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REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD :
OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOBOKEN : THURSDAY
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY : SEPTEMBER 8, 2022
OF HOBOKEN : 7:00 P.M.

HELD IN PERSON AT
ADAMS GARDENS
HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY

BEFORE:

CHAIRPERSON BARBARA REYES
VICE-CHAIRPERSON ERICA SEITZMAN
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL RUSSO
COMMISSIONER ANDREW IMPASTATO
COMMISSIONER AARON LEWIT
COMMISSIONER JAMES SANFORD
COMMISSIONER ANTHONY FORBES (absent)

A P P E A R A N C E S:
FITZPATRICK & WATERMAN, ESQS.,
BY: MATTHEW FITZPATRICK, ESQ.
Attorneys for the Board.

A L S O P R E S E N T:
MARC A. RECKO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LOURDES PRIESTLEY, Director of Administration
FRANK MERCHAND, Director of Management
EMIL KOTHERITHARA, CFO (via Zoom)

THERESA L. TIERNAN, CCR, RMR
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER
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I N D E X

1		
2		
3	AGENDA	PAGE
4	ROLL CALL	3
5	READING OF ANNOUNCEMENTS	3
6	PUBLIC COMMENTS	5
7	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS	23
8		
9	RESOLUTIONS	
10	Resolution 2022-09.01	99
11	Resolution 2022-09.02	101
12	Resolution 2022-09.03	103
13	Resolution 2022-09.04	105
14	Resolution 2022-09.05	125
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Can we stand for the
2 salute to the flag, please?

3 (Pledge of Allegiance recited at this time.)

4 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: So, before we start,
5 I just want to say that I would like to take a
6 moment to have a moment of silence for Ms. Kyelia
7 Colon who we lost this last month.

8 So if we can just have a moment of
9 silence, please.

10 (Moment of silence at this time.)

11 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: So I would like to
12 advise those present that the notice of this regular
13 meeting of the Housing Authority of the City Of
14 Hoboken has been provided to the public in
15 accordance with the provisions of the Open Public
16 Meetings Act. Notice to this meeting of Thursday,
17 September 8, 2022, was given by publication of the
18 annual meeting notice of the Authority with
19 amendments as necessary, was sent to the Jersey
20 Journal and Star Ledger on Tuesday, August 30, 2022,
21 was sent to the City Clerk of Hoboken on Tuesday,
22 August 30, 2022, with a copy of the agenda to be
23 posted on the bulletin board in City Hall, Hoboken
24 Library, and Hoboken Police Department, and was
25 posted on the Authority website on Tuesday,

1 August 30, 2022. I direct the minutes of this
2 meeting to state that I have announced that adequate
3 notice of this meeting has been given as required by
4 the Open Public Meetings Act.

5 So we'll go to the public portion.

6 Roll call, Director.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Anthony

8 Forbes?

9 Andrew Impastato?

10 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Here.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Aaron Lewit?

12 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: Here.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Barbara

14 Reyes?

15 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Here.

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Michael

17 Russo?

18 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Here.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: James

20 Sanford.

21 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Here.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Erica

23 Seitzman.

24 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Here.

25 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And we will now

1 begin with our public portion.

2 I just want to remind everyone that
3 comes up to speak, you can direct your questions or
4 whatever you're going to speak about directly to
5 myself. We will then -- if it's something that
6 needs to be further discussed with the Director, we
7 will then do that. I just ask everyone to be
8 respectful of the commissioners, the staff, and
9 everyone here. Thank you.

10 Mark Villamar.

11 MR. VILLAMAR: Good evening, Madame
12 Chair. Good evening, Commissioners. I'm Mark Louis
13 Villamar. I'm the finance officer of the Hoboken
14 American Legion post located just a couple of blocks
15 from here. Like many parts of Hoboken, in October
16 2012, Superstorm Sandy damaged, in fact, practically
17 destroyed our initial post that had one story, and
18 pretty much everything in it was totaled, including
19 all our memorabilia, all our records, all --
20 everything in the building got flooded.

21 The city came to recognize that there
22 was an opportunity here for the post to rebuild
23 itself and at the same time create housing for
24 homeless veterans because the city had a parking lot
25 just on the corner of Willow and Second, which was

1 adjacent to our post, and what we've decided to do
2 was to embark on a program to rebuild a new post out
3 of the flood zone and create 24 units of housing.

4 Through the efforts of the Hoboken
5 Housing Authority at the time, we were able to
6 secure six vouchers, only six, we applied for
7 twenty-four in the RFP, but we took those six and
8 said let's break this project into two parts. We'll
9 have a phase one, we'll build the main building, get
10 six people up to speed, and we did that. We
11 completed the building about three years ago, and
12 there are now six residents that had previously been
13 on the streets, and there have been no trouble with
14 them.

15 We've had absolutely no trouble in
16 terms of our ability to work with the neighborhood
17 and integrate these people back into society. In
18 one case we had one of the residents we were able to
19 secure a job with him -- for him with the city of
20 Hoboken.

21 And that's what the American Legion's
22 pledged to do. Our mission, our 102-year old post,
23 our mission is to assist veterans and their
24 families. And we're now, for the last two years,
25 been working somewhat closely with your executive

1 director to secure another 18 vouchers, and that's
2 why I'm here today, to tell you a little bit about
3 our second phase of the project, which would expand
4 the post facilities to include meeting rooms and
5 exercise rooms, and ability to engage the Veteran
6 Administration to provide all the kind of services
7 that people previously homeless need. Sometimes
8 it's substance abuse, in a case of veterans it could
9 be PTSD or post traumatic stress disorder, it could
10 be any number of issues related to their service for
11 our country. These 18 people will be selected not
12 by the American Legion, we have an agency that does
13 that for us, and we just basically require that they
14 have an honorable discharge from any branch of the
15 military service.

16 And with the understanding that as many
17 things in Hoboken, many things in this country
18 originated in Hoboken, baseball being probably the
19 most famous, our post is the first post in the
20 United States that had, on the same location, a post
21 and housing for homeless veterans, and we're now a
22 model throughout the state. There are four other
23 communities that are doing this, they're closely
24 connected to us, but we can't even get started
25 without a commitment for project-based vouchers.

1 You all know about what vouchers are and how to get
2 them, I am here today to seek your assistance to get
3 these vouchers so that we can fund the rest of the
4 building, get them constructed, and get 18 more
5 veterans homes.

6 Director Recko and I are going to meet
7 and try to work something that will engage the
8 elected community, the elected officials in our
9 community to assist us and to eventually have an
10 expansion of our building. And if anyone has any
11 questions about what I'm doing and how we can work
12 together, I'd be happy to tell you. And I would
13 also like to invite you all to visit what we have
14 built. If you haven't been there yet, you should
15 see.

16 We have an amazing post, and anybody in
17 the housing authority, residents that are veterans
18 and are interested in working with other veterans in
19 this community, I really urge you to send them our
20 way because we have a wonderful post. It's very
21 vital now, we have a lot of younger members. I'm a
22 Vietnam veteran, but we're on the way out, there's a
23 lot of guys coming in now that are much younger than
24 I am, and these -- it's a very interesting facility.
25 And anybody who'd like to see it, Director Recko,

1 obviously, has my e-mail, and I'd be happy to walk
2 you through it.

3 Thank you so much for all you do for
4 the people in the Housing Authority.

5 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: That's wonderful.

7 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Carmen Vega.

8 MS. VEGA: Good evening, everyone. I'm
9 just here to take a moment just to say thank you for
10 Hoboken Housing, that they've been excellent in
11 trying to provide services to their ability for all
12 the tenants, they're trying their best. I also want
13 to take out this moment to thank councilman Phil
14 Cohen for the tremendous summer that we have had
15 this summer. Fox Hill, he's been very excellent in
16 servicing the seniors/disabled people in our
17 building. And the reason I want to emphasize this
18 is because the previous person that we had that many
19 of you know never did anything for Fox Hill, so we
20 have to give credit where credit is due, and he has
21 done a tremendous job up till now.

22 I also want to be -- I also want to
23 thank Ruben because Ruben Ramos has been there for
24 years for us, and every time there's a bus ride down
25 here, I tiptoe down here and I get on it, so I'm

1 very grateful for that. Also, Councilman Ruben, if
2 anyone needs him, he's there, that's a true fact.

3 And, Mr. Recko, I know that you have
4 come a long way and unfortunately because of the
5 pandemic we had some issues that had to be on hold,
6 but we're trying to be as patient as we can. I know
7 there's a lot of fixtures that have to be done at
8 Fox Hill, and where I am, it's understandable, but
9 we have to try to, you know, get the repairs done,
10 that's all. I think that's -- once that's done,
11 we'll be on a smoother road with everyone there, I
12 hope.

13 Anyway, but I want to thank you for it,
14 you and your staff. I must say that the girls in
15 Fox Hill, they're awesome. They're here, Natalie is
16 here, some of them aren't here. So I just want you
17 to know that you do have a great team up there, and,
18 you know, and just in general, everyone that you --
19 that we reach out to, we need help, they're always
20 there for us. So that's not -- they don't hesitate
21 to not help, and we need it, they're there, whatever
22 it may be. So, you know, you have a great team, and
23 they're trying to do their best that they can with
24 whatever they can do, so it's understandable. So I
25 want -- I want to say that I just wanted to take out

1 that moment.

2 And, also, the security, it seems to me
3 like these couple of days it's only been not even a
4 month but it seems like it's working out, so I hope
5 that it continues to keep out the people that we
6 don't need in our building.

7 Barbara, I know you for many years, and
8 I'm glad that you're there where you're at right now
9 because you know what we've all been through, and
10 the struggle has been real.

11 So, also, I want to take out the
12 opportunity to thank every commissioner who sits
13 here in front of us and hears our complaints or
14 whatever it maybe, whatever issues there are.
15 Michael, I know you for many years, I want to thank
16 you for being back here on this taking -- trying to
17 help as much as you can.

18 So, you know, with that I just want to
19 say that we're moving forward, we're trying to do
20 whatever we can, and, you know, if they complain to
21 me or give complaints to the office, I just push
22 over the information, you know, pass it over and
23 just move on. But I want to thank you because your
24 voice as well, I've heard you for a long time, and,
25 you know, you're very clear, and I like that about

1 you, and I always tell you that, and everyone else.

2 I know you as well, I know this
3 gentleman over here, I know you, you're very -- and
4 thank you for taking out time. So thank you, let's
5 push forward. And thank you for the great summer
6 that we had at Fox Hill. I want to say that about
7 my team, you know, we had a great time, and I can't
8 wait for the winter and other events that are coming
9 along. So we have a fun time, yeah, it's about
10 time. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Thank you.

12 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Absolutely.

13 Evelyn Lopez. It's okay, Evelyn.

14 MS. LOPEZ: Hi, good evening. I never
15 spoke in a meeting before, it's my first time. I
16 want to start by thanking everyone that went to
17 Kyelia's candle lighting, Mr. Recko, Frank, Barbara,
18 Ruben Ramos. I know Mr. Russo couldn't make it.
19 I'm here to say that I feel that we should put the
20 street on Harrison Street going one way towards
21 Marshall Drive as Kyelia's Way. She was a great
22 advocate for the community and Hoboken Housing
23 Authority, and I feel she deserves the street under
24 her name and her family. So if yous take this in
25 consideration and give us that, we'll be glad and

1 the plaque, did you pay for the plaque?

2 MS. LOPEZ: I went to Stan's to do a
3 plaque for her, so we donated it to Kyelia's family,
4 so she has an original plaque that's coming, because
5 Ruben Ramos is going to build a tree, plant a tree
6 for her, and that small plaque is going to the tree,
7 and the big plaque that comes within a month, it's
8 going up on the wall where she lives in three --
9 where she lived in, 318 Harrison, that Mr. Recko
10 okayed already.

11 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Awesome.

12 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: So you
13 didn't -- there was no cost to you.

14 MS. LOPEZ: No cost.

15 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Maybe we can
16 send a letter to Stan's to thank him.

17 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Absolutely.

18 MS. LOPEZ: I think, Barbara, you sent
19 that, right?

20 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Thank you for
22 doing that.

23 MS. LOPEZ: You're welcome.

24 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Thanks, Evelyn.

25 MS. RAWLINS: I've had a rough August,

1 and a very not-so-good start to September. I sent
2 this e-mail August 23rd regarding late fees and
3 issues in my unit, simply because Housing just needs
4 to get their act together. There was a leak in my
5 unit that you had to gain entry to. My son let your
6 staff in, replaced the pipe underneath the kitchen,
7 come to find out it wasn't done properly, so they
8 had to come in again and fix it. When they did,
9 they left the bottom of the cabinet soaking wet.

10 Your staff is supposed to clean up
11 after themselves. I said it last month, and every
12 time I send a text, make sure they clean up after
13 themselves. They are still not doing that. And
14 they haven't cleaned the hallway properly either,
15 there's dirt all over the place.

16 And, you know, I got a text back from
17 Maria because I didn't pay my rent until I was
18 satisfied with that, this pipe was in properly, and
19 I said I'm not paying the late fee, I'll pay the
20 rent, but I'm not paying the late fee. Oh, well,
21 we're not going to waive your late fee, and you had
22 proper notice. Everybody got proper notice about
23 the late fees, but my issue is when you send someone
24 to do a job, they need to do it correctly the first
25 time. And then for the leak to happen, you're

1 damaging the cabinets. It's not going to come back
2 on me, I didn't make the mess. Your staff made the
3 mess, they should have cleaned up after themselves.
4 Bring a towel with you when you know you're going to
5 deal with water, bring something so that you can
6 clean up after yourselves, and don't use the items
7 of the residents, that's not fair to the residents
8 either. You should not be doing that.

9 And then she said, because I requested
10 that it be on my day off, that's because my
11 15-year-old was home, and when my sons are not home,
12 she's home alone. Surprise. Housing cannot come in
13 my house with a 15-year-old there by herself, so --
14 and when I requested on a day off is so that I can
15 be there, get it done, do it right, leave, so I can
16 get the rest of my day done and do whatever I have
17 to do, so that I don't have to sit there all day
18 wasting my time waiting for someone to come in and
19 fix something they should have fixed the first time
20 correctly.

21 I don't ever want anyone coming into my
22 unit without proper notification and without
23 contacting me or -- and my boys. I will -- once
24 it's to me, I'll let my sons know. If they're
25 available, fine. If not, don't come in my house.

1 Nobody is allowed to do that. If there's an
2 emergency, by all means, do it, but make sure you
3 leave a notice on my -- on my door, not on the door,
4 on my table, bright pink, bright orange, I don't
5 care, a note on my table if you have to enter. And
6 make sure that someone goes with your staff so they
7 don't rob me because they have done that in the
8 past.

9 I'm not paying the late fee for August.
10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Mr. McMillan.

12 MR. MCMILLAN: Hello. Hi. This is my
13 first time, so I'm, like, still trying to -- I've
14 been here for about a year and some change, and I'm
15 actually enjoying it, you know, it's my first time
16 living in my own apartment. The only issue I'm
17 having is that since I've been here, like, my stove,
18 even though it's brand new, for some reason, the
19 oven part won't work, and when I turn it on, when I
20 turned it on the first time, it, kind of, like, my
21 asthma bothered, so I thought maybe it was the first
22 time, so I tried it again. It didn't. So when I
23 said something about it they came, the guys said,
24 oh, it needs a piece, so I'm like okay. He said
25 they'd have to order it. I haven't heard from them,

1 so I said something again.

2 And I know Miss Marie, she asked me,
3 you know, with the -- the same guy came and looked
4 at it and was like, oh, it needs a piece. I'm like,
5 well, you said that before, so, I don't know, you
6 know. And I'm like, okay, I haven't had an oven for
7 about over a year, so I'm like, I'm really now, kind
8 of, pushing to get at least a new one, so that way I
9 can cook something for the holidays. You know, I
10 got this little convectional oven but it ain't going
11 to do much. I'm like, I'm not going to fit a turkey
12 in that. But that's my only issue, like, within the
13 next two months can I just get a new, brand-new
14 oven, so that way, you know, I can actually cook
15 something, a meal, correctly?

16 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Thank you,
17 Mr. McMillan.

18 MR. MCMILLAN: That's about it.

19 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: We appreciate it.

20 Director, I know we don't go back and
21 forth, but --

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We'll be on
23 it. We'll be on it.

24 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Okay, thank you.

25 Mr. Glume (phonetic)?

1 MR. GLUME: Good evening, how you
2 doing.

3 Can I show you all something, can I
4 come right here and go around and show you pictures,
5 I'll be right here. Look at this.

6 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Well, it depends
7 on the pictures.

8 (Laughter.)

9 MR. GLUME: This is our cabinet. Can
10 you see it?

11 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah.

12 MR. GLUME: Cabinet. That's part of
13 the kitchen cabinet, right there. Look at this.
14 Look at this. That's a shame. I want to show you
15 all. That's a shame. I mean, what's coming up now,
16 I can't, I still have --

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Make sure the
18 Director sees those and just speak into the
19 microphone after you're done.

20 MR. GLUME: You see?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Yes.

22 MR. GLUME: I reported this last month,
23 last month, in August, now we're going into
24 September now, nobody came, nobody came. I mean, I
25 went to my manager, went there, I came to the -- I

1 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Would you like to?

2 MS. HUSSANE: Yes. If it's okay.

3 Thank you. I appreciate it.

4 Good evening, everybody, Michelle
5 Hussane (phonetic). I just want to ask, do you
6 have enough maintenance workers? Because I don't
7 see many, which there used to be a lot, now there's
8 very few, because this -- this -- I know people with
9 garbage cans outside, people unfortunately, they
10 don't take heed to the garbage can outside. But the
11 buildings need cleaning. I myself mops my building,
12 and I'm -- I got pains, I be in pain at night, y'all
13 see me moving around, but at night I suffer. I mops
14 my building because unfortunately you got people
15 that bring garbage out, it drips, they drop stuff in
16 the hallway, causes ants.

17 I'm on the first floor, the lady next
18 door to me has heart problems, ants, I'm spraying,
19 I'm buying my spray, which I'm going to charge
20 y'all. I'm buying my spray, I'm spraying outside
21 the walls, water bugs everyday, I'm spraying this
22 side of the wall of the building, on the staircase
23 all, I even get hot water and bleach and pour it
24 down the stairs, I done it out the hallway, pour it
25 down the stairs to clean the steps because if

1 somebody dripped something sweet we have a bunch of
2 ants.

3 Like, if y'all need some maintenance
4 guys, there's a whole bunch of young guys outside,
5 give them four hours, four hours in the morning,
6 give some four hours in the afternoon before y'all
7 close, I mean, I think they should be used for
8 something, I mean, besides sitting outside. It
9 would be -- it would be appreciative to have a job
10 four hours just to get paid to clean up where they
11 sitting outside at.

12 I mean, I really -- y'all really got to
13 invest in some maintenance guy. If I start
14 cleaning, y'all going to charge me, I'm going to
15 start sending y'all bills because at night I'm the
16 one going through the pain. But it's ridiculous.
17 I've never seen that we have no maintenance guys,
18 and I lived here long enough to know how many
19 maintenance guys, and I see very few. There's a lot
20 of them I see working, they got to do apartments and
21 stuff, but we need somebody cleaning them grounds.
22 It's just -- and the buildings need to be mopped.

23 It doesn't hurt to pay somebody four
24 hours to get the mop, go down one, ten flights of
25 stairs, seven flights of stairs, three flights of

1 stairs, don't matter, go down the stairs this side,
2 go down the stairs on that side. I mean, we really
3 got to do something about this. I understand it's a
4 lot, but I think y'all should look into them young
5 guys outside, I'm quite sure they'll be glad to work
6 four hours just to clean for an hour and they have
7 money in their pockets. Okay? Thank you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Thank you,
9 Ms. Hussane.

10 Director, could we move on with your
11 report?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We can,
13 thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Oh, I'm sorry. I
15 need to let you know that Commissioner Russo said he
16 wants it to be five minutes. Okay.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: I'll talk
18 fast. Or as fast as I can.

19 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Okay.

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Thank you.

21 The first part of my report was, again,
22 acknowledging Ms. Kyelia Colon, and we are looking
23 at the idea of, possibly next month, bringing a
24 resolution to you to rename the what we call the
25 horseshoe over to Kyelia's Way. I think that's a

1 great idea.

2 HUD did visit us on August 11th, it was
3 our last Board meeting day, I didn't say much about
4 it last month. Barbara Reyes was with us with some
5 HUD dignitaries, I think they were incredibly
6 impressed with where we are and what we're doing.
7 They see housing across the country, across the
8 state, and they know the situation we're in, and it
9 never hurts to have some of the important folks, not
10 to say our local officers aren't important, but here
11 we're talking about a deputy assistant out of
12 Washington for the Office of Public and Indian
13 Housing and our regional director, Marilyn
14 O'Sullivan, were here, so we had a chance to really
15 educate them as to what we're doing, and I think,
16 Barbara, I think we could say they were pretty
17 impressed with where we are.

18 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes, they were
19 impressed.

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: So the word
21 is we're doing a good job.

22 We are going to be talking to the
23 Braxton family this month about when the date should
24 be for the dedication ceremony for the Harrison
25 courtyard. Paul is going to help us out with that,

1 as well as some other folks, so thank you, Paul.
2 And we will be communicating on that, what that date
3 is for the courtyard. The work there is done now,
4 so we can move forward.

5 We did have our annual picnic for our
6 staff on July 26th. Thank you, staff. This is a
7 way of saying to our staff a little thank you for
8 their hard work they do day in and day out.

9 Hoboken Housing Forward, we do have a
10 memorandum of understanding between the City and HHA
11 in front of you tonight. It did -- was approved by
12 City Council. I just got to give a big thank you to
13 Councilman Russo for all the work he's done on this,
14 and to our staff and folks, because we really burned
15 the midnight oil on this one and we got it done, so
16 we're really, really happy and hope you all pass it
17 tonight.

18 The study from the City for the area in
19 need of redevelopment is continuing. We have been
20 talking to the City on a continuing basis about
21 that, to the staff. We are putting out our RFP for
22 on an obsolescence study, we hope to have that to
23 you at the next Board meeting, that's a step we need
24 to take in order to move forward with our renovation
25 project. We are studying the options on bringing on

1 a special legal counsel for future development.
2 We've had some progress on that, but we should have
3 a presentation for you on that, we hope, at the next
4 Board meeting, so we can work that out with
5 piggybacking on another housing authority's contract
6 for a special legal counsel.

7 And we are looking at a special Board
8 meeting, maybe in October, and a special resident
9 meeting in October to bring everyone up to date on
10 where we are with Hoboken Housing Forward. So I
11 think by that time we'll have enough news to talk to
12 everyone about the MOU, the obsolescence study, and
13 where we are and what our plans are for the future
14 for Hoboken Housing Forward.

15 Security policing issues, we did start
16 the security contract as of September 1st. I know
17 Ms. Vega mentioned that there have been a great
18 experience; that hasn't been our experience across
19 the Board. We have some issues. We have some
20 issues. We've communicated with the security
21 company, so it's only been, what, eight days now,
22 but we have had some issues. We have communicated
23 with the security company, we're going to be meeting
24 with them on Tuesday morning to hold them to task
25 and see where they are. So we are going to strive

1 for improvement, folks, we're not particularly happy
2 with where we are right now, so we'll be, hopefully,
3 next month you'll be seeing, and if they can't
4 improve, we'll look for somebody else. We're on it.
5 We hear you. We hear you. I've had a number of
6 residents call me and a number of the staff is
7 upset, so we're moving forward on that.

8 We are going to be holding meet and
9 greets during September, we'll see you all at the
10 meet and greets in September, so we'll be out to
11 each site in September we'll meet so -- to hear you.

12 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Director, what
13 times and days are you doing those?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We normally
15 do the elderly disabled sites in the afternoon.

16 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Uh-huh.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: And then we
18 do Christopher Columbus and Harrison and Andrew
19 Jackson in the evenings.

20 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Okay.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: So we'll
22 pass that schedule around.

23 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Please.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: You're
25 welcome. As long as there aren't any more than

1 three commissioners, you guys are welcome all the
2 time. And, again, I do encourage any resident that
3 wants to meet with me personally, schedule an
4 appointment through our office. We have a lot of
5 intakes, we continue to have them. I am reachable.
6 You can drop off a note to central office, you can
7 call Ms. Lourdes, call us, send a note to your
8 manager, and we'll set up an appointment for you.
9 Needs to be an appointment because I have so many
10 meetings that if you just walk in, you'll be lucky
11 to get me.

12 Hoboken Police Department continues to
13 work with us on a regular basis. We continue to
14 refer our cases to court when possible, and we have
15 a few running through now. It has taken a long time
16 through the Court system, but we continue to work
17 closely with the police department.

18 We do anticipate applying for funds in
19 October for the Family Self-Sufficiency program,
20 let's all knock on wood that that application is in
21 the works through Ms. Corinne.

22 We are developing a resident handbook
23 for each of our sites, that should be published
24 within the next 60 days. And our second edition of
25 the newsletter has been published and widely

1 distributed, you should have a copy of that
2 newsletter in your packets tonight. And I think
3 everyone else has one.

4 Our changes to the ACLT and drug abuse
5 policies are at HUD. They've got their review
6 period. We think that that should expire before the
7 next Board meeting, so we should have good news for
8 you. Whether they make comments or not, we don't
9 know, we'll see. By the end of September we should
10 have to have a response from them.

11 Now, we continue to look for a new
12 plumber and a maintenance mechanic, so feel free to
13 have anyone you know with those skills put in an
14 application down at central office.

15 Our pre-job meetings are being held
16 with the contractor for the Fox Hill project,
17 Ms. Vega mentioned that. We have had a -- again,
18 source issues with the supply chain. Waiting for
19 that project to get fully started. I have asked for
20 a meeting with them by the end of the month to do an
21 overall review, and we'll get everyone involved that
22 needs to be involved in that -- in that meeting.

23 Housing for Hoboken, we do have in
24 front of you tonight a recommendation for two new
25 community trustees, which we'll be talking about

1 during resolutions.

2 We do have good news on vacancies,
3 we're actually reached our goal of 95 percent. We
4 have reached it. Maintenance staff and management
5 staff, let me just thank you. I've -- it's just
6 been a great, great effort by them. We're not done.
7 My goal is 98 percent, it always is 98 percent,
8 but -- and we are, since the September 1st report by
9 the way, we are at 96 percent.

10 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Nice.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: So
12 96 percent is my goal.

13 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Director, that
14 triggers more money for them, for the housing
15 authority?

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Well, we did
17 a better score on our annual pass with them, so it
18 will help us get out of trouble. But, obviously, we
19 get more rent.

20 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Right.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: So this year
22 we have housed 141 people, 141, all right?
23 Tremendous, progress?

24 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Great.

25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: That whole

1 elevator project that we've been struggling with,
2 we're moving. That's all in our past now, we're
3 back to where we were, and we intend to continue
4 that. So I think Frank gave you a couple of graphs
5 in there, which I'll talk about as much as you want
6 or not, but it really shows our project -- progress
7 over the past nine months. Tremendous progress.

8 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Is there a
9 chart in there about the payment, payments of
10 residents? Remember last meeting we talked about --

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Yeah.

12 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: -- outstanding --
13 outstanding --

14 MR. MERCHAND: We'll talk about that.
15 We'll talk about that.

16 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Do you have
17 any data, though, in the packet?

18 MR. MERCHAND: I have it here.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: He has it
20 with him tonight, so we can go to that next, I just
21 want to talk about vacancies first, and their
22 management goals will be -- as part of our report in
23 just a minute. Okay.

24 Special capital projects, the work at
25 Adams Gardens is still going on with the boiler

1 work, we're still waiting for a condensate tank to
2 be delivered before that can be completely done.
3 The emergency generator work, prework is being done.
4 Again, it won't be finished until spring because the
5 generators can't be here until spring.

6 We did get some good press on the CDBG
7 funding this past month, it was interesting that it
8 got to the newspapers. I reported to you last month
9 on this, but we did get from the City \$627,927
10 commitment. We still have to sign the contract:
11 300,000 for boilers; 50,000 for lighting upgrades;
12 and 2748,000 for security enhancements, most of that
13 is going to go to camera infrastructure. We have
14 switches in each of our buildings that are original
15 to our camera systems. They need to be upgraded in
16 order to keep the integrity of our systems going.
17 So you really thank the City for that. Last year's
18 CDBG funds are under design dedicated to boiler
19 work, we should be able to hook them up with this
20 year's amount. So, again, thank you to the City.

21 And there's very little left in the
22 2020 budget. The only thing that's left in our 2020
23 CDBG is that generator project I mentioned earlier,
24 that we've got to wait for the generators to get
25 here.

1 So our management report, getting back
2 to Commissioner Impastato's question, are really
3 focused on our initiatives for the coming year, that
4 occupancy rate, a better score on HUD's PIC system,
5 which is our reporting rate in the HUD's PIC system.
6 The removal of that audit finding that we've gotten
7 for a few years in a row now. And then the last but
8 not least, focus on reduction in the tenants'
9 account receivable, which is that topic. We've --
10 we, as well as many housing authorities nationally,
11 have had large rental balances that are due and
12 owing. I want to assure residents that as we roll
13 this out, and we'll get to the stats in a minute,
14 that we are going to be fair, we are going to be
15 across the board, but, also, folks that owe us rent
16 from the pandemic times, we need to work out
17 something. If you owe us rent, we need to sit down
18 and work that out. And we need to talk about
19 repayment agreements and how we're going to do
20 repayment agreements, we're going to be sitting down
21 with each family individually, talking about what
22 you might owe us and making sure you understand what
23 and how and why. We're going to be armed at that
24 point with any outside assistance we can bring in,
25 like, I know Commissioner Reyes has found us a new

1 angle we're at?

2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes, that's correct.
3 So earlier today I received an e-mail from the
4 county. As many of you know, August 31st was the
5 deadline for the emergency COVID money for rental
6 assistance. About noon today they e-mailed us and
7 let us know that, yes, that that is being extended,
8 that individuals can actually continue to apply
9 through us for the emergency COVID rental
10 assistance.

11 They also have another program for
12 individuals who receive SSI, TANF, or general
13 assistance. Those individuals, there is a different
14 application that needs to be applied for them if
15 they do owe rent. And then the last -- so there's
16 three funding sources that the county is providing
17 now. And the last funding sources, the SSH funding,
18 which is -- the name really doesn't make sense
19 because it consists of homelessness, but it's not
20 for individuals who are homeless, it's for
21 individuals who also work but cannot afford or have
22 bills such as back rent or utilities. So they will
23 cover up to four months of back rent and up to eight
24 months of back utilities, so through the SSH funding
25 through the County.

1 So right previously to this meeting, I
2 was speaking to Frank, as you guys know, HOPES
3 partners with the county, and so we are going to
4 continue to partner to make it easier for our
5 residents to come down to our office at 532 Jackson
6 to complete these applications. I just want
7 everybody to keep in mind that these applications
8 take time. So we ask that you come between the
9 hours of ten to three because it could be
10 time-consuming.

11 Another option that I spoke to Frank
12 about was if they can get me a number of individuals
13 in the housing authority that really need this
14 assistance, and we can make sure that they actually
15 come, we can maybe contact the County to see if they
16 will come on site to one of our community rooms and
17 have their workers do these applications on site,
18 and I am willing to do that. I know Frank said he's
19 going to go back and identify for me how many
20 families we have. If we have to do a couple of days
21 we'll work on it. Our staff will be there, the
22 County can be there, and we can all work together in
23 an attempt to, kind of, get, you know, get us the
24 most -- not just us, the residents, because
25 technically that's what we want to do, we want to

1 help you guys.

2 So we understand people fell behind, we
3 understand that everyone has to pay rent, and we're
4 trying our best as commissioners and as the housing
5 authority to work on this, because I cannot tell you
6 how many texts I got from Commissioner Russo, is
7 there another program we can work on? So we're
8 working on it. We're trying to find every funding
9 source that we can find to help you guys. We just
10 ask you guys to -- when they're here, please come
11 out. We've had them come out in the past and,
12 unfortunately, we've had five, six, seven residents
13 only come and see them, so to them it's kind of --
14 it turns out to be a waste of time, that they're
15 not, you know -- that we're not having the amount of
16 residents that we say we need assistance for,
17 they're not showing up. So -- and, unfortunately,
18 they're not going to come out in the evenings, so
19 that's not -- it's going to have to be a day where
20 it's during the day.

21 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Is this any
22 resident of Hudson County?

23 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes, it's a Hudson
24 County -- it is any resident of Hudson County, and
25 we will help anybody. Although our offices are in

1 the housing authority, we also have a building over
2 at 301 Garden, so they can go to either office, all
3 staff is trained the same, and we can assist them
4 with the entire process.

5 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: What's the
6 group called, that the money comes from?

7 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: So there's different
8 funding sources. So one of them is ERA2 is one of
9 the funding sources, which is COVID rental
10 assistance. The other one is EA, it's called an EA
11 application, which that one is geared specifically
12 to SSI tenant or general assistance individuals.
13 And then the SSH funding is actually for
14 individuals, it can be -- their income can come from
15 employment, unemployment, regular social security
16 retirement, alimony, child support, workers' comp,
17 VA benefits, and pensions. So -- and that's the
18 program that I said could help you go four months
19 past rent and up to eight months with utilities.

20 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: And, sorry,
21 just one more question.

22 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: No no no.

23 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: If a resident
24 has already received funding from the government,
25 from the federal government, is this -- can this

1 also be in addition to that?

2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Well, see, that's
3 one of the things that we're trying to iron out with
4 the county. We have had individuals who have
5 received COVID money in the past and maybe in the
6 first era when they -- when they sent it out.

7 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Right.

8 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And we're trying to
9 figure out, can we help them again. I know in most
10 cases, honestly, doing this in the past, it has been
11 where they don't help you again. You know, it's one
12 time for a year and that's it. But maybe because of
13 what's happening with the whole pandemic and all
14 that, maybe there is an exception.

15 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Sort of worth
16 it.

17 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: It's worth asking,
18 it's worth -- and we are back and forth in
19 communication with them, and as soon as Frank gets
20 me all that information, I will stay on top of it to
21 maybe have them come on site.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Thank you.
23 And what's going to help is where we're going too,
24 and we'll be back to stats in a minute -- thank you,
25 Commissioner, because that's really crucial -- by

1 the end of September, everyone is going to be
2 getting a letter that owes us rent, and it's going
3 to say hello, you owe us rent, right, come on and
4 make an appointment, all right. So you know, folks
5 know who they are, so start thinking about it,
6 residents, and then we're going to ask you to come
7 on in and sit down and talk to us, and we're going
8 to do everything we can to work with you.

9 We are not interested in evicting
10 anyone for nonpayment of rent. That's not our
11 interest. That's not what we want. We want to work
12 it out with you if you've gotten behind, all right?

13 So once we do that, we're going to ask
14 you to come in for an appointment, we're going to
15 have some extended hours for folks that can't be
16 with us during the day, we're going to be having
17 staffing from four to six, Monday through Thursday,
18 and on Saturdays for folks that need to come and
19 meet with us and work these things out. When I come
20 out for our meet and greets in September, we'll have
21 a presentation on this, as well, on where we can go
22 to get assistance and what we're going to be doing
23 in the future here, so we expect to start our
24 meetings right around October 1st. All right?

25 So having said that, our balances are

1 huge. We're up over a million dollars in unpaid
2 rent. And we got some stats for you on some of the
3 issues. A great chunk of the money is by a very
4 small number of families, and then another chunk of
5 the money is folks that are under -- owe us under a
6 thousand dollars, and then there's another chunk of
7 folks under zero to 10,000. So wherever Frank is --

8 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: He's actually giving
9 that out.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: And, Frank,
11 I'll let you talk a little bit from here.

12 MR. MERCHAND: Okay. So what we talked
13 about last month, right, was the urgency of the rent
14 collection rent. Obviously, like Barbara just said,
15 and we understand from you guys, that there's a lot
16 of people who are hurting right now financially.
17 Unfortunately, the realities are, is that we do have
18 to pay the rent, and we're going to have to get to
19 that point. So currently, right now, there are 569
20 families that are outstanding rent. That's whether
21 they owe five dollars or 30,000, right?

22 So as a whole, that's the total amount
23 of number of families that owe \$1,237,577. That
24 amount only represents the outstanding rent. There
25 is another component to this, which is not reporting

1 your income. So if you don't report your income, we
2 didn't know that you owe more money, so this number,
3 if reported properly, would probably be higher. If
4 reported properly, we probably would have other
5 amounts of income that would have come in.

6 So the reason why I'm bringing that
7 into the conversation right now is because you see
8 there's three categories here. Out of that 569
9 families, 316 are under a thousand. 227 families
10 are the bulk of it, and that's above a thousand and
11 under ten. And then we have 26 families that hold
12 the big chunk of the debt. Between those 26
13 families, they owe almost \$400,000, right? So
14 because of that we have to treat them differently to
15 be successful, right?

16 Now, just like, like in a doctor's
17 office, right, you can't treat everybody the same,
18 every person has a different situation. Here we're
19 going to have three specific methods to handle the
20 situation. So for the first group, which is the 316
21 families, the people that owe less than a thousand,
22 it could be very simple: They could owe \$20, and
23 we're going to clear it up; they could owe \$200, and
24 maybe we have to break it down to two payments; but
25 I feel that that category, the 316, we can take care

1 of right away, and that's just an automatic they're
2 going to -- we're going to -- they're going to come
3 in, hey, listen, you owe 500 bucks, well, I see that
4 your rent is only 50, for that group of people, most
5 likely there isn't unreported income. The reason I
6 say that is because the reason those numbers are so
7 low is because those other folks who have social
8 security or 50-dollar rents or smaller amounts,
9 right? So they could have just fallen behind a
10 little bit. That's good news because it ties in to
11 what Barbara talked about. Some of those folks
12 might fall into that where it's, kind of, like,
13 social security, we might be able to just -- so I'm
14 going to get her that list, and maybe we get 200
15 families out of that 316 that will qualify for that
16 the SSI.

17 So the goal is, with these families, is
18 obviously we're not going to collect all the money
19 up front. What we want to do is put them on the
20 path to getting right, which is you're entering into
21 a repayment, whether it's long-term or you just pay
22 off whatever amount that you can afford now and then
23 we do a repayment for the balance. There is not
24 going to be interest, so this is all -- all we need
25 to do is make the housing authority whole from what

1 was owed in rent, right?

2 For -- the reason why the categories
3 are less than a thousand and then the other on this
4 side, those other two categories, 10,000 and above
5 and the median families, they are, unfortunately,
6 most likely to have unreported income as well. So
7 that requires a little bit of, as you could see the
8 bottom, the skill level employee, so this is one,
9 two, and three. That's because we want to make sure
10 that the families that sit with somebody to talk
11 about their financial situation, they have the right
12 information and that we can do it properly, because
13 some of the folks that owe a lot of money, when we
14 come to the point where we need to make sure that
15 they're isn't other debt before we enter into a
16 repayment. We want to make sure that we capture all
17 the debt so we do it once and we don't have to go
18 back. We don't want to say, okay, we got everybody
19 on repayments, and then next month I come to you,
20 oh, but there was unreported income, so we have to
21 do a whole other round of repayments.

22 We just want to do it all one shot. So once
23 a person gets onto the repayment, and what I'm
24 liking it to is that's the golden ticket into the
25 redevelopment, the minute that you have a repayment

1 agreement in your hand, you are now -- you've made
2 the housing authority whole and you are as if you
3 paid your rent. Right? So you just have to stay on
4 time with your payments now in order to be able to
5 qualify.

6 So as we're working through it and we're
7 talking to the families, if you could see the next
8 chart, that's, kind of, like the stages of where
9 realistically we are and what we can do. So right
10 now we're in stage one. In September what we're
11 doing is we're -- I'm going to work with Matt to
12 finalize the repayment agreement, we are going to
13 train the staff that's going to handle it, we're
14 going to set our goals so that we know what we're
15 achieving each month.

16 I'm estimating it's going to take about an
17 hour per repayment per family, right? The hours
18 that the director mentioned were Monday through
19 Friday, four to six, and Saturday, nine to one,
20 that's 28 hours. So if we had one person working,
21 we could realistically say we're going to get about
22 25 repayments entered that week in those hours. So
23 it's a matter of how many people can we put to work
24 on it, and then we can shorten the length of time.
25 If it was only one person working on it for 28

1 hours, it would take about five to six months. So
2 the more people we put into the mix, the quicker we
3 can get people into those repayments.

4 Regardless of how many people we have working
5 on it at the same time, the stages stay the same,
6 right, so October is the kickoff of stage two, which
7 is when appointments will begin, when people will
8 physically be meeting with our staff to enter into
9 these repayments.

10 Then stage three is November, because that is
11 the beginning, November is the beginning of what the
12 model will look like for the next ten years.
13 Because November is when we've now have a signed
14 agreement with some certain amount of families,
15 whether it's 10, 20, and we already know are they
16 paying on time? Because entering into a repayment
17 agreement is only worth if you pay it.

18 So, now, November will be the first month
19 that the first few families that enter into a
20 repayment agreement we're going to see, okay, did
21 they pay that? If they paid that, we're good. And
22 then we keep moving, and we keep adding families to
23 that, that job keeps growing.

24 December is when, now, we'll have a good idea
25 of who didn't comply and who is not going to play

1 nice in the sandbox with, especially with the larger
2 amounts, and that's when we're going to start
3 scheduling actual court dates at that point, which,
4 then, if you could see the next stage is September
5 of 2023, because Matt has said it over and over, it
6 can take eight, nine, ten months to get in front of
7 a judge and actually get this done.

8 However, and this is what's so important for
9 people to understand, if we go to court for eviction
10 because someone is smoking, because somebody did
11 something, because they're wrong, you have to prove
12 it. When it's nonpayment of rent, you either paid
13 the rent or you didn't and you have till
14 4:00 o'clock. And then in those cases, the judge
15 says, well, landlord, make a deal with your tenant.
16 And then that's what we're going to say, but we did
17 and they defaulted. And then the judge is going to
18 say, oh, then 4:00 o'clock.

19 At that point it's a done deal. Are not in
20 the business to evict people. We do not leave --
21 our hope is that not a single family gets evicted.
22 Our hope is that we just get on the right path
23 because this is the income that takes care of the
24 buildings so they can be clean, this is the income
25 that takes care of the repairs so that we can have

1 employees, this is the income that we're not
2 receiving.

3 A million dollars is a lot of money to be
4 outstanding in rent right now. At most housing
5 authorities, if you're off by, you know, \$300, it's
6 like, oh, my God, what happened, right? So we are
7 going to get there, just like we did with the
8 vacancy, we're going to do the same exact thing.

9 And then that vacancy chart that you saw,
10 this is going to be the amount of repayments. Every
11 month I'm going to come in front of you and I'm
12 going to say, listen, this month we had 25, now we
13 have 50, now we have a hundred, till we get to 569.
14 We're either going to have 569 repayments by
15 December, or we're going to have a certain amount
16 and then packets for eviction. So that is where we
17 are.

18 We need to, with Corinne's help, educate
19 folks, part of the meet and greets, at these
20 meetings, anywhere that we go, making sure that you
21 get counted, stand up and get counted, get on the
22 lease, make sure that you're paying your rent, and
23 make sure that you pay the repayment, if you did
24 turn to one, because that is the purpose of it. But
25 if we do that, the MOU is signed, things are going,

1 and new buildings are going to go up, and everybody
2 will be able to take those apartments. And that's
3 what our goal is, to get every family into those new
4 apartments. But we can't do it owing rent and it's
5 not going to happen, it's not going to happen.

6 So I will now update this report for you
7 monthly, and then you'll have the progress report.
8 Our job this month is to hit get that -- that staff
9 in place, and then with your support, whatever it
10 is, if you have to push more people, less people,
11 we'll figure it out based on their budget. But
12 that's --

13 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: I have a question
14 relating to this, I'm the only resident on the
15 Board. But when you're saying they owe this rent, I
16 know when I get my rent receipt, you get your rent
17 and then you get whatever else you owe and then the
18 total. So what I mean, whatever else you owe. So
19 you call in for a clogged toilet, that your toilet
20 hasn't been, you know, isn't working properly but
21 it's not your fault and you're being charged for it
22 to be unclogged. Same thing with your tub, you go
23 in there, they unclog it, it's not your fault
24 there's an issue, but you're still being charged for
25 it. So when you're giving us these amounts, are

1 these amounts including that? Because, see, I think
2 a lot of the residents, the confusion is that when
3 you go pay your rent, right, and you pay your amount
4 of your rent, then they give you a receipt, they
5 give a receipt with all the other charges on it and
6 what else you -- what is your balance?

7 MR. MERCHAND: Know --

8 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: So even though --
9 even if you have paid your total rent, you still
10 have a balance and you owe them for coming to your
11 house to unclog your toilet, fix your wall, fix
12 whatever is happening. So that also causes
13 confusion. So when you're saying that this amount
14 is the total amount of the rent, it's actually just
15 rent, it's not late fees, it's not nothing else --

16 MR. MERCHAND: No late fees, no
17 anything else in there.

18 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Okay.

19 MR. MERCHAND: Because we can't go to
20 court on late fees.

21 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Correct.

22 MR. MERCHAND: So this is only what we
23 can go to court for.

24 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Frank, do we --
25 excuse me. Do we offer our residents the ability to

1 do direct withdrawal for their rent?

2 MR. MERCHAND: We don't have it set up
3 with the bank. So what we need to do is work with
4 the bank to give us a credit application for them to
5 do it, and then once we have that, we have two
6 options, we have the portal, which we are working on
7 to get out as soon as possible, but that's
8 different. The portal is a place where you can go
9 and swipe.

10 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Swipe a card,
11 right.

12 MR. MERCHAND: What you're talking is
13 can we set you up so that you never have to make --
14 write another check, and the answer is yes.

15 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Correct.

16 MR. MERCHAND: What we need for them is
17 we need the bank to approve us for a dollar amount
18 of ACH, and that's a credit issue. So then the
19 Housing Authority would have to apply for credit to
20 be able to withdraw or deposit a million dollars a
21 day based on our accounts. So that's something that
22 we can work with the banks and get that approved.

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: He knows the
24 answer because we've been working on it.

25 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Okay. Great.

1 Because I think that's a good --

2 MR. MERCHAND: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: -- I think it's a
4 good option, especially for families that are in
5 arrears, right, where that becomes part of that
6 negotiation, so to speak, to get that repayment.

7 MR. MERCHAND: Since it's not set in
8 stone, I think that's a great addition to it. Part
9 of entering into a repayment agreement is that you
10 must enter into a direct withdrawal.

11 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And, honestly, I
12 mean, I do it, right? Like, I mean, I don't see my
13 bills, ever.

14 MR. MERCHAND: Yeah, yeah, no, no.

15 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: It comes out of my
16 account --

17 MR. MERCHAND: I think that's the most
18 effective way.

19 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I mean, my wife
20 takes a lot out of the account too, but that's
21 besides the point. But no, honestly, like, I mean,
22 I personally have set it up that way where
23 everything is paid, right, all my basic bills are
24 taken care of. I never see that money, it basically
25 goes into my account and comes directly out. So I

1 think residents would appreciate something like
2 that, especially if they're, kind of, trying to
3 balance and juggle some stuff, so.

4 MR. MERCHAND: Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I have a
6 question. So out of the 569, do we know how many
7 families, like, lost their jobs because of COVID
8 or --

9 MR. MERCHAND: No, that --

10 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Because my
11 confusion lies with, like, were we not educating
12 people that you have to pay your rent unless you
13 lost your job, right? That was the whole reason
14 what our federal government did is, like, they
15 realized that so many people were losing jobs and
16 not able to go to work and make money, so they
17 stopped the eviction process, right? But the people
18 that were making money or still had their job might
19 have just stopped paying because they heard, oh, you
20 don't need to pay your rent.

21 MR. MERCHAND: Unfortunately, there was
22 a lot of misinformation on the street that people
23 were actually going around telling people don't pay
24 your rent.

25 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: So out of the

1 569, we don't have a number of how many people --

2 MR. MERCHAND: There is no way to know
3 that, no.

4 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

5 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: -- received a
6 letter saying, listen, I lost my job.

7 MR. MERCHAND: All those people would
8 have already applied for the ERA2, and they didn't
9 because a lot of people that went to apply for it,
10 when they got there they said, wait, you never lost
11 your job.

12 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: They didn't have a
13 loss. So in order for you to actually get the
14 assistance for the COVID rental assistance, you had
15 to prove to them as to why you didn't pay your rent.
16 So if you had paystubs, and, again, you're dealing
17 with the County, they know, they run your social,
18 you got to give them your information, they run it,
19 and when they're running it, they're finding that
20 no, you had income, so now we need your income.
21 What was the income during this period of time? Why
22 didn't you pay your rent?

23 And then if you didn't have enough --
24 for instance, some people they were working
25 full-time and then their hours were down to four

1 hours, right? So they lost income in that case, so
2 now they had to decide whether they were going to
3 pay food or they were going to pay their rent, let's
4 say. So if you prove that you had other bills that
5 you were paying, like for food for the house, your
6 child got sick, the whole family got sick, you
7 didn't have insurance at that time and you had to
8 pay for medical, that all counted towards that
9 application, so then they would help you, because
10 then you prove to them, look, my kid got sick or I
11 got sick, I didn't have health insurance, I had to
12 pay my bill, get my medicine, I couldn't afford it,
13 then they would help you. But --

14 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yeah. So the
15 Housing Authority never got notice, like, I go --
16 during COVID every time I went to pay my mortgage,
17 it popped up big bold letters, if you lost your job
18 or are having trouble status because of COVID, you
19 know, let us no, right?

20 MR. MERCHAND: Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Do we do that?

22 MR. MERCHAND: Many times in
23 conjunction with HOPES there were many ways --

24 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

25 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Frank, so I

1 wasn't involved in the preparation of these specific
2 numbers, but the housing authority did have, I know,
3 one big mailing, and then I think that it was
4 subsequently sent out again, but there was one big
5 mailing to let people know that not only did they
6 still owe rent, but that the housing authority was
7 allowed to use different rules in terms of how
8 recertifications were done and income adjustments
9 were done.

10 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Okay. So
11 that's good.

12 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: So the rules
13 in terms of what needed to be submitted and when it
14 needed to be submitted were somewhat relaxed and
15 interim rent adjustments were done. So the housing
16 authority did publicize the fact that you could
17 submit your income information, obviously, a number
18 of people had a reduction in income, and that we
19 would perform interim rent adjustments revolving at
20 that time. There's still a requirement that
21 paperwork be submitted eventually, but for a period
22 of time --

23 MR. MERCHAND: You're actually bringing
24 up an amazing point. The rules in HUD were you lost
25 income, just call me and tell me. After COVID is

1 over, we'll verify that, which leads us to IDT. The
2 income verifications rule is when they didn't come
3 back to tell us that actually happened, and now
4 we're getting that direct from the IRS.

5 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And to
6 help -- I guess, Frank answered your question,
7 Commissioner Impastato. I think there are a certain
8 number of people who didn't -- haven't recertified
9 and didn't report that information, and
10 recertification's is a whole 'nother issue, but I
11 think we don't know the answer to that. The Housing
12 Authority doesn't know the answer to exactly lost
13 their job, who had a reduction in income, because a
14 lot of people just hadn't applied for the
15 recertification package. A number of those people
16 are because they've had an increase in rent or
17 because they had people living with them who aren't
18 on the lease, so that's more common, but in some
19 instances they just didn't recertify.

20 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: So out of,
21 like, the 26 families that owe the largest amount,
22 what's the last time that they paid rent, is
23 there --

24 MR. MERCHAND: Some of them had said
25 because the rent is very high, so that number grew

1 very quickly.

2 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: But has it
3 been years?

4 MR. MERCHAND: No, yeah, years. Like,
5 it's been years about two years --

6 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

7 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: So that's kind
8 of -- so that's my question, though, like, as the
9 Housing Authority, we haven't reached out after the
10 first year of no money coming in, we didn't reach
11 out to those people and say, hey, what's going on?

12 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

13 MR. MERCHAND: Well, there was a
14 moratorium, there was no court, there was no
15 anything, so it was, kind of, like --

16 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: So we weren't
17 allowed to --

18 MR. MERCHAND: We weren't allowed to --

19 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: We couldn't
20 contact --

21 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

22 MR. MERCHAND: We could contact them,
23 but we couldn't go to court.

24 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And they knew that,
25 and I think that's the issue. The residents knew

1 they couldn't go to court, so you couldn't contact
2 them a hundred times, they know you're not taking
3 them to court, they're just.

4 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I just want to
5 make sure that, like, these people are not -- they
6 weren't educated on the process that they had to
7 eventually pay this money back and we weren't
8 communicating to them.

9 MR. MERCHAND: I think just in general.

10 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Now -- and,
11 again, I don't know the exact answer, but for what
12 you're asking, I think a lot more of those families
13 may fall into the 316 families. I think the 26, for
14 example, I think they deliberately probably avoided
15 the housing authorities overtures to try and get on
16 our safe page.

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And just -- if I
18 may answer, this is well beyond housing authority,
19 there are landlords all over the city of Hoboken,
20 and I'm sure well beyond, that are dealing with the
21 exact same thing. They couldn't take their tenants
22 to court because they didn't pay their rent.

23 MR. MERCHAND: Yeah, no, I know that.

24 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And now they're
25 trying to catch up just like we are.

1 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: But, like,
2 those landlords have documented that, of sending
3 letters, communicating to their tenants, saying,
4 hey, your rent's due, hey --

5 MR. MERCHAND: Well, every month --

6 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Some do and some
7 don't.

8 MR. MERCHAND: In the entire two years,
9 every month they get a statement saying that you
10 didn't pay your rent.

11 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Okay, so.

12 MR. MERCHAND: And a notice to quit.
13 Every month.

14 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: That's all I
15 meant, yeah, so that's --

16 MR. MERCHAND: No, no, that's the
17 standard -- I thought you meant, like, a --

18 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

19 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: So our
20 tenants, if someone owes 10 -- if they owe, you
21 know, over \$10,000, it's not a surprise to them?

22 MR. MERCHAND: No, no, no. Every month
23 they get this letter saying, you're outstanding in
24 rent and we're going to start to --

25 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: I'm sorry, Frank, I

1 don't want to -- I don't want to sound --

2 MR. MERCHAND: But they don't.

3 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: -- but I've never
4 heard of a notice to quit every month if you don't
5 pay the rent.

6 MR. MERCHAND: No notice to quit, like,
7 the notice for your late rent, right? So if I
8 had --

9 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Oh.

10 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

11 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: You get your receipt
12 when -- okay --

13 MR. MERCHAND: Then it tells you how
14 much --

15 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: No, no, you're
16 right. But you get your receipt when you go pay.
17 If they're not paying, you're not getting the
18 receipt.

19 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: That's my
20 point is, all I'm saying is --

21 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: I'm sorry, I'm
22 just --

23 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: After a year
24 of not getting any rent, right, after a year,
25 Barbara, of not getting any rent from a tenant, all

1 I'm saying is did we reach out and say, hey, you
2 know, what's going on? Is there a reason why you're
3 not paying you're your rent? Did we communicate at
4 all to them? I know we can't evict them, I know we
5 can't legally get that rent, I'm just saying was
6 there any form of communication to these people
7 like, yes, I lost my job, I'm having a tough time,
8 it's been a tough year, you know, and now we have
9 this all documented, like, unit one lost their job,
10 that's their problem right now. Unit two, I don't
11 know, someone's sick in their family, they haven't
12 been able to pay the rent. Do you see what I'm
13 saying? So I don't --

14 MR. MERCHAND: So they have to get the
15 recertification and they won't come in for
16 recertification. All I'm saying is that, like, when
17 you come in --

18 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I got you.

19 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

20 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: So I think the fix
21 is -- I think the fix is actually this, to go
22 through the process. But I think what the
23 commissioner is saying is we should have that added
24 step for other families, as well, that are not on
25 this list in case something happens. If a family

1 who is not on the list currently, tragedy strikes,
2 whatever it may be, and now they're -- they start
3 falling behind on rent, we as the authority should
4 be communicating with them and documenting that
5 communication so that we know.

6 MR. MERCHAND: Historically prior to
7 COVID, I wasn't here, wasn't that the function?
8 Every single month you had a list of people that
9 were outstanding rent, and they --

10 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Yes, I think
11 it's a totally different story --

12 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

13 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: -- rent
14 filings every month.

15 MR. MERCHAND: Every month.

16 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: There was a
17 notice every month prior to the filing of the court
18 case, but we were in court one day a month for a
19 whole day.

20 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yeah, I
21 just -- this is a daunting -- and leads me to my
22 next question. This is a daunting task --

23 MR. MERCHAND: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: -- it seems.
25 I don't, you know, I'm not in the -- I'm not down in

1 the trenches every day, but you need additional
2 resources.

3 MR. MERCHAND: We do.

4 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Are you going
5 to need to maybe hire consultant to come in?

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Yeah, we
7 may -- well, I don't know about a consultant, we may
8 need to bring on some part-timers to supplement
9 our --

10 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Because you
11 guys, you know, you have an overload now, everyone
12 back there has enough load, right, like, now they
13 have to add all this additional steps, and this is a
14 lot, man, so maybe that's, maybe we should look
15 to --

16 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Is an option giving
17 the staff that's here already the ability to get the
18 overtime and then adding them --

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: That is one
20 option, yes, yes, that is one option. Staggered
21 shifts are an option as well, and bringing on some
22 part-timers to cover for our existing management
23 staff so they can do this. Because this isn't
24 simple, we need to be educated, so we need our
25 management staff to do this. So we're discussing

1 all of those options. So.

2 MR. MERCHAND: And the other thing
3 that's a good side effect of this is that, okay, in
4 his management report he was talking about things
5 that we are sure, obviously, vacancies, rent
6 collection, our PIC score. Our PIC score is tied
7 into late recertification. We will not enter into a
8 deal with you if you haven't -- I can't give you a
9 repayment if you haven't recertified. So step one
10 is you got to recertify, which is going to help our
11 PIC number. So we're actually -- this is swinging
12 the bat in both directions at the same time because
13 we are going to get our PIC number and the money
14 coming in.

15 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: That's good to know.
16 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

17 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: If I can add
18 one thing, I don't want to keep you here all day, we
19 can talk about this all night, just to a question
20 that the chair asked and Frank answered, and
21 answered it correctly, the numbers that will be sent
22 out for rent for outstanding balance will include
23 rent. Now, most often when you're talking about
24 other charges, you're talking about late fees. At
25 this point those late fees are just starting to be

1 charged again, but really nothing has been charged
2 the last two and a half years for late fees, right,
3 so those have not been building up. If they are on
4 the account, it's because they've been on the
5 account for years.

6 And yes, the Housing Authority can't
7 file a case to evict based on a late fee or any
8 other charge other than rent, based on the fact that
9 public housing tenants' income has to be tied to the
10 exact percentage, but that doesn't mean that we have
11 to enter into an agreement with someone who owes us
12 additional money.

13 Frank pointed out if they come on the
14 day of court and say I have all the rent that's
15 owed, by 4:30 on the day of court, Housing Authority
16 has to accept it, doesn't have a choice. However,
17 if they come to court and say I don't have that, I
18 want to make an agreement, the Housing Authority
19 does not have to enter into an agreement with that
20 individual if they don't want to. So if you do have
21 families who, for whatever reason, owe significant
22 amount of other charges, for better or worse, this
23 is an opportunity to try and work that out. That
24 should be folded into any repayment agreement, so
25 people may find, okay, well, this letter says I owe

1 \$4,000 in rent, but when I went in they said I owed
2 \$4,500. They're giving me two different numbers.

3 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And I think that's
4 the --

5 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And that is a
6 legitimate source of confusion, but there's a
7 reasonable answer. It's because that \$4,000 is what
8 your eviction theoretically could be based on, but
9 the Housing Authority, in order to enter into these
10 in-house repayment agreements, our recommendation is
11 every amount that's outstanding to the Authority
12 should be included. There's no reason to exclude
13 \$500 that was owed in February of 2020 for
14 legitimate charges just because it was prior to
15 February of 2020. For better or worse, Commissioner
16 Russo mentioned something about negotiation. This
17 is the Housing Authority's chance to have a little
18 bit of leverage in that respect.

19 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Right.

20 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: So I just
21 wanted to make it clear that it's not, okay, this is
22 going to just be about rent, everything else is
23 going to be ignored.

24 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: I get it. But I
25 also want to point out, from a resident's point of

1 view, is do you know how frustrating it is, we hear
2 this every month, of all the issues that our
3 apartments are having, they're getting called in,
4 maintenance is -- let's be fair, they're getting
5 called in, they're doing the job, the work order
6 goes in, the resident is being charged, and it's not
7 the resident, our buildings are falling apart. So
8 is it fair for us to charge a resident whose
9 apartment is failing apart?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: It's not,
11 and we often take charges off. If somebody comes in
12 and says --

13 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: But I think
14 that's --

15 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Are you talking
16 about the rent? Or are you talking about --
17 additional charges --

18 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

19 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: No, like, when you
20 have the receipt, it will break it up, like he said,
21 you see your late fees, then you see whatever
22 charges you've had for the month. So if you have
23 maintenance issues, a window, a stove, a
24 refrigerator, whatever it is, you're charges are
25 there. And I understand that we have a list of

1 things that we must charge for, and I'm absolutely
2 okay with charging for that if the person has an
3 apartment that, you know, that warrants it. But
4 when you have people who are living in the
5 conditions that we're living in, can we really
6 warrant that we should be charging them --

7 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yeah, I agree.

8 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: -- because it's
9 clogged or the pipe is broken?

10 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: But this
11 number doesn't -- this number --

12 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: No, this is
13 concerning the other things --

14 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

15 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: -- that's what I'm
16 saying.

17 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: It's all
18 about --

19 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

20 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I hear you.

21 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: You see, I'm just
22 being --

23 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

24 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Understood,
25 understood. And you're exactly correct that I, you

1 know, I heard that when we were going to court every
2 month, I would encounter that on a monthly basis
3 where we would have to --

4 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And you're going to
5 see this Frank --

6 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

7 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: -- make a
8 call and say, what's going on here? And frequently
9 the Housing Authority would remove charges, waive
10 charges, or it would become clear what the story
11 was.

12 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

13 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: The best I
14 can tell you -- no, it's okay -- the best I can tell
15 you is this is an opportunity to get the Housing
16 Authority and the residents to the table. Stuff
17 like that, while a little bit rare, is more common
18 than we would like and probably will contribute to
19 the time some of these meetings take.

20 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I think to
21 your point, though, too, when you talk about
22 leverage, when -- we would probably be more
23 acceptable of, like, let's just say you owe a
24 thousand dollars in rent, past rent, and you owe a
25 hundred dollars in charges.

1 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Fees.

2 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Listen, we'll
3 waive the hundred, just pay the rent. And now
4 you -- now you -- well, why --

5 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: I know -- I'm
6 not going to acknowledge that necessarily, but yes,
7 there will be --

8 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: You see --
9 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

10 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: There will
11 be -- we're not trying to nickel and dime --

12 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And, again --

13 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: This will be
14 a give and take.

15 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: We just want
16 the rent really.

17 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And I'm not speaking
18 on my behalf, because everybody here knows that if I
19 have a problem, I'm going to absolutely call the
20 director or whoever I have to call, but you have
21 residents that don't do that, and they don't speak
22 up, and they're afraid to speak up and say, listen,
23 I'm not paying this late, I'm not paying this charge
24 because my toilet or my tub was already clogged, and
25 it wasn't my fault, so I'm not paying it. And in

1 most cases they do work with you and they do remove
2 them, and I do say that. But there are cases where
3 our residents are not talking and they don't say it.
4 So I think, again, it goes back to educating them.

5 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yeah.

6 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And that's
7 not necessarily what I'm referring to. That's a
8 good example of -- those are not necessarily the
9 instances on I'm referring to, I'm referring to
10 people who would pay their late every month
11 pre-COVID and knew that they couldn't get evicted
12 based on late -- they essentially gamed the system
13 and would have, I mean, it's \$25 a month, yeah,
14 that's not much, but that's \$300 a year, and if
15 you're doing that for years, you have a significant
16 balance owed to the authority, which is money due
17 and owing to the authority, but money they couldn't
18 collect under an eviction act.

19 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Right.

20 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: So they
21 hadn't done it. So this is an opportunity to try
22 and clean up a little bit.

23 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: My last two
24 points of -- one point is to Barbara's suggestion of
25 help from the County, I think it should be

1 documented that everyone should know that that's
2 available, and if you as a tenant choose not to
3 attend that, that should be documented, that we're
4 trying to help you, here's people that are going to
5 pay your rent, and you just didn't even show up. So
6 there needs to be an accountability.

7 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: So that will
8 be in the letter that will go out to every resident.

9 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Cool,
10 that's --

11 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And should --
12 should it be necessary, if it's unfortunately
13 necessary, to file a nonpayment action, that would
14 certainly be mentioned if a case actually went in
15 front of a judge.

16 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Good. And
17 then second, if let's just say at the end we evict,
18 we don't want to, right, or let's just say it comes
19 down to that, the money that is owed, what happens?
20 Is that a write-off, is that just debt that's
21 written off?

22 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Do you want
23 me to answer that? So an eviction action is just
24 for possession of the unit. It has nothing to do
25 with the money, you can't force anyone to pay us

1 anything.

2 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: So where is
3 the -- do we just lie in troubled status.

4 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: No. So what
5 happens there is that would theoretically -- someone
6 is out, they're evicted, that would become a
7 potential eviction -- I'm sorry, a potential
8 collection action. You could file a case in special
9 civil part, it depends upon what the balance is,
10 whether it's small claims or not, and you can file a
11 separate action for the money itself. And if you
12 get a judgment for the money itself, you can take
13 different actions. I mean, it would be on a credit
14 report, you can attempt to garnish wages if someone
15 is getting income. I mean, SSI you wouldn't be able
16 to garnish, but if someone has a job and they're
17 getting a paycheck, you'd be able to garnish wages.
18 Things like that.

19 So there are avenues to pursue. And
20 pre-pandemic, we were talking about doing that with
21 some of the bigger balances and, unfortunately, that
22 existed pre-pandemic. But unfortunately with COVID
23 and everything, that has a little bit fallen to the
24 wayside, but that's certainly going to be another
25 tool. Because, unfortunately, it will take a while,

1 it will take a year of whatever it takes, but people
2 are going to be evicted because of this. We're
3 going to have to face reality, not everybody is
4 going to enter into a repayment agreement and agree
5 to pay every dollar they owe.

6 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And what's the
7 reality of really collecting? I mean, as a small
8 business owner, I've dealt with situations where
9 people owed me money, and it comes down to, you
10 know, if I had to put a percentage on it, 70 percent
11 of those people I never get a dime from, right? So
12 the reality is, you know, we have some big
13 outstanding balances, I mean, what's really the
14 likelihood of trying to get that money and actually
15 achieving it?

16 MR. MERCHAND: When they owe you the
17 money, it's for a service you already provided. No,
18 but there's a roof over there head. And number two,
19 wherever they go, it comes back to us because they
20 can't go to another housing authority, public
21 housing anywhere in the country --

22 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

23 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Commissioner,
24 his question is, what's the likelihood that we're
25 ever going to see a dime of that? And on some of

1 these smaller balances, when someone owes -- their
2 rent is \$50, things like that, reality is very low,
3 you can't say very well that you're going to see a
4 dime of that; however, on these larger balances that
5 you're talking about where someone has an income,
6 that money that their rent is based on is coming
7 from somewhere.

8 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Sure.

9 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: We've had
10 tremendous success in the past --

11 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Okay.

12 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: -- in some of
13 those cases, filing a collection action. It's more
14 time intensive, but once you get into it and
15 streamline it and have staff familiar with the
16 process, it's just like anything else.

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Okay.

18 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: You can have
19 success.

20 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: All right. I
21 appreciate it.

22 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Great.

23 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Just a couple --
24 from personal, it looks like you and the Director
25 have come up with a solid plan, so thank you for

1 that. It's very well organized.

2 Of the families that are listed here,
3 just as a -- since you've been handling this
4 situation, as a gut feeling, how many are trying to
5 work in good faith versus are just not?

6 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: So just
7 personally, I haven't been involved in the numbers,
8 this is the first time I've seen some of these
9 numbers, so I'm going to defer to Frank.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: I think it's
11 going to be interesting, Commissioner, when we start
12 to have these meetings.

13 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Okay.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: You know,
15 when we start to have these meetings, start to sit
16 down with those, I think we're going to have some
17 better numbers.

18 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So the second
19 part of that question is, and so these are families,
20 what kind of breakdown, in terms of children, are
21 affected by this possibly? Or is that a question?

22 MR. MERCHAND: I can't actually give
23 you specifics without giving names, but it's a mixed
24 bag, it's -- I could tell you right off the bat that
25 the biggest chunk of this money comes from Andrew

1 Jackson North, which is families. So it will affect
2 the majority of this is families with children.

3 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: The -- the
4 reason I ask that question is are there additional
5 resources, whether they're state or with federal,
6 that could go towards those children?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We'll turn
8 over every rock to try to help them, we really will,
9 we don't want anyone to be --

10 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yeah, there's
11 private entities that may be willing to assist the
12 family and say, you know, I'm willing to, kind of,
13 like, sponsor the family and I'll bring them up to
14 date with their rent, there are individuals that do
15 stuff like that. Civic associations sometimes are a
16 great example of doing stuff like that. But yeah,
17 but honestly, to be honest with you, when we talk
18 about these programs that I just spoke about, with
19 the county and usually the state, they're very
20 specific and they are open to families with
21 children, so I don't think they have anything
22 specifically just for individuals who have children.

23 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And I think
24 Madam Chair mentioned it a few -- a few of the
25 organizations last month, BOF in North Hudson,

1 Catholic Charities, I know, has helped people.

2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes.

3 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: They --
4 getting assistance there was awful competitive prior
5 to the pandemic. At this point, you know better
6 than I do.

7 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: It was --

8 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: But it, I
9 imagine it's --

10 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: It's -- what
11 happened is --

12 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

13 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Not something
14 we should rely on.

