

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

**September 22, 2022  
Minutes**

The Housing Finance Authority of St. Johns County met at 3:00 pm in the Kingfisher conference room in the Health & Human Services Building – 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida 32084.

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Michael O'Donnell, Chair.

**Members Present:**

Linda DeGrande  
Andrew Evener  
Robert Marshall  
Carolina Morrow  
Michael O'Donnell  
Malinda Peeples  
Erick Saks

**Members Absent:**

None

**Guests Present:**

Rich Komando, Esq., Bradley, Garrison & Komando  
Marianne Edmonds – PRAG – Via Zoom  
Helen Feinberg – RBC Capital Markets – Via Zoom  
Sarah Taylor, Assistant County Administrator – Via Zoom  
Joseph Cone, Assistant Director, Health & Human Services  
Roberto Ortiz, Housing & Community Development Manager  
Mary Garcia, Social Services Support Staff  
Julie Voorhees, Housing & Community Development Support Staff

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

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

Request made by County staff to add "Dominium/Oaks at St. John Request" to "New Business". **Motion** made by Linda DeGrande to accept the agenda with the proposed addition; motion seconded by Erick Saks. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Public Comment:** None.

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

- **August, 2022:** Mr. O'Connell was unable to attend the meeting but financials were distributed and a check for legal counsel in the amount of \$1,500 payable to Bradley, Garrison and Komando was presented for signature, as well as a check for CPA services in the amount of \$382.05 payable to William O'Connell and Associates.
- **Auto Owners Insurance Policy:** Julie Voorhees explained a refund will be forthcoming from Auto Owners Insurance for CWHIP properties no longer owned by the HFA. Ms. Voorhees stated Chair Michael O'Donnell signed off on the authorization to remove those properties from this policy.
- **Proposed Budget:** **Motion** made by Linda DeGrande to approve the proposed budget as presented; motion seconded by Malinda Peeples. **Motion passed unanimously.**

### **Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion** made by Linda DeGrande to accept August, 2022, meeting minutes; motion seconded by Carolina Morrow. **Motion passed unanimously.**

### **Administrators Report:**

Mr. Ortiz reported San Marcos Heights is very close to obtaining their Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the first completed building and it is expected within two weeks' time. Mr. Ortiz explained that residents will be able to begin moving into that building just as soon as that CO is issued. Mr. Ortiz stated construction on the Victoria Crossing multi-family development is also making good progress and he referred to a project schedule that was provided in meeting packets. Mr. O'Donnell asked that these two projects be linked to the HFA and used as an example of modern, aesthetically pleasing, affordable housing.

### **New Business:**

- **SHIP Program Administration Discussion:** Mr. Cone stated that after the HFA's inquiry regarding Clay County's administration of the SHIP program he requested that staff contact seven Florida counties with similar funding streams to St. Johns to see how they administer the program. Mr. Cone referenced a spreadsheet provided in meeting packets that detailed allocation, number of staff administering SHIP, primary activities, difference in funding from St. Johns, etc. Mr. Cone said the only HFA administering SHIP out of those contacted is Clay County. Erick Saks inquired about the HFA's ability to apply for CDBG funds and Mr. Cone explained that these funds are layered and can be used for land use acquisition and infrastructure, among other things. Mr. Cone stated that other funding is typically necessary and up until quite recently, the HFA had very little money to work with, making it difficult to qualify for these funds. Discussion ensued and Mr. Saks asked if SHIP administration was to be brought in-house to Health & Human Services. Mr. Cone answered affirmatively, stating County staff will handle all administrative work including income verification, scope of work, general inspections, and customer service. Mr. Cone stated individual RFPs would be issued for each scope of work and proposals would be received from both for-profit and non-profit builders. Mr. Marshall said he would like to see the HFA pursue administration of the SHIP program once an executive director is hired and he suggested that sort of expertise be sought in a candidate for that position. Michael O'Donnell asked how the HFA would make the request to take over SHIP administration and Mr. Komando explained that would be a decision made by the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Cone did say that should the HFA take over SHIP, more staff would be required as it could not be managed by a part-time director. Mr. Cone went on to say the subsidy would not change whether the County or the HFA manages the program and this year it is much higher than it has been in the last several years when the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund was swept. Mr. Cone said should SHIP funds be allocated to subsidize staff for the HFA, a year of funding short-fall could be a serious issue. Mr. Cone asked the HFA if they would like to take formal action with regard to this matter but he did caution that for a number of different reasons, transferring administration of SHIP funding would not be recommended by staff. Mr. O'Donnell asked if the HFA might be more involved in the decision making related to the SHIP program and Mr. Cone said the HFA could be engaged a bit more but again cautioned that it is sometimes necessary for staff to be flexible and act quickly to allocate funds so there isn't always a great deal of time for consultation. The HFA chose to take no action at this time.
- **Dominium/Oaks at St. John Request to "New Business:** Marianne Edmonds stated correspondence was received from Dominium requesting Collier, Inc. be used as investment banker on the Oaks at St. John bond issuance. Ms. Edmonds stated that this would be in conflict with the HFA guidelines which govern the professionals this HFA will work with and this change would have required a waiver. Ms. Edmonds stated that since this email request was received, a compromise has been reached whereby RBC will act as the structuring manager and Collier will act as investment banker. Both Rich Komando and Marianne Edmonds recommended this arrangement. No action was necessary.

### **Old Business:**

- **Executive Director Recruitment Update:** Sarah Taylor provided an update on the advertising of this position and stated the County's HR director offered to assist staff with setting up an Indeed account. Ms. Taylor advised the free Indeed option might very well serve to garner enough qualified candidates and advised any other professional organization websites would also be effective recruitment options. Carolina Morrow suggested posting the position on the Chamber of Commerce website and Ms. Garcia asked if there would be a charge or membership fee. Ms. Morrow stated she would inquire and advise.

Discussion ensued and it was ultimately decided the position would be posted on Indeed.com for a period of 30 days, and Ms. Garcia stated she would also post the position on Florida Housing Coalition's website. The decision was made to allow a budget up to \$500 for advertising, if necessary. **Motion** made by Robert Marshall to approve advertising costs up to \$500; motion seconded by Linda DeGrande. **Motion passed unanimously.** Discussion then turned to the process of reviewing applications and selection of candidates. Ms. Taylor suggested a subcommittee may wish to meet in order to screen all applications and bring back a list of individuals for all members to review. Mr. Komando suggested that decision should be predicated upon the number of applications received. Ms. Taylor suggested the HFA should take the time now to consider the interview questions they would like to ask.

- **Partial Release of Land Use Restriction Agreement:** Mr. Komando explained the County attorney's office looked into this matter and established the only release of lien was on the properties sold by the HFA to Breeze Homes, LLC. Mr. Komando stated the liens on the CWHIP homes remain in place. No action required.
- **Own a Home Opportunity Program/Lee County Regional Workshop Update:** Mr. Ortiz advised there has been no activity.

Joe Cone announced Andy Evener submitted his resignation from the HFA as he is moving out of county. Mr. Cone thanked Mr. Evener for his years of service to the HFA and wished him well in future endeavors.

**Meeting was adjourned** at 4:01 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the HFA will be held on October 27, 2022, in the Kingfisher conference room, in the Health & Human Services Center, at 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine.

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary