

**Princeton Housing Authority  
Minutes of the Special Meeting – August 20, 2025 at 6:00 PM  
via Zoom**

- I. Notice of Meeting:** read by Chairwoman Felicia A. Spitz.
- II. Roll Call**
- a. **Present:** Commissioners: Samuel Becker; Denny Velazquez; Patricia Gillette; Linda Sipprelle; Jeffrey Oakman and Roger Piné; Chairwoman Felicia A. Spitz; Board Attorney-Robert F. Casey; Municipal Liaison Leighton Newlin.
  - b. **Excused:** None.
  - c. **Members of public:** Lewis Hurd, Executive Director; Earlene Baumunk; and Wayne T. Sleppy.
- III.** Motion made by Chair Spitz to hold Public Session at end of meeting, seconded by Commissioner Velasquez and approved unanimously by the Commissioners.
- IV.** Motion made by Chair Spitz to move meeting into closed Executive Session to discuss attorney / client privileged content, seconded by Commissioner Oakman and approved unanimously by the Commissioners.
- V.** CLOSED SESSION.
- VI.** Motion to move back into the Public Meeting made by Commissioner Sipprelle, seconded by Commissioner Oakman and approved unanimously by the Commissioners.
- VII.** Executive Director Lewis Hurd was provided with notice pursuant Rice v. Union County BOE and NJSA 10:4-12 by Attorney Casey on August 4, 2025. On August 5, 2025, Lewis Hurd confirmed via email to attorney Casey that he wanted the personnel portion of the meeting, discussing his employment, held in the public portion of the Meeting.
- VIII. Chair Spitz Report of ED Lewis Hurd**
- In advance of the meeting, on August 15, 2025, Chair Spitz attached a packet concerning the performance of Executive Director Hurd relative to his position within Princeton Housing Authority for discussion at tonight's special meeting. The packet was comprised of 172 pages (the "Packet") and was evidence in support of her presentation concerning his incompetent, ineffective, unqualified, and failed performance as ED for PHA. This Packet is made part of the record here tonight.
- To recap, Chair Spitz shared / stated the following highlights from the Packet:
1. Chair Spitz went over the statutory duties with Mr. Hurd at the interview and before the hiring, at which point she believed that he was able to perform said duties. After two months it became apparent that the PHA and ED Hurd were not moving in the right direction. Exhibit 6 in the packet was 72 days after his hire and the DCA budget was submitted under John Clarke's credentials which is not permitted and was made clear by Felicia to ED Hurd at that time as it could create some legal jeopardy for PHA. ED Hurd brushed this off, and it was then evident that he would not accept responsibility for the

budget issues that would then ensue. Ten days after this communication the credentials were still not updated and ED Hurd still not updated of record having not received his credentials. ED Hurd was untruthful about some of the facts behind still not having received his credentials.

b. Exhibit 13 of the Packet concerned a Finance Committee meeting with ED Hurd because the income was not supporting our expenses. No explanations were provided by ED Hurd. Commissioner Velasquez set objectives and requested a meeting in two weeks for an update.

c. ED Hurd was placed on a corrective action plan on or about July 25, 2025 concerning his poor performance. ED Hurd presented a rebuttal from the action plan saying he was not receiving any assistance from his predecessor. This was found to be untrue. Chair Spitz inquired of the appropriate authorities as to how long it takes to be credentialed and learned it only takes a few days. Chair Spitz again spoke with ED Hurd and received no positive answer and it now was truly a large problem that ED Hurd was not being truthful about.

d. Exhibit 15, HUD is trying to assist PHA with the OCAF submittals. Doctor Morash from HUD was giving us additional assistance. The filings with HUD were incorrect and PHA already had this same issue with the 2019 OCAF submissions. No follow up with HUD by ED Hurd. ED Hurd sends emails with no identifying information to HUD expecting to get a response from HUD having repeatedly told them that they did not provide the numbers which was untrue. ED Hurd's communication with HUD has been poor and not detailed so as to stall any progress and efficiency with the most important entity for the PHA's viability.

e. Subsidy Issue. PHA has still not received the July and August subsidy from HUD, and this is the biggest issue and the biggest failure and incompetence of ED Hurd. His number one role is to collect income from HUD. At the July 16<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the Board was not told that we had not received the July subsidy. This was never disclosed by ED Hurd. ED Hurd said at the Finance Committee there is only a \$1000 shortage, and he was requesting we transfer money and we agreed to transfer the money, all at the same time no July subsidy had been received! Subsequently, Deputy Director Brooks told Chair Spitz that they still had not received the July subsidy. ED Hurd failed to disclose to the Board of a change in financial status which is a requirement of his job duties. Chair Spitz sends emails to ED Hurd clarifying. ED Hurd still denies and does not admit we still have not received the July subsidy. Chair Spitz asked for July statement and ED Hurd sends June statement. ED Hurd cannot send the July statement showing receipt of the subsidy for July because it never happened. Chair Spitz then asked one more time, "Did we receive the July subsidy??", and finally ED Hurd stated that we had not received the subsidy. ED Hurd was dishonest and hid the truth from the Board relative to the financial status of the Princeton Housing Authority. This dishonest behavior has eroded the trust between the Chair, the Board and ED Hurd. Chair Spitz met with staff to find out about not receiving the subsidy. Staff reported they knew July 8<sup>th</sup> and we didn't find out until July 28<sup>th</sup> that there was no subsidy received. Chair Spitz relayed that ED Hurd blamed the vacancies at PHA for the financial issues and wanting to redevelop all the while the #1 source for funding was not received and he was untruthful about that. In all Chair Spitz had at least five conversations or follow ups with ED Hurd concerning the failure to receive the subsidy and never received

the truth nor a plan to fix the issue; rather it was that ED Hurd claimed he didn't understand.

f. Chair Spitz relayed ED Hurd's inability to manage recertifications and late submittals and obvious failure to manage the staff that reports to ED Hurd as well as the consultants that assist PHA. Part of the job is to manage the PHA finances and report abuses and fraud to the Board and this can't be done in reliance on ED Hurd that has proven to be dishonest about the finances.

g. Exhibits 44-47 of the Packet shows the disconnect with HUD. HUD sends requests and ED Hurd sends the wrong items back. Chair Spitz needs to intervene in the management of PHA which is ED Hurd's job. ED Hurd sends wrong emails and information and then claims to have never seen them before.

h. There is a HUD volunteer from Boston that reports to PHA on OCAF adjustments and they sent a new form. ED Hurd never sends to deputy director to fill out. ED Hurd doesn't know how to fill out the forms that are critical to the number one function of his job, to receive money from HUD. ED Hurd doesn't know what some basic HUD abbreviations mean and never communicated to his staff these issues. The PHA staff is not being managed properly by ED Hurd.

i. Chair Spitz met with ED Hurd about the bank name changes that were never done. ED Hurd defects and blames others.

j. As for the Corrective Action Plan ED Hurd was placed on, the first three deadline items received no response for ED Hurd. Chair Spitz reached out to ED Hurd and received no response. Chair Spitz has legitimate and founded concerns that tasks that should be getting done with HUD and/or management of the PHA are not getting done because ED Hurd does not know what he is doing nor who to ask nor who to manage. Loss of confidence in ability to perform job duties due to incompetence, untruthfulness, and no experience.

k. PHA has received increased tenant complaints on health and safety items since ED Hurd took over the position. For example, no AC for senior citizen(s) that should be a high high priority. Uncaring attitude coming from the office and inability to manage the staff. Tenant complaint: "John Clarke was here for 10 hours a week and saw John more than Lewis who is fulltime."

l. There is a general incompetence and inability to perform the job. ED Hurd has been here for 182 days and on August 8, 2025 he finally received his "M" number in the system!

There were no questions from other Commissioners.

#### **IX. Public Comment**

ED Hurd spoke in defense of the report given by Chair Spitz. Primarily his position was: with HUD layoffs he was not receiving the needed support; the income of PHA is lower than expenses; trying to balance monthly expenses; there are 16 vacant units; and not certain when PHA receives the subsidies because of the PHA consultants.

There was no other public comment.

#### **X. Unfinished Business.** None

**XI. New Business.** None

**XII. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Velasquez, seconded by Commissioner Becker, and unanimously approved by the Commissioners in attendance. The meeting ended at 7:01 pm.