15 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: No, it's really not
16 because one of the things is that when this funding
17 goes around, it does usually, and to be honest with
18 you, goes around to these agencies that are experts
19 with rental assistance. And this is pre-COVID, so
20 this is what they deal with. And so usually they're
21 usually the ones that continue to get those grants.
22 Now, what happens is they get them in one hand, and
23 to be honest, it's out the other. So by the time --
24 for instance, North Hudson, the office that helps
25 that is West New York. So I remember calling for a

1 client and they said, no, we don't help, because the
2 client was from Hoboken. And I said, well, what do
3 you mean, you don't help? No, no, we don't help, we
4 help West New York residents. And I'm like what do
5 you mean? This is a federal grant that you got,
6 it's for everyone. So you, kind of, have to know
7 the insides of it because if not, I would have hung
8 up the phone, and that resident would have not
9 gotten assistance because they told me that it was
10 just for their residents.

11 So I think that also is a major problem
12 with some of these entities, that they get it and
13 they have their own people that they help first, and
14 then whatever is left over is for everybody else in
15 the county. Personally, I like when it's the County
16 itself that's doing it because they open it to
17 everyone and they're not specific. But yet these
18 small agencies like BOF, North Hudson, Catholic
19 Charities, and then sometimes even just getting
20 through to them is impossible.

21 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: They were
22 ultra competitive pre-COVID. Now -- yeah, unlikely.
23 So your best source of assistance is probably, you
24 know --

25 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I have a question

1 for you guys. From a legal perspective, our
2 nonprofit, the Housing For Hoboken, can we -- can we
3 do something where we set up a fund specific for
4 rental assistance, where we do a yearly gala or
5 whatever, some fundraiser yearly and, you know, we,
6 kind of, raise some money, I mean, Hoboken is a very
7 generous city.

8 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Or even donations.

9 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: They really are.
10 Yeah, I mean, people are willing to help as much as
11 they can, and, you know, a lot of these nonprofits
12 do a lot of good work. Can we actually utilize our
13 own nonprofit to help to pay for rental assistance
14 for residents?

15 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: The short
16 answer is yes.

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Okay.

18 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: We have to
19 look into make sure it's planned out properly.

20 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Sure.

21 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And consider
22 all the reporting aspects of it, things like that,
23 there will be all kinds of red tape involved, in it,
24 but the short answer is yes.

25 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Because then we

1 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: But the short
2 answer is yes.

3 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Okay.

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Thank you,
5 Frank.

6 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Thanks, Frank.

7 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: I have one other
8 question, would you partner with Senator Stack, and
9 do we know anybody else who can ask for this, so
10 what I'm saying, like, so if I was thinking -- if
11 I'm a resident and I need assistance and I don't
12 have the -- say, a connection, I don't know anybody,
13 and I'd be afraid to come and speak with housing or
14 come to speak to somebody, how do we make this,
15 like, not scary and be able to reach out to people
16 and say -- I know that we're going to do education,
17 but saying here are the options, because I think
18 some people are going to be afraid just by the
19 nature of it.

20 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: But if you -- if
22 it's like peer to peer, or we make a lot of social
23 media, or we try to do something so people come, and
24 say don't be scared, it's not jail, we're going to
25 talk to you, we're going to work it out.

1 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah, I think -- I
2 think someone like Senator Stack, right, a lot of
3 times those are, those one-on-ones --

4 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: Of course.

5 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Right, right.
6 We're looking for -- and we'll take all the help we
7 can get, right? I mean, by all means refer people.
8 He loves when people approach him and ask, right, so
9 he's just that type of guy. But I don't think
10 that's really going to address the large scale.

11 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Well, I agree
12 with you but I was just --

13 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: But in a situation
14 where they may be timid to come in and speak to
15 housing --

16 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: That's what I
17 was saying.

18 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: -- whatever
19 reasons, maybe that is something where we could
20 refer them and there are -- like I said, there are a
21 ton of other programs out there. There's
22 nonprofits, there are -- there's a lot of options
23 here for our residents, and I think our biggest
24 obstacle is communicating that with them.

25 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Right.

1 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And then then
2 getting through that process, whatever it may be.

3 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Exactly.

4 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Right. And
5 then the word of mouth starts to spread and
6 residents are talking to each other.

7 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Right, sure.
8 Especially if we could get one or two of these
9 families that owe a big chunk and then that now goes
10 away, right? All of a sudden, you know, four months
11 of, you know, a large rent is now gone, right? Like
12 wow, okay, it really helped, you should probably
13 look into that.

14 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And frankly,
15 one of your best --

16 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Not one of them
17 the word of month.

18 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: One of the
19 resources is sitting right here.

20 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I agree.

21 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Loves being
22 able to say to people hey --

23 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

24 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: They're
25 willing to work with you and helping spread the

1 word.

2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes, I think maybe
3 when you guys in housing is getting in touch with
4 these individuals about the late rent, maybe what I
5 can do is put together a list of, like I said last
6 month, all the agencies that do help with the rental
7 assistance, and just saying, like, these are some of
8 the resources that may be able to help you. And --

9 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Exactly.

10 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: -- and with the
11 phone number, and see if that maybe helps, right?

12 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yes.

13 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Because, I mean --

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Absolutely.

15 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: So I'll work on
16 something like that during the month.

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I mean even to
18 communicate through Nixle to those individual
19 families, right?

20 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: If they're signed
21 up.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: If they're
23 signed up, yeah.

24 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And hit them
25 wherever we can, get that communication going.

1 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Or even send a Nixle
2 out to all the ones, that's right, all the ones
3 that, you know, to everybody in general and say, you
4 know, residents, if you owe rent, please, there are
5 resources here, click here so you can do the recert.

6 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: That's a good
7 resource for anyone whether they're in arrears or
8 not, I mean --

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: That's a
10 great idea.

11 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: -- it's nice to
12 know that.

13 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And it
14 doesn't sound like much, but the fact that the
15 Housing Authority is even willing to entertain
16 in-house agreements or revolving payment agreements
17 is, you know, from the minute we got here the
18 instruction our office had is absolutely not,
19 everybody owes anything goes to court, any agreement
20 we're signing is in court. So that's not realistic
21 now. It doesn't help the residents to wait a year,
22 it doesn't help the Housing Authority.

23 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Right.

24 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: So it sounds
25 minor, but that's a pretty big olive branch, is we

1 want to do as much of this in-house and as much of
2 it by saving a skipped day of work, the agony of
3 thinking about am I going to get evicted because I
4 have to go to court. We want to sort this out, the
5 Housing Authority just wants its money.

6 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Right.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Good.

8 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I like the plan.

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Thank you.

10 We're moving forward.

11 Okay. We have been working hard on
12 trying to work out the details on our project-based
13 voucher RFP. We've got some issues with working
14 with legal on how we're going to put out the RFP and
15 some budgetary issues, but this came out with new
16 reg levels, so we'll get back to you on this, but I
17 want you to know we're working on it, and I'm also
18 meeting with Mr. Villamar next week. We had already
19 set up a meeting on that project.

20 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: So are we going to
21 be funded at a hundred percent or is there an issue
22 there?

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Well, we'll
24 be -- we'll at a hundred percent, but it's still not
25 giving us a ton of extra money, you know, we still

1 got X amount of money in our Housing Choice Voucher
2 Program. HUD's intending on somewhere in the
3 vicinity of a 70 percent possible increase this year
4 in fair market rents, but they don't give us more
5 money, they just say this is how your increase is.
6 So we're moving again to another round with Bill,
7 who is on the line of going back to our Section 8
8 budgets and what we can shake free here. And I'll
9 be talking to Mr. Villamar about the possibility,
10 with the backing of the veterans groups, of
11 whether -- if we can get their backing, we go we can
12 apply for some special vouchers. We never had their
13 backing in the past. So we're going to be
14 working -- I'm going to be working with Mr. Villamar
15 to see if we can shake some extra vouchers out.

16 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Awesome.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: That would
18 be great if we can do that. Because my response
19 from the veterans group so far has been no, DCA does
20 that, we don't give you guys. If he can use his
21 influence to get them to back us, there's a good
22 possibility we can get some vouchers.

23 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Awesome.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Maintenance
25 reports, we've been actively working on maintenance.

1 I give you those reports, I justifiy want to make a
2 note on those reports. If you look at the major
3 issues that we have in maintenance, fully 73 percent
4 of them, almost three quarters of them are major
5 plumbing issues. Plumbing issues. If you look at
6 those reports that I've got, my attachments, there's
7 stacks that are breaking on the fourth floor.

8 Again, the issue is our infrastructure. You've got
9 stacks that are breaking, you've got major issues
10 that affect the second, third, fourth floor, you got
11 the leak on the fifth floor, it's affecting all the
12 way down, and our guys are doing amazing work at
13 responding to those, but it's a lot of work, it's a
14 ton of work. So we're responding to those as we go
15 along. I've got some individual ones that I've
16 listed down through my report that maintenance has
17 been working on.

18 Our financial budget we'll be talking
19 about in a resolution here in a minute, that's why
20 Bill and Emil are waiting for us.

21 And Danny Prez isn't with us. We did
22 have, I think, a great month, a great summer, in
23 many ways. We had the food pantry, we had the
24 Family Hood Back to School Event, the HOPES Game Day
25 Back to School Event, we had the Movies Under the

1 Stars, talks with Minions. We had a good month, we
2 had a good month. Basketball league going on. We
3 had a lot of things going on this month, it kept us
4 busy.

5 We've got some upcoming events listed
6 in your packet here of the adult bingo events are
7 coming. I think we're getting back to getting more
8 events at our senior sites. I'm excited to talk
9 about the Hoboken Library pop-up event for Hispanic
10 heritage celebrations. Yay. We're going to be
11 coming out to each site with Hispanic heritage
12 celebrations in the coming month or so, so that's
13 goaling to be great. And I think that's the end of
14 my five-minute report, Commissioner.

15 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: I just --

16 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Barbara was longer
17 than you are, just saying.

18 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Excuse me, I'm here.
19 I just want to add, Director, and I know I text you
20 guys all during the weekend, we did have a family
21 who suffered a fire, and I just want to commend the
22 staff that was present with helping us. The Hoboken
23 police department obviously was the first entity on
24 site, they went to the floor and they evacuated
25 everyone from that floor. And then the fire

1 department came, and luckily the family wasn't home,
2 they arrived while everything was happening, no one
3 was hurt.

4 I think that, as resident services,
5 I -- and I spoke to the director about this, I think
6 what we have to have in plan is what's -- a plan of
7 what happens when a fire occurs. Shawna Oliver was
8 the manager on site that day, and I think all of us
9 together, I know as a commissioner, my role is not
10 to get involved in the day-to-day, but living there
11 it kind of makes me -- I don't have a choice. I
12 knew the director wasn't here, I'm watching it from
13 my window, so I ran outside. First thing I did was
14 call the director. But I also want to provide the
15 services that we have available to the residents.

16 So I just want to thank the entire
17 staff, because I think that day it showed what our
18 staff here is capable of doing when there's
19 teamwork. So thank you all for all those that were
20 involved. The family is okay, they're doing good,
21 they're getting assistance from everyone, so that's
22 also very, you know, I'm glad to know that they're
23 getting help from everyone.

24 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Madam Chair, if I
25 could just add.

1 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Sure.

2 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: You know, it's a
3 nice moment of pride for me, not only as a
4 commissioner, to see how we as a housing authority
5 reacted, but also as a councilman to see how our
6 public safety overall --

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Absolutely.

8 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: -- not just the
9 police department, the fire department, the
10 ambulance corps, the office of emergency management,
11 how that all comes together, and they do it
12 consistently and constantly all the time throughout
13 the city. So this was a situation that happened
14 here at our authority, but they do it every day,
15 everywhere throughout the city, and assist outside
16 the city as mutual aid. So, you know, I know a lot
17 of times they may get some flack and residents might
18 get a little heated and upset, but the reality is
19 that they are always there for us, and it's
20 important to be said because we want them there and
21 we want to make sure that they keep protecting us,
22 so.

23 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And --

24 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

25 MR. MERCHAND: I'm sorry, we have a

1 tenant who is blocked right now, so if any -- I
2 don't know whose -- somebody's in spot 19, but if
3 you have a car out there, he's -- someone is
4 blocking him, so I don't know whose parked here.

5 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: What type of
6 car is it?

7 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And just,
8 Commissioner Russo, just so you know, that night I
9 did send out an e-mail, and I CCed the vice chair
10 and the director, to Director Ferrante thanking the
11 entire -- the police department, the fire
12 department, OEM was on site immediately. So it was,
13 it was very nice to see everybody working together
14 to help there.

15 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Does the
16 resident have new housing?

17 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes. Well, I
18 think --

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We've got
20 them stabilized, we have them stabilized in a
21 temporary unit as we find our final unit. But we
22 were in touch with the family immediately.

23 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Immediately.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: And helped
25 immediately, so we're working with them.

1 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Dovetailing off
2 the presentation that Frank just gave, this is from
3 a legal perspective, is there any way to claim some
4 kind of hardship on our own? Because we got one
5 person who, through no fault of their own, lost
6 their home in a fire, and then we got a whole bunch
7 of other people who aren't paying the rent. Is
8 there any way to speed up at least one of those
9 eviction processes?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Well, the
11 fastest way is to find an existing unit we're
12 already working on. So we identified one we're
13 already working on and we're accelerating the work
14 on that unit to get them their permanent housing.

15 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Okay.

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: So it's not
17 an eviction matter, it's one that we all --

18 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: There's a unit --
19 there's a unit allocated for --

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: So there's a
21 unit allocated already.

22 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: The family
23 immediately -- the Housing Authority immediately
24 stated that they would put them up in a hotel, but
25 they refused, they decided they wanted to stay with

1 family, and -- but yeah, the Housing Authority could
2 not have done more than they did that day to help
3 the resident, and I have to say I'm extremely proud
4 of them.

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: And to that
6 regard, special shout out to the chairwoman for
7 doing what she did on that day, and to Ms. Shawna,
8 thank you. You were on the spot, as I was out of
9 town, so -- but the phone was burning and we were
10 all coordinating, no matter where we were --

11 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: We had a conference
12 call in the middle of the whole thing.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Right.
14 We're all going, OEM, everyone was there, we all had
15 our phone numbers, so it was tremendous.

16 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Job well done,
17 everyone.

18 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And something else I
19 wanted to commend is all those that participated. I
20 know the police department donated book bags to the
21 Familyhood book bag giveaway, they also donated to
22 HOPES a few bags that they had left over, and I'd
23 like to inform everybody that HOPES that day itself
24 gave out over 300 book bags. We do have -- we have
25 a registration process for everybody that gets a

1 book bag, and so we tallied it up, it was over 300
2 book bags. We do still have some few book bags over
3 at 532 Jackson Street, so if anyone knows of any
4 family, whether they're from the Housing Authority
5 or not, that their child may need a new book bag, I
6 know school just started, just reach out to me, if
7 not, stop by the office, Shelly is out of our staff
8 members there, the lady with the picture, she's one
9 of my staff members, and she's there from nine to
10 five. So if anybody, anybody within, you know,
11 anybody needs help, just stop by there and we'll
12 give them bags. So thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: One comment
14 on -- I think the newsletter is fantastic,
15 compliments to you, I think it's awesome, I love the
16 Chef's Corner, nice little touch. If you -- I've
17 seen one thing, and I'm -- I don't know about
18 everybody else on the Board, but under Board
19 Commissioners, if you can just add -- I would be
20 open to just adding my cell phone number and my
21 e-mail just if anybody wants to reach out directly.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: You can ask
24 everybody else, but for me I would like that to be
25 added, if you can. If there's room for it.

1 VOICE: Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: But other than
3 that, this is awesome, awesome stuff.

4 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: In addition to
5 that, I was going to ask the director, but I might
6 as well ask now, I'd like to be put on the Nixle
7 list as well, so that when they go out --

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Sure,
9 absolutely.

10 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Just --

11 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Is that -- you
12 mean, like, you get the message?

13 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah, for the --

14 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: For the --

15 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Go on the
16 website to sign up.

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: It's right here,
18 bro.

19 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Okay.

20 (Laughter.)

21 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: We're going to have
22 you read the letter.

23 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I'll sign you
24 up right now. Text "for HHA" to 888777.

25 (Laughter.)

1 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Let's go.
2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: All right.
3 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Give me that.
4 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Do it at your
5 leisure.
6 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)
7 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Is that it?
8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: I'm done.
9 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: We're done.
10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Thank you.
11 It's my five minutes.
12 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Well done,
13 Director.
14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Thank you.
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1 RESOLUTION NO. 2022-09.01
2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: So Resolution
3 No. 2022-09.01.
4 A Resolution of the Housing Authority
5 of the City of Hoboken to approve the meeting
6 minutes for August 11, 2022, regular Board meeting.
7 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Motion.
8 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Second?
9 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Second.
10 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Roll call, Director.
11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: All right.
12 Anthony Forbes?
13 Andrew Impastato?
14 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yes.
15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Aaron Lewit?
16 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: Yes.
17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Barbara
18 Reyes?
19 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes.
20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Michael
21 Russo?
22 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Aye.
23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: James
24 Sanford?
25 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: No.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Erica

Seitzman.

COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Aye. Yes.

CHAIRWOMAN REYES: I just want to say

I'm so sorry if I didn't mention this before,

Commissioner Forbes did text me. Unfortunately,

he's short-staffed at the shelter and he could not

make the meeting, he was going to try to log in. I

just want to put that on the record.

1 RESOLUTION NO. 2022-09.02
2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Resolution
3 No. 2022-09.02.
4 A Resolution authorizing the payment of
5 the monthly list of bills for the Hoboken Housing
6 Authority.
7 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Motion.
8 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Second.
9 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Director, roll call.
10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Any
11 discussion?
12 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Oh, any questions?
13 I'm sorry. I don't know if they have any questions.
14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Anthony
15 Forbes?
16 Andrew Impastato?
17 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yes.
18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Aaron Lewit?
19 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: Yes.
20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Barbara
21 Reyes?
22 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes.
23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Michael
24 Russo?
25 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Aye.

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: James
2 Sanford?
3 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: No.
4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Erica
5 Seitzman?
6 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Yes.
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1 RESOLUTION NO. 2022-09.03

2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Resolution

3 No. 2022-09.03.

4 A resolution adopting the annual and
5 capital budget program for the fiscal year beginning
6 October 1, 2022, and ending September 30, 2023.

7 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Motion.

8 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Second.

9 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Any questions?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We passed
11 the original one a few months ago and this is the
12 final version, the same -- essentially the same
13 since Bill has been waiting for us for so long.

14 No changes in the last one, right,
15 Bill?

16 MR. KATCHEN: No changes. A few --
17 (inaudible), a few speed bumps with recommendation
18 about the new programs (inaudible) and then the
19 funding by (inaudible), the state is comfortable
20 with the notice as presented.

21 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Thank you.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Ready, then?

23 Anthony Forbes?

24 Andrew Impastato?

25 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yes.

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Aaron Lewit?
2 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: Yes.
3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Barbara
4 Reyes?
5 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes.
6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Michael
7 Russo?
8 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Aye.
9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: James
10 Sanford?
11 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: No.
12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Erica
13 Seitzman?
14 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Yes.
15 MR. KETCHAN: Thank you, guys.
16 Bye-bye.
17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Goodnight.
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1 RESOLUTION NO. 2022-09.04

2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Resolution

3 No. 2022-09.04.

4 A Resolution of the Housing Authority
5 of the City of Hoboken to appoint two community
6 trustees to the board of the Housing for Hoboken,
7 Incorporated.

8 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Motion.

9 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Second.

10 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Any questions?

11 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yeah. I
12 would -- I don't -- is there, like, a bio or, like,
13 a packet on the two people? I mean, I don't know.

14 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: I think we had
15 that last time.

16 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Did we have it
17 last?

18 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Didn't we have
19 it last?

20 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I thought
21 there were two different names.

22 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: No, same
23 people.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: There were
25 two different names, that was going to be one --

1 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: There was one
2 different name.

3 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Oh, one
4 different name.

5 MR. MERCHAND: Yes, one different name.

6 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: So is there,
7 like, a -- I mean, I don't feel comfortable, I don't
8 know either one, like, to the degree where I feel
9 comfortable to vote on it, so is there, like --

10 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: So -- Madam
11 Chair?

12 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Sure.

13 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Absolutely.

15 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: So April Harris
16 is one of them. She has been around Hoboken for 40
17 years. She runs In Jesus' Name Pantry. So if
18 you're familiar with the shelter and the Hoboken
19 Community Center, she started at the same time as
20 the shelter.

21 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Sure.

22 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: When the fire,
23 when the arson, kind of, plagued Hoboken. So she
24 has been around for over -- this is her 40th year.
25 She works out of OLG. So she is a -- if I don't

1 have the right Christian language, I'm apologizing
2 in advance -- missionary and such, does missionary
3 work, like nonprofit work, works with many Housing
4 Authority residents here and many people out in the
5 community, she sits on many boards, but she's
6 basically like a saint. She does -- there's nobody
7 else you would basically trust with servicing this
8 population, understanding, having the relationships
9 with the community.

10 I've worked hand to hand in floods many
11 times with April. I would give her -- I don't have
12 kids, but I'd give her my dog. So if you know me,
13 that's a big deal.

14 And then when we talk about
15 Ms. Hernandez, right, or Ms. Rodriguez, yes, who is
16 here, she is a former commissioner on the -- and if
17 I'm off at all, please correct me -- she is on the
18 resident advisory board here, has done amazing
19 things for the community, an advocate for the
20 community, so we felt that she would be -- she's
21 familiar with the process, she's already advocating,
22 and this was to continue her advocacy.

23 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Correct.

24 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah, I mean, I'll
25 just add I know both, both of these women

1 personally, I dealt with them on the city level,
2 I've dealt with them here at the Housing Authority
3 in my prior term. I think they're both fabulous
4 people, and I think they would do a great job on the
5 Board.

6 So I don't have -- again, but they're
7 people I know and people I worked with, so I
8 understand your concerns, Commissioner, but it's --
9 for me, it's an easy vote.

10 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Is there a
11 reason why -- what's the reason why the other two
12 people were taken off?

13 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Well, I think it
14 was only a switch of one, I think April Harris was
15 originally --

16 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Kept.

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah. For me,
18 anyway, the -- the addition of Jean Rodriguez on
19 this is to make sure that we have a resident of the
20 Housing Authority on there --

21 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Correct.

22 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: -- and someone who
23 is familiar with the process and the Board and its
24 workings, and the community. So for me that's, to
25 me, a no-brainer.

1 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And Ms. -- former
2 Commissioner Rodriguez also served as the chair for
3 many years on the Hoboken Housing Authority Board
4 many years ago. She continues to advocate, I think
5 she's one of our biggest advocates, she represents
6 the residents to the fullest, has no problem telling
7 us what we're doing wrong and when we're doing it
8 wrong, and I think that's what we need on a board
9 like this, is to have someone that's going to hold
10 us accountable and not say, because I know you, it's
11 okay, just do this so. I think she would be a great
12 addition.

13 April Harris is someone that I have
14 worked with, I know personally as well. We work
15 with her, we partnered with her through the agency I
16 work with as well. She's another very hard --
17 another person who advocates for residents. Her
18 target population is our residents. I want to say
19 the majority of the people that she helps come from
20 our community. And she -- she's known everywhere,
21 city, everywhere, and I think she could also be a
22 great advocate for everything that we have coming
23 with the Housing for Hoboken.

24 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: And the last
25 thing I'll just talk about, what was the -- does the

1 process to get these two names, it starts, I think
2 the three of you sit on the --

3 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Is that right?

5 And then so you come up with -- you get the
6 applications.

7 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Yes, we review
8 them.

9 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Review them
10 and then offer the --

11 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Discuss them.

12 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Discuss them
13 and then offer them.

14 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: And then we
15 advise, we can only advise.

16 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yeah, so my
17 only, my only thing, and I'm going to have to
18 abstain from voting on it, is that I just -- I don't
19 feel comfortable -- you know, I trust you guys, but,
20 like, a two-minute thing on each person, I would
21 have liked an opportunity to talk to each person, to
22 see what their situation is or what they're all
23 about, I would have liked an opportunity to see,
24 like, a bio, a resume, which I don't see any of.

25 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I think we should

1 get that to everybody anyway.

2 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yeah, so
3 that's -- I just wanted to explain why I'm -- how
4 I'm going to -- that's where I would be at.

5 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: That's fine.

6 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: So.

7 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So, Mr. Forman
8 was one of the people that was originally put
9 forward. Did he withdraw his nomination or his
10 application or is there a reason why the change?

11 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: I think it was a
12 decision made collectively that maybe he was not the
13 best fit for this --

14 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: We wanted a
15 resident.

16 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: We wanted a
17 resident, correct. We did. After reviewing it, we
18 thought and we looked back at the Board and said
19 there's nobody here other than, obviously, myself
20 that would really represent everyone as a whole. I,
21 you know, Jeannie has been around way longer than me
22 and knows a lot more than I do, so I felt like she
23 could definitely absolutely be an asset to us.

24 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: So I also say
25 that the idea of or the -- the said rumors or

1 everything about people how we're displacing
2 anybody, the more people you have the residents and
3 people on the ground explaining, who have power, who
4 have understanding, who have positions can say, no,
5 that's not true, we have one form of replacement,
6 I'm on this Board and you have my word. And they --
7 the more people that they trust, not taking, not
8 that they don't trust us, but they're going to have
9 a little more trust in Jeannie than they are going
10 to, say, in any one of us.

11 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: As well as us here.

12 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: It's very
13 important to have trust and to understand
14 one-for-one replacement, and we might have to say it
15 five million times, and that's okay, but we follow
16 the process, you follow what you're talking about
17 today, nobody is going to get evicted unless you did
18 not follow the process. And we have given you one,
19 two, three, four, five, six, seven, ten chances to
20 follow the process. So that is extremely important,
21 I think that's the number one thing that we're
22 trying to convey to everybody. Probably have to say
23 it many times or maybe ten million, which is okay,
24 we don't want to evict anybody, and we want to make
25 sure everybody has one for one -- we have a

1 one-for-one replacement. So that's why, at least
2 I -- we felt that Ms. Rodriguez is the best choice
3 for the job.

4 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Well, I guess,
5 to Commissioner Impastato's point, is there any
6 issue with tabling this motion and reviewing it at
7 the next meeting after we've had a chance to speak
8 with the people? Because, honestly, I thought when
9 this motion was coming up that Commissioner for --
10 that we'd go to -- to the former Commissioner Forman
11 for this. And I have absolutely no disrespect to
12 Jeannie, who I served with a while ago as well. I'd
13 like to understand what her vision is for this Board
14 as well as the other person, who I don't know
15 anything about.

16 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: I just feel that, to
17 be honest with you, we are moving along in the
18 process with the City and everything else that needs
19 to be -- get done, and I feel like we've put it out,
20 we took it -- we took it back, we didn't go through
21 it, so now holding it back is just going to continue
22 to hold us back. And to be honest with you, as a
23 resident who lives here and removing myself as the
24 Board Chair, I feel we need to move on this because
25 when I sat here earlier today and said our buildings

1 are falling apart, they are. And we need to move on
2 this now. And until we don't have a Board in place
3 that can actually take on everything that's going to
4 come with it, we're not going to be able to -- to do
5 that.

6 And please correct me, Director,
7 because, you know, you're more knowledgeable in this
8 than I am, I'm learning the process, but am I right
9 in saying that?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Well, I
11 think you are, and I think it's part of our
12 subcommittee system.

13 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Uh-huh.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Right, is
15 the subcommittee's tasked with turning these folks
16 inside out, and that's what they do rather than have
17 the whole Board in to do the -- instead of the whole
18 Board becoming familiar with folks, that the
19 subcommittee's job is to -- to do that.

20 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: I don't want to
21 table this is my whole --

22 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I'm fine with
23 voting.

24 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Okay, good.

25 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And just to

1 answer the Commissioner's question, I don't know if
2 this is helpful, I think I know that some Board
3 members have already expressed their desire to move
4 forward. You could always make a motion, but it
5 would require four affirmative votes to table. So
6 it's up to you if you wanted to do that. If there
7 were not four affirmative votes, then the motion,
8 which is currently on the floor, which is the
9 resolution, would proceed.

10 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Well, I guess,
11 then, one last question because you guys have done
12 your review, what was involved in the vetting
13 process? How did the decision-making come about to
14 choose these two individuals?

15 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Well, we met with
16 the individuals, we had a Zoom call, correct?

17 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Yup.

18 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Had Zoom calls with
19 them, we questioned inside and out. There was other
20 people that had also applied that we actually asked
21 the director to go back because there may be
22 conflicts of interest that could prevent them from
23 coming on the Board, and that was exactly the case
24 in some situations. So I want everybody to
25 understand that this was not a decision that was

1 made overnight. When we brought it the last time,
2 we had met about two, three times, and bringing it
3 back now we met two times. Just the other night we
4 met again just to confirm that everybody was on
5 board and that was okay with the decision that we
6 had made. So I want to assure everyone that this
7 was a fully vetted process. It was transparent
8 amongst all of us and --

9 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: And April
10 Harris, and Ms. Rodriguez both work with the
11 population more so, except for Barbara, more so than
12 any one of us. So when people are working with the
13 population more than myself, you do your due
14 diligence, and then you trust the people on the
15 ground. Like the residents, you hope the residents
16 are trusting us in making the best decisions, and
17 that's how you, kind of, weigh these things, to make
18 sure, well, whoever put us here, the City Council,
19 the governor, or whatever, are trusting us to make
20 these decisions, that hopefully they wouldn't put us
21 here if we're not making -- if we're not able to
22 think of the residents.

23 The residents always come first.
24 Anything that we try to do, we put the residents
25 first. And by putting a resident on this committee

1 is showing that we're putting the residents first.
2 And it's extremely important for people to see,
3 especially for me. I can't speak for anybody else,
4 that we are putting the residents first and --

5 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And it also
6 demonstrates to the residents that they're being
7 heard because one of their people are on the Board
8 here, that one of us is on that Board and they're
9 being heard. You know, like I said, I live here but
10 I think Jeannie probably knows 100, 200 percent more
11 people than I know because she's been around a lot
12 longer than I have. So I think, you know, I think
13 together, as an entire Board, we can get the word
14 out to the residents, we can make them
15 knowledgeable, educate them, and we can assure you
16 that as a board we're also going to make the best
17 decisions for the housing -- I'm sorry, Housing for
18 Hoboken, and for the residents.

19 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I would say, I
20 would just make a comment that I would agree with
21 you if, like, it sounds like both of them are
22 perfect commissioners for the Housing Authority,
23 right? I think the Housing for Hoboken is a little
24 different in the aspect that they're interviewing
25 potential developers; am I right with that?

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: That may
2 well happen.

3 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Well, we don't
4 know that.

5 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: But they --
6 part of the process for the -- and James could speak
7 to this because he was on it.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Sure.

9 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: You know,
10 you're interviewing consultants for our development,
11 right, you're interviewing housing. Who else?

12 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: We're reached a
13 planner, so we --

14 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: The planner.

15 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: The planner for
16 2020 was the team, was I was on the Board, and we
17 picked the planner, but the same -- so what,
18 basically, so we had 13 people, maybe 15, so I had
19 to sit through 15 of them, and then we narrowed it
20 down to, like, say, 5, and then we brought the 5 to
21 the whole Board, and then the whole Board
22 collectively made the decision. So you're partially
23 right there.

24 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yeah.

25 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: But that's not

1 necessarily the truth -- necessarily what that
2 nonprofit may or may not be used for, because at the
3 end of the day we have that this Board is going to
4 make the end of the decision, so you have to work
5 partner in conjunction. But by working in partner
6 in conjunction with those people who are on the
7 ground, are in the collective, in that
8 subcommittee's opinion, are April Harris and
9 Ms. Rodriguez.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: The other
11 thing to your point, Commissioner, I think in our
12 discussion about this was that we now have experts
13 with us, we now have the Enterprise Partners, and we
14 have the association of Torti Gallas that's in the
15 past, we could call on them. So our discussion on
16 that was that the trustees should be community
17 Hoboken based, and we can call in those experts to
18 help us with that experience and with the
19 development experience because we did discuss that,
20 because we said, oh, isn't this a whole --

21 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yeah, they
22 have experience in that.

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Yeah, yeah.
24 And we said now we've got experts because Enterprise
25 is fully with us now, we've got some of the best in

1 the country now, so we can bring them in as we need
2 them.

3 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Can we -- was
4 there a -- like, in the procurement subcommittee we
5 use a criteria that we score.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: No, we can't
7 just -- it was a consensus, we came to a consensus.

8 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: There was no,
9 like, criteria --

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: There was no
11 ranking point system, and we did talk to the
12 attorney about that.

13 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: It would be
14 nice, like, to have that, going forward maybe.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We did talk
16 to the attorney about that.

17 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: We did.

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Yeah. At
19 length, right?

20 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Yeah. So we
21 talked -- that was the first thing we said because
22 we want conformity, and you want consistency on
23 every --

24 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

25 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: You don't want

1 to see favoritism.

2 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: No, so you want
3 conformity and consistency across the board. But
4 because this was, like I couldn't get another arm or
5 a special entity or whatever the legalese language
6 is, he said we don't have to worry about that, so we
7 didn't. It's --

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: It's cheaper
9 than a consultant. It's not like hiring an
10 architect. It's different.

11 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: So he said that
12 we just made a -- we didn't have to.

13 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Is there a way
14 we could see the applicants? All applicants.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Of course.

16 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: We could have
17 that mailed out?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Oh, of
19 course.

20 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: When I was on
21 the Board, the members of -- the Commissioners, all
22 Commissioners were given the applications, and they
23 were allowed to speak with the -- and do interviews.
24 I just, for my own sake, I would like to make a
25 motion to table Resolution No. 2022-09.04.

1 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I'll second.
2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Director, roll call.
3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Anthony
4 Forbes?
5 Andrew Impastato?
6 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yes.
7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Aaron Lewit?
8 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: Wait, is --
9 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: The motion is
10 to --
11 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: It's a motion
12 to table the resolution.
13 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yes, is to table
14 it. No, is to --
15 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: No.
16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Barbara
17 Reyes?
18 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: No.
19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Michael
20 Russo?
21 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: No.
22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: James
23 Sanford?
24 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Yes.
25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Erica

1 Seitzman?

2 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: No.

3 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Time for a motion.

4 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: That will be
5 on the resolution itself. So has -- there's been a
6 motion and a second?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: So on the
8 resolution itself, Anthony Forbes?

9 Andrew Impastato?

10 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Abstain.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Aaron Lewit?

12 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: This is the
13 resolution itself, right?

14 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: This is the
15 resolution -- this is the resolution to appoint
16 Ms. Harris and Ms. Rodriguez.

17 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: So this is the
18 one. Do you want -- are you agreeing with this?

19 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: This is to appoint
20 April Harris and Jeannie Rodriguez to the Board.

21 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Yes.

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Barbara
24 Reyes?

25 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes.

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Michael
2 Russo?
3 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Aye.
4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: James
5 Sanford?
6 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: No.
7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Erica
8 Seitzman?
9 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Yes.

