

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

**January 26, 2023  
Minutes**

The Housing Finance Authority of St. Johns County met at 3:00 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 3:02 p.m. by Michael O'Donnell, Chair.

**Members Present:**

Linda DeGrande  
Robert Marshall  
Carolina Morrow  
Michael O'Donnell  
Erick Saks

**Members Absent:**

Malinda Peeples  
(1 vacancy)

**Guests Present:**

Priscilla Howard – Executive Director to the HFA  
Monique Spotts – PRAG – via Zoom  
Rich Komando, Esq., Bradley, Garrison & Komando, P.A.  
Henry O'Connell, CPA, W.H. O'Connell & Associates  
Bill Lazar – SJHP  
David Birchim – Assistant City Manager, St. Augustine  
Sarah Taylor, Assistant County Administrator – via Zoom  
Shawna Novak, Director, Health & Human Services – via Zoom  
Joseph Cone, Assistant Director, Health & Human Services  
Roberto Ortiz, Housing & Community Development Manager  
Mary Garcia, Social Services Support Staff  
Julie Voorhees, Housing & Community Development Support Staff

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

**Additions/Deletions to Agenda and Approval of Agenda:**

**Motion** made by Erick Saks to accept the agenda as presented; motion seconded by Robert Marshall. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Public Comment:** None.

**Financial Report/Review of Bills and Correspondence:**

- **December, 2022:** Mr. O'Connell reported a refund has been received in the amount of \$2,020.60 from Auto Owners Insurance and is the result of the removal of properties the HFA no longer owns from the policy. Mr. O'Connell reported checks were presented for signature; two months of Mr. Komando's legal services in the amount of \$3,000; two months of Mr. O'Connell's CPA services in the amount of \$625.05; and for legal advertising of meeting dates in the amount of \$100.64.

There was discussion regarding the HFA's current bank account and interest that might be gained with a Certificate of Deposit. Mr. O'Connell stated he would look into the matter and bring his findings back to the HFA.

Mr. O'Connell stated the audit is underway and he said they may contact Mr. O'Donnell for signature.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion** made by Linda DeGrande to accept November 17, 2022, regular meeting minutes (no regular December meeting); motion seconded by Robert Marshall. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion** made by Erick Saks to accept November 15, 2022, special workshop meeting minutes; motion seconded by Carolina Morrow. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion** made by Robert Marshall to accept December 12, 2022, executive director interviews minutes; motion seconded by Linda DeGrande. **Motion passed unanimously.**

### **Administrators Report:**

Mr. Ortiz reported the Oaks at St. John project is anticipated to close in approximately 4 months. Mr. Ortiz stated Dominion staff have reported the delay was caused by gaps in financing but this has been resolved. Mr. Ortiz stated the Victoria Crossing multi-family development is approximately 80% complete and he said a meeting has been scheduled with their property management company in early February to discuss next steps, which will involve calling all candidates on the waiting list in order to have them complete an application and be income-qualified. Mr. Ortiz said County staff have also been working with the property management company for San Marcos Heights in order to educate the public on the eligibility requirements to be a resident. Mr. Ortiz said he would share statistical information regarding occupancy rates, etc. with the HFA, and he also shared general employment categories of current occupants, stating most residents work within St. Johns County and are in the tourism and restaurant industries.

Michael O'Donnell asked for a recap of the public housing authority (PHA) item that was recently on the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) agenda. Mr. Cone stated the BCC asked staff to research the structure and organization of Florida PHAs and that this information was presented at the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Cone stated that while this was an informational only item and did not require action, the BCC voted not to further pursue the formation of a PHA within St. Johns County at this time, for various reasons. Mr. Cone stated the vote was 3 to 2 against the PHA.

David Birchim, Assistant City Manager of the City of St. Augustine, was asked about an affordable housing project that the City is considering that would be located on North Holmes Boulevard. Mr. Birchim stated the City is not yet sure if this will include single or multi-family units but he stated several workshops and a charrette will be held in order to solicit public opinion. Mr. Birchim stated there will also be an open house at the proposed site but the date has not yet been determined. Mr. Birchim said the City will retain ownership of the land and will grant a long term lease to the developer/property manager. Mr. Birchim said the City would like to have a mix of income levels and he stated they plan to include a community center that will also serve as a hurricane shelter. Mr. Birchim said a request to rezone the land for affordable housing will be necessary.

Mary Garcia reminded HFA members to submit their financial disclosure forms, which will be arriving by mail, to the Supervisor of Elections by July 1<sup>st</sup>, or fines will be imposed.

### **New Business:**

- **Planning/Discussion with New Executive Director, Priscilla Howard:** Ms. Howard thanked HFA members for engaging in individual discussions with her and she said she has been in touch with Marianne Edmonds, PRAG, in order to get up to speed with regard to financial matters. Ms. Howard said she would like to schedule a workshop in order to discuss a collective goal for the HFA and a strategy to achieve that goal. Ms. Howard said she would also like to discuss the HFA's desire to be involved in the City of St. Augustine's plans for affordable housing on North Holmes. Ms. Howard said she plans to set meetings to forge partnerships within the community and she welcomed suggestions from the HFA in that regard. Ms. Howard stated she will attend monthly meetings and workshops in person and she said that she will plan to stay a day or two before or after so that she can engage with community partners and stakeholders in person. Bill Lazar, St. Johns Housing Partnership, offered Ms. Howard space to work in his offices when she visits St. Augustine.
- **Vacancy – Recommendation:** All applications were sent to HFA members prior to the meeting. There was discussion and all candidates were considered. **Motion** made by Linda DeGrande to recommend Brian Clark; motion seconded by Carolina Morrow. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Old Business:**

- **Own a Home Opportunity Program:** Ms. Voorhees advised there has been no activity. The HFA requested Tim Wranovix, Raymond James, attend a future meeting in order to explain this program and how it is currently being impacted by the market.

**Meeting was adjourned** at 4:07 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** The next regular meeting of the HFA will be held on February 23, 2023, in the Kingfisher conference room in the Health & Human Services building, at 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine.

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary