

WINTER PARK HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 17th, 2023

8:00 A.M.

Tranquil Terrace
845 Swoope Ave.
Winter Park, FL 32789

Commissioners Present: Board Chair; Hal George, Vice-Chair Kenneth Goodwin, Commissioner Tammie Holiday, Commissioner Kevin O’Rawe, and Commissioner Karen Jacobs.

Commissioners Remote:, Commissioner Dawn Ofodile,

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Joe Regner

Staff Present: LaShanda Lovette, Executive Director, Laneshia Church, Portfolio Manager, Felix Alicea, Maintenance Supervisor, Tarena Grant, Resource Coordinator

Guests Present: Rick Gilmore

Guests Remote: Jodie Jeffery, Dean Petty

I. **Call to Order**

Chair George called the meeting to order at 8:00am and announced a quorum.

II. **Approval of Minutes (December 2022)**

There was a motion provided by Commissioner Jacobs to approve December 2022 Minutes as written. Commissioner O’Rawe provided a second to motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

III. **Actionable Items Requiring Vote**

There were no actionable items requiring a vote.

IV. **Informational Items:**

V. **Accessible website/industry updates; Guests: Jodie Jeffrey of Brooks Jeffrey & Rick Gilmore of Saxon Gilmore and Carraway**

- i. ED Lovette introduced Rick Gilmore and Jodie Jeffery. She gave a brief synopsis of what Rick Gilmore would be discussing. This included an update of things going on in the PHA industry regarding lawsuits and how we can prepare, as well as explanation on why we must update our website. Mr. Gilmore goes on to explain how litigation began picking up in 2018, due to website not being accessible to primarily handicap and those who are blind. He named corporations like Nike and Chevron, as examples. Their sites didn’t give you information needed when you clicked on it and had forms on their sites that couldn’t be filled out without operation of a mouse. These lawsuits slowly trickled down to municipalities, counties and PHA’s websites. He went on the explain that just about all Housing

Authority websites were updated to avoid litigation. He referenced a 2nd handout about the St. Petersburg Housing Authority, which has been in operation for over 85 years. They recently did an unveiling on their new website and logo, which was updated to be accessible and better reflect who they are. He reassured everyone that many PHA's have gone through the same things we are currently going through.

Jodie Jeffery went on to introduce herself as one of the partners with Brooks Jeffery Marketing and explained the services that they offer. She went on to explain that initially, websites had to do with type size, type style, colors on the website. But now websites must be programmed to operate from the keyboard. Someone who is handicapped blind cannot use a mouse or monitor. They have to have directions and information about the site. And it's read aloud to them since they are unable to see the website. It's also important to ensure the website is properly coded and all of the information on the website can be described clearly and operate well.

Mr. Gilmore asked if anyone had any questions he could address. Commissioner Goodwin asked what kind of accommodations were available for those who are blind or hard of hearing. Ms. Jeffrey attempted to answer this question and mentioned that videos or anything with sound would be required to have closed captioning for those who are hard of hearing. Commissioner Goodwin asked what time of liability has been seen in terms of the lawsuits that have been seen. Mr. Gilmore said it is broken down based on whether it is a housing authority, government entity or large corporation. Larger corporations have had huge dollar figures because it's per incident. Many Times they would be joint lawsuits where people joined together on the claim for large pay outs. Chair George asked if we were considered compliant with the changes we've made to the site. Ms. Jeffrey confirmed that we indeed are. She also provided reassurance that anytime they retouch a website, the scan it for ADA compliance and readability. She mentioned that have a staff member who is blind, whom reviews and ensures that sites are accessible for those who cannot see. She mentioned that what the government requires is constantly changing, so they must constantly be reviewing and ensuring that as changes are made, our site is compliant. Mr. Petty mentioned that WCAG is a platform that is used to review sites quarterly to ensure they are compliant for those who have a handicap.

Commissioner Goodwin commented on the accessibility of the logo and branding and asked Ms. Jeffery if the previous logo was accessible. Ms. Jeffrey confirmed it was not, but what she is proposing is accessible. Commissioner Jacobs shared her discontent about not being consulted about the changes to the website, logo and seal. She feels as though the seal should mirror that of the City of Winter Park. ED Lovette agreed that she understands it should've been brought to the board for their input. She went on to explain why she had Mr. Gilmore and Ms. Jeffery on standby to ensure any unanswered questions were addressed by the resources we have in place to best answer them. Ms. Jeffrey interjected that while she understands that the board would like the site to mirror that of the City of Winter Park, it must be understood that their site is dangerously inaccessible and contains many errors.

Commissioner O’Rawe asked for clarification on the seal and why it isn’t compliant. Ms. Jeffery tried to explain that we would have to update it to make sure the code could be read properly. Commissioner Goodwin reiterated that the current seal would need to be manipulated. Ms. Jeffery confirmed. Commissioner Jacobs asked for clarification on the company’s name. ED Lovette confirmed we are still the Winter Park Housing Authority, despite the fact that the “authority” part of our name is not listed on the website. She went on to explain we are still legally Winter Park Housing Authority and cannot change our name. Mr. Gilmore offered that the name change allows us to brand ourselves the way we’d like to be seen. Chair George suggested that another meeting be held, so that the board can talk about the direction they would like for the agency to go in the future.

➤ **Resource Coordinator (ROSS) Monthly Recap**

- i. Mrs. Grant discussed the resident services for December 2022. She explained we served our communities from the Second Harvest Food Pantry. We had the Winter Park Police Department come out to The Meadows with the annual Toy Drive. The Winter Park Library was also there and gave out books and made sure residents has access to Library cards. We had St. John Luther that hosted a free lunch event for our residents at The Meadows. They served about 75 families. When they were on site, we also did our annual Adopt – A – Family Holiday Gift Program and Breakfast with Santa events. Where we hosted cookie decorating, scavenger hunts, an ugly sweater contest and we even had caroler’s there. Santa also made a stop at The Meadows. The children we really excited for that. For the Month of January, we’re looking forward to The Meadows basketball team participating with the Winter Park Community Center as well as the residents over at The Plymouth will begin their photo class session with the photo program over at Wellness College. Commissioner George commended our team on the Breakfast with Santa event at the Wellness Center.

➤ **Executive Director Report**

- i. ROSS Grant Approval
ED Lovette shared we have been renewed for another 3 years. Commissioner Jacobs asked if we were renewed at the same amount as we were previously. ED Lovette explained Training dollars was a little less. But overall there wasn’t much of a decrease.
- ii. Ribbon Cutting Dedication of the Meadows Playground

ED Lovette shared that the ribbon cutting at The Meadows Playground will be February 18th at 10am. Commissioner O’Rawe asked why they haven’t met Amaris, the Executive Assistant. ED Lovette explained that since we have app that transcribes minutes on our behalf, it allows the Executive Assistant to be more efficient in her role.

- ii. Vison/Goals for 2023

ED Lovette opened the floor to continue to conversation about the vision for 2023 for the agency. She shared what her thoughts were and what she wants to achieve for the agency and provided the Board with a handout that highlighted goals of agency. She went on to explain she sat down with the executive team to talk about the vision for 2023. Commissioner Jacobs asked for clarification on who the executive team is. ED Lovette shared that it is Laneshia Church, Tarena Grant, Amaris Hunt, Felix Alecia and Melissa Martinez. ED Lovette went to on give an explanation of our company pins, how we are shifting our focus to continuous trainings with the staff. She went on the explain how she'd like to have more engagement with the Board outside of board meetings and consistently bringing information to the board about what's going on in our industry. From the standpoint of Human Resources, they are assisting with communicating the vision, helping with policy, ensuring development is efficient, streamlining the onboarding process, updating job descriptions, disc assessments etc. Commissioner Jacobs asked for clarification on what a disc assessment is. ED Lovette attempted to answer. She also shared that she would like to build out the program and figure out how we can expand. We'd also like to apply for the FSS grant this year. Overall, ED Lovette would like to lean into the strengths of the team and focus more on efficient managing so that we aren't just putting out fires constantly. Lastly, ED Lovette shared her crazy faith dream and how she would like to bring the first modular multifamily community to the city of Winter Park. Commissioner O'Rawe asked what the position is on the property around The Meadows that's currently owned by the City. ED Lovette says The City currently thinks they have a purpose for it. Commissioner O'Rawe brainstormed that a prototype would work well on that space of land. From there, we'd use it the redevelop The Meadows. Commissioner George would like the continue the discussion on development at The meadows or Tuscany property, gather proposals and learn as much as they can from developers. He asked if we currently have an RFP out. Commissioner Jacobs would like to know if it only gets published in Florida. ED Lovette confirmed it is published nation wide and we'll also reach out the partners such as NAHRO and FAHRO, as well as reaching out to certain developers.

iii. Tuscany Report

Ed Lovette provided the board with the structural engineer's report. We do not have any balcony 100% complete. She confirmed we are about to go out to bid once Orange County gives approval. Commissioner Goodwin asked if we've been given additional funding. ED Lovette confirmed we have not at this time. Once numbers are in, there will be additional conversation once she has the opportunity to crunch numbers to see where we are once bids are received. Commissioner O'Rawe asked the status of the bond company issue. ED Lovette is planning to follow up with Sherry on the performance bond. Commissioner Jacobs gave a recommendation for a company who may be able to help. Ed Lovette confirmed we'd reach

out.

iv. Property Overview (October)

- Ms. Church stated we have 99% occupancy at Meadows and Plymouth. 100% at Rail Road and Tranquil Terrace. Tuscany, we're gauging at 92%. We're currently accepting applications and are working through remediation issues that is slowing down the leasing process. We're at 100% at Winter Park focus as well. Overall, the portfolio is at about 98% occupied right now. We have no incidents to report.. Our work orders are being closed out. We just have a few that are open due to outstanding work orders and make ready. We have one unit at Meadows that we need to take offline due to the hurricane and structural damage caused. So we do have to reach out to HUD to get that taken offline as well. Commissioner O'rawe asked if we do seasonal tree trimming. Ms. Church confirmed we did work about 2 months prior to the hurricane. So it was solely an act of nature.

Commissioner Holiday mentioned a roof issue with her neighbor. Ms. Church confirmed that she is working with Florida Express and Felix to rectify the issue prior to moving the resident back in.

v. Monthly Financial (October)

- Commissioner O'Rawe had questions about all properties. Ed Lovette attempted to answer. She confirmed that some of the formulas were some what off. She is planning to comb through the spreadsheet and asking questions of Patty for clarification if needed. Commissioner O'Rawe asked why so much of our administrative expenses are loaded into The Meadows. ED Lovette attempted to answer. Commissioner O'Rawe gave insight on the accessibility of the Board portal for the board and asked that it be made more user friendly. He also asked that the board be able to change their user name and password. ED Lovette confirmed she'd look into it. Commissioner Jacobs asked about the Public Records requests. ED Lovette confirmed we are required to respond to public records requests. She mentioned that Mr. Gilmore is working with PHA's to pass certain resolutions to get in front of the next round of lawsuits. One being who has the ability to file lawsuits on behalf of the housing authority. The other being to pass a resolution saying who is the custodian of records for the housing authority. Commissioner O'Rawe asked for clarification on who the custodian on record is now. Is there a person or position that has to be listed. ED Lovette said she is working with Rick Gilmore on how this is to be worded.

➤ Executive Director Evaluation

Chair George is working to get the evaluation form from other PHA commissioners. Once received, he will share the form with the

rest of the board and hope to discuss the evaluation at the next meeting. Chair George explained that their evaluation is the boards thoughts on areas or improvement as well as what is provided in the employee salaries, such as cost of living increases and merit increases. Commissioner Jacobs mentioned the city of Winter Park gave a 5% cost of living increase, merit increases and the possibility of an increase on the employee high date. Chair George will leave up for discussion at a later date.

➤ New Business/comments

- i. No new business or comments

VI. Adjournment

With there being no further business to come before the board, Chair George called for adjournment at 9:48 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hal George, Board Chair

LaShanda Lovette, Executive Director