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1 RESOLUTION NO. 2022-09.05

2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Resolution

3 No. 2022-09.05.

4 A Resolution of the Housing Authority
5 of the City of Hoboken to approve memorandum of
6 understanding with the City of Hoboken with respect
7 to redevelopment -- redevelopment of Authority
8 property in accordance with the Hoboken Housing
9 Forward Strategic Plan.

10 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Motion.

11 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Second.

12 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Second.

13 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Director, roll call.
14 Any questions?

15 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: I had questions.

16 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Sure.

17 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So we got this
18 last night. Is it my understanding that director
19 and counsel were involved in preparing this?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Very much
21 so.

22 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Okay. Would you
23 like to maybe help us to understand how this came to
24 be?

25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Sure. Sure.

1 Since we passed our strategic plan, the City was
2 very clear with us that the first thing we needed to
3 do was a memorandum of understanding with the City
4 on how we were going to proceed up to the
5 redevelopment plan, how we're going to get to our
6 redevelopment plan with the City and move forward in
7 the future. So their -- the City's rule is that
8 they always do a memorandum of understanding with an
9 entity like ourselves.

10 So we started to talk about that memo
11 of understanding -- memorandum of understanding
12 right from the beginning. The City did a draft and
13 they gave it to the Housing Authority, myself, our
14 staff, and Harold and Matt went through that
15 memorandum of understanding, we made some changes to
16 it. In the meantime, time was moving along, and,
17 again, some consultation with the City, we really
18 wanted to get this going. We wanted to get a final
19 understanding between us and the City.

20 So we met up to yesterday afternoon
21 with the planning department, with the City's legal
22 team, with our legal team, and our staff, as well as
23 the Enterprise partners, and HUD was involved, as
24 well, on the call, a HUD representative. So we went
25 through this in detail, we've been going through it

1 for three months now in detail, and we decided we
2 needed to get this agreed upon, we all agreed upon
3 all the terms. We believe that this push -- this
4 moves us into the future, it opens the door for the
5 city to move forward, finish the redevelopment --
6 the area in need of redevelopment study. It opens
7 the door for the city, then, once we are done with
8 that to move forward with the redevelopment plan.
9 And by the way, pay for it, because the City's doing
10 the bill on this, on the area in need of
11 redevelopment and the redevelopment plan.

12 So this opens our door, it gives us
13 who's going to do what, what responsibilities we
14 will have. It does not address everything for the
15 next five years, we are still going to have to come
16 back to the table on a memorandum -- on a revised
17 memorandum when we get to actually do the actual
18 development on who's going to pick the actual
19 developer and who's going to do those things. But
20 it leads us through the redevelopment plan and gets
21 us on the same page as the City.

22 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And this is
23 essentially the City treating the Housing Authority
24 exactly the same as they would treat anyone else who
25 sought a redevelopment plan. Essentially, the City

1 said this is our requirement, if you want to even
2 complete this study for -- to designate it as an
3 area of need of redevelopment and to essentially
4 have a redevelopment plan formulated, considered,
5 passed, adopted, this is what we require. So this
6 is the very basic framework of saying, okay, let's
7 get this process started, we're all on the same
8 page. As the director mentioned, this is by no
9 means the end, right. This isn't the be-all,
10 end-all.

11 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: By no means.

12 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Right.

13 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Just the
14 beginning.

15 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: This isn't
16 the redevelopment plan, this is more advanced, this
17 is essentially a first step to get the ball rolling.

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: So --

19 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: How effective
20 would Housing for Hoboken be in terms of making
21 decisions versus the entire Board? Because when we
22 set up Housing for Hoboken as a nonprofit, quite
23 often the nonprofit takes possession of the
24 property, takes possession of the financing, all
25 that stuff, and commissioners don't.

1 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: In terms of
2 the exact ownership structure, that would really
3 depend upon how the project or projects develop.
4 Right now, for example, Fox Hill Gardens, converted
5 under RAD, the Housing Authority kept total
6 ownership of Fox Hill Gardens, Housing Authority
7 owns Fox Hill Gardens, nobody else has any ownership
8 in Fox Hill Gardens. I'm not guaranteeing that
9 won't be the case going forward with every Housing
10 Authority property, but I can guarantee you the
11 Housing Authority will retain a large degree of
12 control.

13 Often in situations like this, the
14 Housing Authority would keep possession of the land.
15 I'm not guaranteeing that's going to happen in this
16 instance. It really depends upon how this whole
17 thing progresses. That's very far down the road and
18 that's a decision for all of you. But the Housing
19 Authority will be very involved in the
20 decision-making by entering this memorandum of
21 understanding, the Housing Authority wouldn't be
22 ceding any -- this Board wouldn't be ceding any
23 decision-making authority to Housing for Hoboken's
24 Board.

25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: I think part

1 of that question, I'm not sure exactly what you're
2 asking, but I think part of the question, Aaron, is
3 if we do the next project, will Housing for Hoboken
4 act just like it did for Fox Hill? Maybe yes, maybe
5 no. It depends on when we get to that development
6 project whether Housing for Hoboken will be active
7 nonprofit or whether we will have to form a new
8 nonprofit. Sometimes that happens with each
9 project, under tax credit rules you have to form a
10 new limited partnership and then a new -- a new
11 nonprofit. My last organization I worked for, we
12 had six nonprofits because we had six different
13 developments that we developed over time and we had
14 to develop a separate nonprofit for each one. They
15 were all under the control of the housing authority.

16 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: I was going
17 to say, it's a decision if any of that is done, that
18 decision, that designation will be made by this
19 Board.

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Right, yeah.

21 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: The Housing
22 Authority's Board.

23 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: And having
24 different nonprofits in charge, it isolates one
25 building, so if there's a lawsuit in one building,

1 it can't roll back to all the other buildings.

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Some of
3 that's true.

4 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: That's part
5 of it, and that's very far down the line. But the
6 question is in terms of who's making the decisions,
7 if you adopt this MOU, or enter into this MOU with
8 the City tonight, the answer is this Board is still
9 in charge of every decision.

10 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So section 2,
11 subsection 2, last sentence: The HHA Board of
12 Commissioners will have final approval of the role
13 of the HHA parties consistent with the MOU.

14 That means we retain full control?

15 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Correct.

16 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I'm sorry.
17 Where is that, James?

18 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Page 2 of 4,
19 section 2.

20 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Section 2.

21 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Bullet point
22 number 2.

23 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Got it,
24 thanks.

25 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Correct. And

1 that's essentially saying what I was just trying to
2 say, that this Board, this body will retain all
3 decision-making authority under this agreement.
4 Whether you see something going forward because of
5 the specs of a particular development is a totally
6 different question and very far down the line. But
7 under this MOU you're still in total control.

8 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So to that
9 point, does section 5, Parties' Responsibilities,
10 first line, the HHA boards are -- will be the
11 primary stakeholder, should that be -- instead of
12 "will be," should it say it "is" -- so should it be
13 are the authority, it is the authority, because
14 "will be" implies it could change.

15 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: In this sense
16 "will be" is just because there is no scope of work
17 yet. It's in -- the scope of work that doesn't
18 exist, and then it goes into the parties agree to
19 undertake the scope of work. Just future tense
20 because it doesn't exist, so it doesn't warrant it.

21 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Got it.

22 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Will be,
23 shall be, both mean that the Housing Authority is,
24 doesn't -- for example, it doesn't say the housing
25 may be, that ought to be --

1 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So going back to
2 section 2, subsection 1, for City, it lists a number
3 of people, a number of staff. As a matter of
4 understanding, do we know who these people are that
5 we're going to be working with? Because I
6 understand this is an agreement, a memo of
7 understanding between the City of Hoboken and the
8 Housing Authority, but who are the people involved?

9 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: I mean, we
10 know who the current -- some of the current people
11 in these positions are, but really that would be up
12 to the City. If those people change in those
13 positions, if somebody else gains one of the titles
14 of one of the positions, that would be up to the
15 City.

16 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And that's
18 consistent with any redevelopment that's done in the
19 city of Hoboken, those are the players from the
20 City's perspective on this process, right. So
21 whether it's Director Brown or a future director,
22 that's who's going to do it, right? It's not going
23 to wind up being, you know, like, the director of
24 environmental services, it's going to be the
25 community development director.

1 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So I guess as
2 we're going through the process and more is -- more
3 detail is coming forth, could somebody present that
4 to all commissioners, of who is going to be the
5 people from these various departments?

6 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Oh, yeah. I mean,
7 of course. I don't see why we would want to not do
8 that, but if there's a change, I mean, we'll
9 probably know before there's an official
10 communication, knowing Hoboken, we'll definitely
11 know before there's an official communication.

12 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: For the director.

13 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Those
14 individuals would be appointed by the City or the
15 particular department, whatever it is, and I'm sure
16 the director would be happy to update anyone who is
17 involved in these discussions.

18 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So when that
19 happens, I would like everybody on the Board to know
20 who those people are going to be. If you just make
21 a note of that.

22 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Well, I think
23 just --

24 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I don't anticipate
25 any changes.

1 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And I think
2 in some of these instances it may be that the
3 Housing Authority shows up to a meeting with
4 representatives from various entities and these
5 individuals are there, so it may be that you find
6 out about it after a particular meeting has taken
7 place. I don't know if the director necessarily
8 will be able to --

9 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: That is
10 acceptable.

11 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Just making
12 sure that's --

13 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: But I would like
14 to know who -- who is formulating this in a sense
15 because we're starting a process here. And the
16 process as it's going is -- I understand we all want
17 to try and get this done as quickly as possible, but
18 I'm also only seeing this from last night.

19 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: They just
20 finished it.

21 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: I understand you
22 guys just finished it, but so I'd like to know who
23 we're working with, that's all.

24 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And I
25 understand your concerns, but in reality these are

1 the city's representatives. Now, can you name, I
2 mean, name the -- some entity of the city that is
3 not listed here that would not have anything to do
4 with this?

5 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah, I mean,
6 there is, you know, you're not going to be dealing
7 with --

8 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Department of
9 recreation.

10 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah.

11 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Whatever the
12 name.

13 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: I don't know any
14 of these people so --

15 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And I
16 understand, but --

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Which is a valid
18 point, right? And like for me, when I sit here and
19 this is, like, just standard operating procedure for
20 me, right, because we do this on every redevelopment
21 in the city of Hoboken, so I'm used to it, you're
22 not. Right. So those are valid concerns from your
23 perspective.

24 What I can say is that the reality is
25 this is really just standard, right? And no matter

1 what we as the Housing Authority want, that stuff's
2 not going to change because without the City doing
3 what they need to do, they just won't move along
4 with that process, right? So, ultimately, the City
5 is what's called the redevelopment authority, right?
6 Years ago this Board, actually, was the
7 redevelopment agency, so it was an outside agency
8 that did all the redevelopment in the city of
9 Hoboken. That was changed in I think it was 1993,
10 where the City Council then became the redevelopment
11 authority, there was a slight shift in what that is.
12 But once that happened, the City Council then makes
13 those decisions.

14 And this is the staff of the City
15 Council, so to speak. So if we came back as an
16 authority and said, look, you know what, we don't
17 want to include the environmental services director,
18 the City would just come back and say, well, too
19 bad, right? You know what I mean?

20 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So fair enough.

21 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And it doesn't
22 matter who the individual is, because that's an
23 appointment made by the mayor.

24 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Well, so, but
25 then that really, kind of, is a good segue into

1 section 3 about understanding the parties.

2 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Uh-huh.

3 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Let's say that
4 we as an authority may have a concern about one
5 person who is representing the City, but then -- and
6 we're supposed to retain all the authority here and
7 be the primary stakeholder, but if we voice a
8 concern that we don't want to work with a particular
9 person, then what happens? Does the City just come
10 right back at us and say tough luck?

11 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: It's almost
12 like -- and I'm sorry to interrupt.

13 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: No, that's
14 okay.

15 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: But it's almost
16 like you going to, you know, you know, hire a
17 plumber to do work in your house, and then you go,
18 you know what, I don't like the plumber, I like the
19 electrician, I just don't like the plumber, right?
20 The plumber goes, you know what, I'm not going to do
21 the work, and he walks out. Now you're holding the
22 bag, you don't have a plumber, right? It's the same
23 situation. We turn around and we say, no, we don't
24 want to work with whatever city staff that normally
25 does this, the City has every right to just go, you

1 know what, that's fine, we may not want to move
2 forward with a redevelopment area or plan or
3 agreement, right? So that's the prerogative of the
4 City, just like we, from our perspective, go, okay,
5 we don't like any of these people, you know what,
6 we're going to scrap the project, we don't want to
7 do it.

8 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Right. I
9 should say --

10 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: We have that same
11 ability to walk away, but that doesn't get us
12 anywhere.

13 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: That's --

14 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Could I say
15 the City would not be dictating who could be
16 attending these meetings on behalf of the Authority
17 necessarily unless that person has absolutely
18 nothing to do with the meeting. So if there was
19 some representative from the City who, for whatever
20 reason, the Housing Authority thought, oh, that
21 person has no business being here, then there may be
22 an issue. But, essentially, as commissioner said,
23 the City is the gatekeeper on this, and it's just
24 making it clear to the authority, essentially, hey,
25 these are the players on the City's end, this is

1 who's going to be involved.

2 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I think the
3 ultimate question is, too, Commissioner, if there is
4 an individual or a title in there that you have
5 major concerns about, I think we should know about
6 it, right, because maybe those concerns are really
7 valid. And then we may want to have a conversation
8 with the City and say, look, there's concern about
9 this director or whatever it may be.

10 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Which is exactly
11 why I started by saying I just don't know who any of
12 these people are. Okay?

13 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: So maybe we
14 should have a meeting. I don't know if we can.

15 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: It doesn't change
16 anything.

17 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

18 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: And I don't
19 think any of these people are going to have the
20 ability or responsibility to make any impactful move
21 without us or the city --

22 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Or the city.

23 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: The City
24 Council --

25 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

1 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: -- the City
2 would be the decision-makers, it's just these are
3 their appointed representatives for these things.

4 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: And right now
5 most of that is Director Brown.

6 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Director Brown, we
7 have some planners in the city, we have our
8 engineer, right, there are technical aspects of
9 these conversations. And then the legal team,
10 right? So.

11 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Right. For
12 example, you wouldn't deal with the City saying
13 whoever your chosen attorney is, I don't like him, I
14 don't want him.

15 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: No.

16 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And for the
17 same way, you're not dictating that to the City.

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We know
19 they'd never come up and say we don't want to deal
20 with your executive director --

21 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

22 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: They'd get a
23 prior matter from day one.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: -- but you
25 might want to say about that, right?

1 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I think you
2 can tear away even, James, at least what I am, is
3 from the beginning of this process we just wanted to
4 be as transparent as possible. We don't want any
5 surprises, we don't want anybody popping up, and I
6 think our residents deserve that. So that, I mean,
7 I think we're doing a good job of that so far, and
8 it's been a tedious process and this is a big step,
9 so I appreciate everyone involved that's working on
10 it for sure.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: And the City
12 did pass this last night.

13 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah, and I was
14 just going to say, before we voted on it, this is,
15 you know, it's awesome for me to see it on both
16 sides, right, to deal with the director, make sure
17 he's doing what he has to do, make sure the staff is
18 doing what they have to do, and they've been
19 excellent.

20 As the director said here, you know,
21 they've been excellent on the City's side. We made
22 sure that we had this ready to go before it was
23 completed, it was on the agenda at the City, we had
24 every aspect covered. If there were concerns, how
25 we would do it as an emergency if, in fact, we

1 needed to do that. We were -- we were, kind of, on
2 a timeline, and we wanted to make sure that was
3 done.

4 And for me it's really special because
5 I get to see it on both sides, I get to vote on it
6 from the council perspective, and I get to vote on
7 it here from the Housing Authority's perspective,
8 and it's really, you know, this is becoming very,
9 very important to me. It always was, but now it's
10 really something that's come to life, and I'm
11 excited about it. And every time we talked about
12 it, every time we move one step forward, I get more
13 excited about it because this is what our residents
14 deserve, and I'm really, really happy we're moving
15 forward.

16 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Was it on the
17 a consent agenda?

18 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: It was. It
19 literally went -- it went on consent, not a -- not a
20 question was asked, not a concern was raised, and
21 that's just a testament to how well Director Brown
22 and his staff did it, how well Director Recko and
23 the staff here and the collaboration amongst each
24 other in getting this thing done, it went on without
25 a hitch, and I can't thank everybody enough.

1 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So on that note,
2 however, they're fully vetted, how did -- so who is
3 Brightview Engineering? How were they selected
4 as --

5 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: That's the City's
6 engineer.

7 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: I understand
8 it's the city's engineer, and so they would handle
9 all --

10 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: From the City's
11 perspective.

12 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: From the City's
13 perspective.

14 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: So I'll give you
15 an example, and, again, like I said earlier, it's
16 all commonplace for me, but when this process is
17 happening, we're going to have our own engineers,
18 our own planners, our own -- the Housing Authority
19 has a say --

20 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Right.

21 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: -- and they're
22 going to say, this is what we think is possible.
23 The City then has to, kind of, verify that, right.
24 So in different types of scenarios, we have a lot of
25 consultants pertaining to the funding of the

1 project, right? Now, a little different because a
2 lot of those other redevelopment projects are for
3 profit, somebody is trying to maximize their
4 profits, right, so they'll come in and they'll say,
5 well, it's going to cost us this much to build, so
6 we need more from you as a city, we want to engage
7 in a pilot payment that's going to be X amount of
8 dollars, right?

9 We have to verify that as a city, so
10 our professionals that look at that go, well, wait a
11 minute, he made some assumptions here about rents
12 that just aren't true. And then we go through that
13 with a fine-toothed comb. So we'll be doing that
14 from the Housing Authority perspective, but the City
15 will also be doing that to say, hey, you missed
16 this, or this is a different -- we would have a
17 different assumption on whatever, whether it's
18 financing or planning or engineering or anything
19 like that. So we'll have that back and forth, and
20 that's part of not only the negotiation with the
21 plan itself, right, because the plan is the envelope
22 of what we're talking about, but the agreement is
23 when you get into the nitty-gritty, right?

