cone also mentioned that they have approached the City to see how they can resolve some of the infrastructure issues together. Mr. Komando suggested that the County also contact USDA about funding. He gave the contact person’s name – Kendell Robinson.

- Mr. Cone reported that they will take the AHAC Report to the BCC in December. The final draft will be voted on by the AHAC in October and a public meeting will be held in November. He invited the HFA Board to show up to support.
- Mr. Cone stated that they are taking applications for a new Housing Manager. On October 1, the new budget will be approved, and they will have a new Housing Specialist for the down payment assistance program they hope to start and the impact fee program for nonprofit developers. The budget will also allow for an administrative assistant.
- Mr. Cone - \$15,000 of CDBG funds has been allocated for a housing study. He hopes to attract a firm that can do a more localized study instead of the number that comes out of the Shimberg Study which is more of a regional report.
- Victoria Crossing – Mr. Hartman, the development contact person, is retiring. The property will send another contact person. The property is aware that the County and HFA are very interested in attending the Ribbon Cutting. Mr. Cone will make everyone aware when it is scheduled.
- San Marcos Heights – County is handling the complaint from one tenant concerning too much noise and items left near the dumpster. Mr. Cone contacted the management office and law enforcement to do a periodic check to make sure the excessive noise, if any, is dealt with promptly. Mr. Cone assured the Board that the County takes every complaint seriously and handles them to the best of their ability.

New Business

Investment Policy Update –

- Ms. Edmonds provided a few sample policies that the HFA can use as a guide when developing the Investment Policy. Mrs. Howard will work with the financial advisor, CPA and attorney to draft a policy to bring back to the Board.

Election of Board Officers -

- Mrs. Howard explained that last September the Board voted to extend the term of the existing officers and vote again in September 2023. Mr. Komando opened the nominations for Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, and Vice Chair.

Approval of Board Officers: Motion made by Board Member DeGrande to keep the same officers for another one-year term; motion seconded by Board Member Peebles. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- Board Member Marshall recommended that the one-year term for officers not be changed.

Sadowski Coalition Education Efforts (SEE)

- Mrs. Howard reported that it was time for the HFA to decide if they would contribute to the SEE and the amount. Mr. Komando stated how the funds were used last year and a big part of what is done is to lobby for full funding for SHIP.

Approval of SEE Contribution: Motion made by Board Member DeGrande to approve a contribution of \$2000.00 to SEE.; motion seconded by Board Member Clark. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Florida Job Growth Grant Fund –

- Was created within the Department of Commerce to promote economic opportunity by improving public infrastructure and enhancing workforce training which now includes State or local public infrastructure projects to facilitate the development or construction of affordable housing.
- Mrs. Howard asked for permission from the Board to write a letter to the County's Grand Department asking them to consider the HFA properties when requesting grant funds for infrastructure.

Approval of Letter to Grant Department: Motion made by Board Member DeGrande to approve Letter to Grant Department; motion seconded by Board Member Clark. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Board Liaison for Upcoming Projects

- Board appointed Board Member Marrow to lead the efforts on the Housing Partners Reception – December 2023. The Board recommended that invitations be sent to all local housing groups. Check with San Marco Heights concerning their club house, or we can go back to last year’s location.
- Board appointed Board Member DeGrande to lead the effort in finding a sponsor and location for the reception at Florida ALHFA Conference – July 2024. Mrs. Howard said she will send the date of the event to Commissioner Alaimo to place on his calendar. Mr. Marshall recommended The Schooner Freedom as a possible location for the reception.

V. Old Business/Informational:

- The Surplus Lands list was approved on September 19, 2023, by the Board of County Commissioners.
- Board Member’s Bios needed for Website
- The Notice of Request for Application was emailed to Coalition of Affordable Housing Providers and Northeast Florida Builders Association distribution to their members.
- Meeting Dates for 2024 are provided in the Board Material
- Victoria Crossing Ribbon Cutting – October 25, 2023
- Disclosure Counsel Update - Mr. Komando reported to the Board that at their direction he, Ms. Edmonds and Mrs. Howard to bring back the recommendation to hire Mark Mustian, Nabors Giblin and Nickerson P.A. as Disclosure Counsel

Approval of Disclosure Counsel: Motion made by Board Member DeGrande to approve Mr. Mustian as Disclosure Counsel motion seconded by Board Member Marshall. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- Mr. Cone asked for an update on the Oaks at St. Johns. Ms. Edmonds reported that a cause for the delay is that they had to change their financial structure from HUD to FNMA and change syndicators. She has requested a meeting between the developer and the HFA professional team.
- Mrs. Howard shared with the Board that an application for Bond Allocation was received from Dominion. The Professional Team is reviewing it and will come back with their recommendation.

Board Comments: none.

Adjourned at 4:16pm

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting of the HFA will be held on October 26, 2023, in the Kingfisher conference room in the Health & Human Services building, at 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary