

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLANDS

**Ptak Towers
215 Shore Drive, Highlands, NJ 07732**

**October 22, 2013
REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of Public Portion**

OPENING

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. and proceeded with the salutation of the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Gloria Miller, Chairperson
Rebecca Kane, Commissioner
Mae Rugg, Commissioner
Ida Tkoch, Commissioner
Richard O’Neil, Commissioner
Dolores Francy, Commissioner

Also Present: Douglas G. Dzema, Executive Director
Jill Homefield, Deputy Executive Director
John Bonello, Esq.
Tom Furlong, Fee Accountant
William Snyder, Executec

Absent: Daniel Conrad, Commissioner

(Note: Hereafter, titles are abbreviated as: Chair, Comm, ED, Dep ED, Atty)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 17, 2013, Regular Board Meeting, Public Portion

Motion made to adopt the minutes by Comm Rugg and seconded by Comm Tkoch.
Chair Miller asked for a vote.

Aye (6) Kane, Rugg, Tkoch, O’Neil, Francy, Miller
Nay (0)

Abstention (0)
Absent (1) Conrad

PRESENTATION OF BILLS

Motion made to approve the October 22, 2013 Bills List by Comm O’Neil and seconded by Comm Kane. Chair Miller asked for a vote.

Aye (6) Kane, Rugg, Tkoch, O’Neil, Francy, Miller
Nay (0)
Abstention (0)
Absent (1) Conrad

CORRESPONDENCE – None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Dep ED Homefield read the vacancy report for October. There are 2 vacancies at Ptak and there are 0 at JPM. There are 8 residents on the Ptak waiting list and 56 non-residents. There are 10 residents on the waiting list at JPM and 46 non-residents.

Comm Tkoch announced that there is a FEMA meeting scheduled for tomorrow night at Henry Hudson, 7:30 p.m. to discuss the town post-Sandy.

Comm Rugg reported that other residents ran Bingo the past week as she and Barbara Hartsgrove were not available.

Dep ED Homefield noted that she distributed a memo advising that there was going to be a Candidate Meet & Greet on 10/20/13 at 10 AM here at Ptak. She also thanked tenant Joe Miller for his generous donation of a replacement DVD-Blu-Ray player.

OFFICERS & STAFF REPORTS

ED Dzema reported that the annual audit was just completed and the results will be reported back to the Board.

Also, the Office of Community Development Block Grant – we were not funded.

OLD BUSINESS – None to report.

NEW BUSINESS – None to report.

RESOLUTIONS

FY13-016 – Resolution approving and authorizing the Executive Director to move forward with an application submission for the RAD (Rental Assistance Demonstration) program.

ED Dzema explained the basics of the proposed program and then introduced William Synder of Executech who explained the reasons behind HUD coming up with this program and why it would be beneficial especially because HUD does not have enough funding to fund the Capital Improvement that are necessary to maintain public housing in an acceptable condition. He explained that nothing will change for the residents.

Motion was made by Comm Kane and seconded by Comm Rugg.

Aye	(6)	Kane, Rugg, Tkoch, O’Neil, Francy, Miller
Nay	(0)	
Abstention	(0)	
Absent	(1)	Conrad

FY13-017 – Resolution ratifying the hiring of Tom Falkowski who will fill the part-time position of Account Clerk.

Motion was made by Comm Rugg and seconded by Comm Francy.

Aye	(6)	Kane, Rugg, Tkoch, O’Neil, Francy, Miller
Nay	(0)	
Abstention	(0)	
Absent	(1)	Conrad

PUBLIC PORTION

Donna Conrad, Highlands – Was concerned that there was no bench in the lobby as her father is a tenant and does use it while waiting for rides. ED Dzema noted that a new bench was on backorder.

Trish Sapia, apt. 505 – Stated that the old bench was not broken. Chair Miller noted that it was structural and something that maintenance could not repair. Dep ED Homefield noted that she had asked maintenance several months earlier but was waiting to order a new bench due to budget concerns. She also noted that she was the one that had placed a bench out there years ago after the Board had directed her to remove all furniture from the lobby area due to the numerous complaints. Chair Miller noted that chairs will be available until the bench arrives.

Ellen Lance (?), Highlands – Requested minutes of meetings. Asked if there have ever been resident quality of life surveys done and asked about resident councils. Chair Miller noted minutes are public and available on the site or from the office. Dep ED Homefield

offered to provide all information. ED Dzema noted that residents are encouraged to attend the Annual & 5-Year Plan meetings where such issues can be brought to the Authority's attention. The Board is also willing to hear what is on resident's minds and noted that Jill is also always available. Resident councils can be formed.

Joe Miller, apt. 406 – Asked if the Board had time to consider his previous request to have the smoking area outside enclosed. ED Dzema noted that the Board has considered his request so it will be added to the 5-Year plan. He has also asked his construction inspector to look at the area for suggestions.

Ronnie Staehle, apt. 217 – Stated she heard that the bench had been removed as punishment as tenants were sitting out there and annoying other tenants and asked that this be cleared up. Tenant John Rahm responded saying he saw that the bench springs were broken. Tenant Vickie Cooke asked if the Board saw the letter sent out by Chair Miller.

Butch Welch began saying that tenants are afraid to leave their units as they are afraid someone is going to come into it. Dep ED Homefield and Chair Miller stated that it is only in emergencies. He said they had pictures. Vickie said she knows for a fact staff comes in. Butch continued that either he or Vickie has stayed home the past 10 years as he knows someone goes in. ED Dzema stated that if they have information relative to anyone entering, he would like to have that in writing and show him the pictures. Vickie stated “and then you will have to do something about it. No more ignoring these complaints. This has been going on for years and years and you guys give the answers through Gloria who is saying that that's a regulation – they don't go in. They DO go in. I'm tired of you covering up and not listening”. Comm O'Neil noted that he was impartial here and said that the Director said he wanted to see their proof.

Butch further complained about the smoking problem. He stated he went out the front door recently and there was a tenant smoking and talking to a commissioner who was not telling the tenant to put the cigarette out. He mentioned Ms. Homefield and the fact that she does not enforce the policy with the staff.

Victoria Marks, apt. 311 – Read a section of the letter to the tenants regarding the action of tenants who arranged an on-going program without the knowledge of management. Chair Miller responded that it was in regard to a mental health group who was scheduled but the woman did not come. Vickie Cooke said yes, they did come but were turned away. Butch Welch stated they were turned away a second time. Dep ED Homefield advised that the program was scheduled for every Thursday moving forward and that the administration knew nothing about it and also the entire tenancy had not been notified. Chair Miller attempted to repeat that the program was set up without the office's knowledge. Butch continued arguing over her. Butch continued saying this is interfering with their quality of life. Jackie White (102) stated this was help they needed. Butch continued that he has been here 13 years and gets no answers. He stated that he keeps

going back to the cigarette smoking and no one listened. Chair Miller noted that the Board did listen and passed a no-smoking policy. Butch complained that it is not enforced.

Lois ?, Highlands – Stated that she came to Ptak the day tenants planned to meet with the mental health program rep by mistake as she thought they were there for an art program. She was in the room sitting with two tenants when the announcement came over the loud speaker that the woman had a crisis and could not come. She stated she offered to give an art lesson in the woman’s absence. She said she brought in her art supplies and then was shouted at by the lady (Dep ED Homefield) who said, “What’s your name! You don’t belong here!” She said she asked if they could have the class but Ms. Homefield said no because it was not scheduled and then told us to “go to your room!” Lois said it was her tone. She said it’s humiliating to the residents here. She said it affected her blood pressure and that we have people here with breathing problems and heart problems. She claimed she had never been treated like that in her whole life.

An unidentified tenant asked Chair Miller if policies were going to be discussed as stated in the tenant letter. Chair Miller noted that the Board was not yet prepared. Vickie Cooke advised the Board that the memo should have been discussed before it went out. She stated it just caused a whole lot of problems and that “this is just a hornet’s nest, good grief.”

Vickie Marks noted that she was sitting in the community room last week when the governor’s office was running a meeting and that Jill (Dep ED Homefield) made them leave because there were not enough chairs. It was open to the public. She stated that that was not a very good thing to do either.

Butch Welch added that they were told that if they had four or five people to see the mental health rep, they could go to one of their apartments. He stated they are senior citizens with major problems. They are not being heard. He stated it goes in one ear and out the other as far as they are concerned. He complained that the Board spent \$2,000 to give the smokers a bench but took away the lobby bench. He said it could have stayed there until replaced. Chair Miller disagreed.

Chair Miller closed Public Portion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Comm Rugg to move to Executive Session, and it was seconded by Comm Kane. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Miller closed the public meeting at 8:15 PM.