24 I mean, some agreements, you could
25 dictate the color of the brick, right? Now, the

1 City has that option. We as an authority also have
2 that option to say, no no no, in our agreement we
3 want X, Y, and Z. The City may come back and say,
4 no, we want it a little different. That's where the
5 negotiation starts. And that's how we, kind of,
6 hash a lot of that stuff out. So you'll have
7 professionals --

8 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Right.

9 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: -- on both sides.
10 So you'll have Brightview Engineering, but then
11 we'll have an engineering firm here at the
12 Authority. We'll have a finance person at the City,
13 we'll have it here at the Authority; we'll have the
14 lawyers, they'll have the lawyers.

15 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So since we're
16 the primary on this, why wouldn't the HHA be using
17 their engineer?

18 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: We will be. We
19 will be. This is just saying that, essentially,
20 this just dictates the City's side of it, and
21 anything that you're reading in reference to what
22 the City is doing, the City has to do that. We as a
23 city still have to do our due diligence on the
24 project.

25 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Absolutely.

1 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Right? So we have
2 those firms in place, we have our engineering, we
3 have our finance people, we have our lawyers. The
4 Housing Authority will have the same counterpart in
5 this conversation. So we'll have our own engineers,
6 we'll have our own planners, we'll have our own
7 finance people, our own legal team, right? So we'll
8 have both sides of that. And each counterpart will
9 collaborate and will come up with --

10 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Will that be
11 the same, too, when we go to pick a developer, and
12 we have an understanding with the developer, we're
13 going to have our engineers, they're going to have
14 their engineers, right?

15 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Correct. And then
16 the City will have their engineers.

17 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: It just
18 happens that this is the understanding with the
19 City, that's why, okay.

20 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah, and like I
21 said, I mean, it is, I mean, 18 years to really
22 understand redevelopment, so.

23 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: I mean, this
24 entity was procured by the city of Hoboken, was --
25 the contract's awarded by the City Council, and in

1 were some issue, the Housing Authority would be free
2 to obtain the services of its own engineer.

3 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And remember, it's
4 all in a negotiation at that point. When we really
5 start talking about what the plan's going to look
6 like, what the agreement's going to look like, it's
7 all -- the -- I'll give you the best example was 770
8 House, that was a year and about eight months' worth
9 of negotiations before that plan was finalized,
10 that's how long that redevelopment agreement took.
11 That was a long time and that changed drastically.

12 The beginning of that redevelopment
13 plan started with a building being built where the
14 gym and park currently is. The developer acquired
15 additional properties and handed that land over to
16 the city in the form of a gym and a park. So that
17 shifted greatly throughout those conversations. I
18 don't foresee anything like that happening in this
19 situation, we own the land, there's no other issues.
20 But yeah, those -- those redevelopment conversations
21 could last a long time.

22 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Well, so you
23 being the ideal position to help us understand,
24 since you're on the City Council and on this Board,
25 one of the expressed purposes when starting Housing

1 for Hoboken is the understanding that the land would
2 be retained and owned by the Housing Authority.
3 There's no way that any of these buildings, this
4 land is sold or given away, that there's going to be
5 a future for all the residents of the Housing
6 Authority. So does that -- can that be a part of
7 the discussion, that that would automatically
8 preclude a developer if they were trying to --

9 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: We have that.

10 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: That happens here.

11 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: That happens
12 here.

13 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

14 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: The city has
15 nothing to do with that conversation.

16 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Right. And
17 that --

18 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: That happens right
19 here. The only way that a developer would retain
20 any rights to any land is if this Board votes to do
21 that.

22 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And that was
23 part of --

24 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And none of us
25 are, we're all on record saying that that's not what

1 we want to do.

2 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Yeah, pardon
3 me, Commissioner. And that was part of the
4 discussion at, I believe it was last month's meeting
5 with Shannon, the question was raised can we put
6 this into the RFQ that goes out on this. The answer
7 is absolutely. If you want to require that the
8 Housing Authority retains ownership, you can require
9 that the Housing Authority retains ownership.

10 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Right. Right.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: That's been
12 our intention from the beginning.

13 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

14 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: And, again,
15 that, we're not giving anything away here. If you
16 wanted to eventually seek some level of control,
17 that would be up to this Board to decide. Just at
18 any point in this process it would take four
19 affirmative votes of this Board.

20 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Well, and to
21 that point, to the other parts of this document that
22 I'm referring to, unfortunately the City Council can
23 change as well. I don't want our Housing Authority,
24 since we're all on the same page, we don't want the
25 land given away or sold to anybody. I don't want to

1 be in the position where a future City Council,
2 because I think you just said that there was one
3 other negotiation that went on for, like, nine
4 years?

5 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: No.

6 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: Eighteen --

7 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Eighteen months,
8 sorry.

9 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Really.

10 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

11 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: I just don't
12 want us to be in a position where somebody else
13 comes along and says we got to do it this way or
14 we're walking away, then --

15 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: That's always
16 possible.

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah, it is, I
18 mean, right, the reality is it is always a
19 possibility, administrations change, council members
20 change, that stuff happens constantly. But I
21 think -- I think we're in a unique position in
22 understanding of what the need is, and it will be
23 very, very difficult for any future council or
24 administration to change course. There might be
25 tweaks here and there, right, but to completely

1 change course, I think that would be very, very
2 difficult, virtually impossible, right? You know, I
3 don't like to say that a lot because a lot of things
4 happen in the world of government and politics, but
5 that's a really, really heavy lift, and that's just
6 my take on it.

7 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: I say this
8 all respectfully, Commissioner, that I understand
9 and I appreciate your concerns, and I think it's
10 clear that they're coming from the best place, but
11 that concern would not at all be affected by this
12 MOU. You're talking about something that is much
13 further down the line in terms of a redevelopment
14 agreement essentially.

15 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Completely
16 agree, completely understand.

17 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Just making
18 sure.

19 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: I just wanted
20 to -- but from my perspective I want to start from
21 the beginning with this understanding. I really do
22 not want somebody coming down the road telling us
23 how we're going to redevelop this Housing Authority.

24 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: We appreciate that,
25 because, I mean, the questions that you're asking

1 are helping me a lot. This is all new to me.

2 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And when we retain
3 as an authority, when we retain our redevelopment
4 counsel, right, which is very specialized, they will
5 really shine a light on the process, how we do it,
6 what the pitfalls may be, because there's going to
7 be, right, the City, the Housing Authority, and
8 potentially even the development partner at some
9 point, there will be moments where there's a
10 conflict, right? It's just a guarantee. So once we
11 retain that counsel, once we retain those
12 professionals, you're going to see a whole different
13 kind of perspective. They will play that out for
14 us, and we'll all have a better understanding.

15 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So one, kind of,
16 final question here, so section --

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Ask them all.

18 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: Section, the
19 development, redevelopment plan, middle of the text:
20 The city and the HHA would collaborate with regard
21 to the retention of any qualified planning
22 consultant to provide planning and other, various
23 other positions, can you help me to understand what
24 a qualified planning consultant is?

25 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah, would just

1 be, really, it just be a professional that is
2 specific to how that plan would -- would finalize.
3 All right? So, again, the stages of a redevelopment
4 is what the City is now going to embark on, which is
5 designated the area. So there are certain criteria
6 that you have to meet. So then an area specific to
7 the Housing Authority in this case have to meet
8 those criteria.

9 We know they meet the criteria. The
10 obsolescence of the buildings alone is enough for it
11 to become an area of redevelopment. The sewer
12 system alone is enough for it to be an area of
13 redevelopment. Combine the two, that's locked in,
14 right? So we kind of know that it's going to happen
15 because we know of the severity of it, so once
16 that's done, you now have a designation of the area.

17 From that point the City then has to do
18 a redevelopment plan, and, again, the plan is the
19 envelope of what the City will allow. It's almost
20 like setting the zoning for that area. So, for
21 example, if the City plan calls for two stories,
22 let's make it ridiculous so we don't put any false
23 information out there, calls for two stories across
24 the Board, that's all you can build. That's the
25 envelope that we can build in.

1 Then after that's approved by the City,
2 then we start with a redevelopment agreement and
3 that continues. Within that agreement, you will
4 build what the City and the Housing Authority
5 collaborated on within the envelope that's already
6 been set by the plan. So in this scenario, two
7 stories, well, we want one story of senior housing
8 and we want one story of family housing. The City
9 comes back and says, well, from the City's
10 perspective, we don't have a problem with that, but
11 on the corners of the block we want a corner store,
12 we want a retail facility there. Then that becomes
13 part of the negotiation.

14 Once that's finalized, that
15 redevelopment is put on paper, the agreement, the
16 City votes on it, the Board votes on it, and the
17 redevelopment partner at that point begins to build.
18 They begin to build that redevelopment.

19 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So a qualified
20 planning consultant, if it's a collaborative effort,
21 do we just -- does the city and the Housing
22 Authority jointly choose that consultant, or can the
23 Housing Authority --

24 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Yeah, in this
25 agreement, it's saying we, the Authority --

1 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: The Authority.

2 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: -- is going to
3 have more sway because we're going to collaborate
4 with the City for their planner, or their planning
5 consultant, as it's termed here. Right? So we're
6 going to have more say than, let's say, a different
7 redevelopment -- or a redeveloper may have. So
8 there is -- there are other things that are spelled
9 out, and this could change, as Matt said.

10 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: So if we have
11 more say, does that mean we have to pay more?

12 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: No, because the
13 City's picking up a lot of the cost.

14 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: The city is
15 paying for this.

16 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Which is good.

17 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: Potentially
18 you're going to work together to agree on these
19 professionals. Now, I mean, if the City said
20 absolutely not, you're using this firm or we're not
21 doing it, the City has the right to walk away just
22 like the Housing Authority has the right to walk
23 away. But, essentially, this is the two parties
24 committing to working together. And while I don't
25 think it's not a concern at all, I think in this

1 situation the City and the Housing Authority are
2 much more on the same page than they would find in a
3 typical redevelopment situation where you're talking
4 about a private entity. But it doesn't mean
5 everybody is going to agree on everything and that
6 you don't need to cover you're bases and you're not
7 asking a valid question. But I think you're going
8 to find in the -- Commissioner Russo, knock on
9 wood -- will find that this one moves a little bit
10 more smoothly than what he's used to.

11 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I think we're
12 going to put this issue --

13 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: But,
14 essentially, this is saying, hey, we've all got a
15 say in this decision, we're going to make this
16 decision.

17 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: And quite
18 honestly --

19 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: -- for these
20 professionals.

21 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I've gotten -- you
22 know, I've had conversations with literally all my
23 Council colleagues and the Mayor and the
24 administration, and I haven't heard any -- I
25 literally haven't heard any concerns to this point.

1 Everyone wants to move this forward, everyone has
2 seen what our repositioning plan looks like, right,
3 so there are no surprises here. Everyone
4 understands what we're really trying to achieve, and
5 there's been no concerns from the City's
6 perspective, and I'm hopeful and pray that it stays
7 that way.

8 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: And the Housing
9 Authority, by owning the land, is worth 25,
10 30 percent of the finished product.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We
12 absolutely perceive that, yeah.

13 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Any further
14 questions? Director?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Anthony
16 Forbes?
17 Andrew Impastato.

18 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yes.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Aaron Lewit?

20 COMMISSIONER LEWIT: Yes.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Barbara
22 Reyes?

23 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yes.

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Michael
25 Russo?

1 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Absolutely, yes.

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: James

3 Sanford?

4 COMMISSIONER SANFORD: No.

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Erica

6 Seitzman?

7 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Yes.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Thank you.

9 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Thank you.

10 And before we close, we did it, thank
11 you so much. Thank you to all those that have been
12 involved.

13 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

14 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: That was the next
15 step.

16 ATTORNEY M. FITZPATRICK: You're
17 appointed the role of him tonight.

18 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: I just want to say
19 before we leave that I am very proud to say that our
20 basketball league ended this past weekend, this past
21 Saturday, and Hoboken won. So our group, Andrew,
22 you probably know, yeah, Tyshon's team --

23 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Hanberry,
24 yeah.

25 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Yea, Tyshon

1 Hanberry's crew won. They were very happy. It
2 was -- it was nice talking to the officers on site
3 because, as you know, they were on site the entire
4 season, and it was nice to hear from an officer to
5 say this was a really nice thing. It went well,
6 there was no issues. You know, this was something
7 really good, and that makes me proud that we as a
8 board were able, you know, to put this together for
9 the kids. Again, we didn't stop everything that was
10 going on, but it helped those few -- those few
11 weeks, I want to say almost two months, that we had
12 this league, it was very, very helpful.

13 With that being said, I have asked the
14 director, I know that the GoFundMe page that we
15 created did go to pay for the scoreboard, for the
16 scorekeepers, for the referees, which were all the
17 young children, I don't want to say young children,
18 the young men from our community who did it, and it
19 was nice for us to be able to give them something
20 for doing this. But I did ask him if we had left
21 over, if we could possibly get some trophies for
22 these fine young kids, young men. I think it's only
23 fair. I don't know how you guys feel, we can
24 discuss it later. I don't know how much is left
25 over, if any is left over, because I did see the

1 bills and, you know, there was quite a few. But if
2 not, I have no problems asking, you know, our
3 resources or my resources to see if everyone could
4 chip in so that we can get these young men --

5 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: I'd be happy
6 to donate a trophy for that from our nonprofit,
7 so --

8 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: -- if that's,
10 you know, if there's no money there, I'll for sure
11 work with Stan's or whoever you got.

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We do want
13 to accommodate matters now that we got this through
14 and then we'll be back to everyone over the next
15 week or so.

16 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Yeah, just let
17 me know.

18 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Thank you so much.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: The next
20 Board meeting, we can work it out.

21 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Now, Director, by
22 the end of -- by our next Board meeting, are we
23 going to have our obsolescence study completed?

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: We will have
25 the obsolescence study selection to you to choose

1 the firm that's going to do the obsolescence study.
2 All right. So we have to choose the firm that's
3 going to do the obsolescence study.

4 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Easiest job there
5 is.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Because the
7 RFP is out.

8 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: The buildings
9 needs to come down. Stick your finger in the hole.

10 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: Absolutely,
11 absolutely.

12 MR. KOTHERITHARA: The obsolescence
13 study will be in the paper on Monday, and it will
14 be -- it's due back on October 4th.

15 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: All right. So
16 we'll have it at the next meeting.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: And then
18 we'll have a subcommittee meeting to evaluate those,
19 and we're planning on, by the way, for that
20 committee, planning on having that meeting on the
21 6th of October at 7 o'clock for that subcommittee.

22 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: What
23 subcommittee is that?

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: And that
25 subcommittee is the Professional Procurement

1 Committee with Reyes, Russo, and Seitzman.

2 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: The 6th you said?

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Let me
4 recheck. It would be the day before.

5 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Thursday is the
6 6th.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Yes,
8 calendar, October 6th.

9 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Wait, Yom
10 Kippur. Can't do it then.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Okay. So
12 our Board meeting isn't until the 13th, so we could
13 do it the 4th, no, can't do it on the 4th because
14 that's when we get it back, the 10th, 11th, or 12th?

15 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Oh, wait, now,
16 the 6th might be okay, the 5th, the 5th is --

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: I think yom
18 Kippur is the 5th, right?

19 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: Yeah, yeah.

20 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: Someone else
21 could step in.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Not that I
23 should tell you that.

24 MR. KOTHERITHARA: The 4th?

25 COMMISSIONER SEIZMAN: The 4th and the

1 5th.

2 MR. KOTHERITHARA: So we could do it
3 any time after that, I would --

4 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: The 6th is
5 okay.

6 MR. KOTHERITHARA: Just do them
7 together.

8 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: The 6th is this
9 okay?

10 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: The 6th is all
11 right.

12 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Let's keep it the
13 6th then.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: Let's look
15 at the 6th at 7 o'clock p.m.

16 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: That's good.

17 MR. KOTHERITHARA: And then, just on a
18 side note, right now I saw there is a tally of seven
19 referees, so for the trophies, we all decide --

20 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: I'll stay out of
21 this one.

22 (Laughter.)

23 COMMISSIONER IMPASTATO: We're not
24 talking about referees.

25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECKO: No.

1 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: For the winners.

2 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: It's only the

3 winners.

4 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

5 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Five kids.

6 MR. KOTHERITHARA: No problem.

7 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

8 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: And so with that
9 being said, before we close I just want to give a
10 big shout out and a thank you to the young man,
11 Mr. Mike Singleton, who put it together, ran it, and
12 it was a success, it was definitely a learning
13 experience for us, and we hope next year to have a
14 more successful league, and then we can continue to
15 do this for the youth in our community from that age
16 group because it's needed.

17 So motion to close?

18 COMMISSIONER RUSSO: Motion.

19 COMMISSIONER SEITZMAN: Second.

20 CHAIRWOMAN REYES: All in favor?

21 (Unanimous affirmative voice vote taken at
22 this time.)

23 (Concluded at 9:47 p.m.)

24

25

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER

I, THERESA L. TIERNAN, A Registered Merit Reporter, Certified Stenographic Shorthand Reporter, and Notary Public of the State of New Jersey, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the proceedings as taken stenographically by and before me at the time, place and on the date herein before set forth.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither a relative nor employee nor attorney nor counsel of any of the parties to this action, and that I am neither a relative nor employee of such attorney or counsel, and that I am not financially interested in the action.

THERESA L. TIERNAN, CCR, RMR
Notary Public of the State of New Jersey
My commission expires March 15, 2008
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