

**City of New Bern
Board of Aldermen Special Meeting
January 15, 2019 – 10:00 A.M.
City Hall Courtroom
300 Pollock Street**

- 1. Meeting opened in prayer by Mayor Dana E. Outlaw. Pledge of Allegiance.**
- 2. Roll Call.**

Present: Mayor Dana Outlaw, Alderman Sabrina Bengel, Alderwoman Jameesha Harris, Alderman Robert Aster, Alderman Barbara Best, Alderman Johnny Ray Kinsey and Alderman Jeffrey Odham. Absent: None. A quorum was present.

Also Present: Mark Stephens, City Manager; Michael Scott Davis, City Attorney; and Brenda Blanco, City Clerk.

- 3. Discuss the New Bern Housing Authority and its Future.**

Mayor Outlaw stated this special meeting was called to discuss issues with the New Bern Housing Authority ("NBHA"). Some years ago, Alderman Bengel and former Mayor Lee Bettis, had concerns about the conditions of Craven Terrace and the need to make similar improvements at Trent Court. That started a model morphing of the Housing Authority. The concern of the Board of Aldermen is affordable housing and the condition of housing in New Bern. The hurricane was a wake-up call. Many people think the New Bern Housing Authority is the City of New Bern, but it is not. There is a need for better communication between the City and the NBHA. The size of the NBHA Commission changed in the last several years, first increasing to nine and then increasing from nine to eleven. Part of today's discussion will likely be about the right size of the Commission. There are three options being discussed: 1) continue the NBHA as is with the hope the Housing Authority will reach out to other housing authorities throughout the United States and look at innovative ideas that can be brought to New Bern, which do not include old institutional buildings; 2) put the NBHA under the City, if that is what it takes to get affordable housing to where it needs to be; and 3) put the NBHA under the Redevelopment Commission.

Alderman Bengel made a motion that the Governing Board would agree to call forward Mr. Blaney, Mr. Anderson, or any members of the NBHA to speak as deemed necessary, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

Alderman Bengel said state statute dictates a housing authority board must be a minimum of five people and no more than eleven. In the past, it was felt nine was the magic number. After she left office from her first term as alderman, it was felt eleven was the best number. The first thing she wanted to discuss was the size of the Commission. Thomas Hardin resigned a month or so ago because he moved

from this area to Raleigh. Since that time, Willie Newkirk's term expired in November and Barbara Lee's term expired in December. Last week, notice was received that Chairman of the Board, Joe Anderson, also resigned. This leaves four open spots. Prior to that, Alderman Bengel stated that she had contacted at least six community leaders, and none were interested in being appointed because of concerns about the NBHA, Trent Court, and the NBHA Board itself. She suggested the NBHA Board be reduced to seven members since that is the number of current filled seats, and she asked for discussion.

Alderwoman Harris said she understood what was being said, but she felt options 2 or 3 should be viewed. If the Governing Board is going to consider those two options, then there was no need to look at the number of appointments on the NBHA. She voiced the need to get everyone back into affordable housing following the hurricane and expressed the need for housing to be under the City or under the Redevelopment Commission.

Alderman Kinsey asked to speak with the NBHA's attorney and Mr. Blaney. While they were approaching, Alderman Odham asked for clarification about the list of appointees that had been provided to the Board, noting it only reflected ten names. Alderman Bengel responded the list only showed the appointments made by the Mayor. The additional appointee is Lisa Hardy, who is selected by the residents. Alderman Kinsey asked whether the Housing Authority is operated by the federal government, and Mr. Blaney explained the authority is in part governed by the rules established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"). Alderman Kinsey then asked if the NBHA had not been following those rules, and Mr. Blaney said they have. Alderman Kinsey said he was trying to figure out what the problem is if the NBHA is in compliance. Jamie Norment, attorney for NBHA, said that is obviously a policy decision for the Governing Board. The NBHA is an independent legal entity that has legal obligations to HUD, as well as through their annual contributions contract. HUD holds the real estate with a deed of trust. Mr. Norment also reviewed other legal obligations that are in place and functioning properly at this point. Alderman Kinsey said he understood about the displacement of residents during the storm, but he questioned what the NBHA had done wrong for the City to consider taking it over. Mr. Norment stated the Authority has a legal plan, agreements and grant agreements with HUD and has begun the implementation process of the Choice Neighborhoods, including the redevelopment of Craven Terrace and Trent Court, as well as other alternatives. How those communicate and interact is a matter of policy explained Mr. Norment, and maybe the Governing Board and Housing Commission need to discuss those. When Alderman Kinsey questioned whether all of those obligations had been met, Mr. Blaney confirmed they had. He also stated the NBHA is looking at a redevelopment to take care of residents of not only Trent Court, but to also provide affordable housing within the City. He stated the Authority is doing what it is supposed to do and really does not know what else it should do. He questioned whether there was other motivation behind the things going on. Mr. Blaney stated the NBHA is fulfilling its obligation to provide safe, clean, affordable housing for residents of New Bern. The Commission wants to expand that commitment beyond Trent Court in a manner consistent with the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative ("CNI") Transformation Plan.

The NBHA does things in a reasonable, measured manner before things are implemented, according to Mr. Blaney.

Alderman Best questioned why Mr. Norment said the decision is one for the Board of Aldermen to make if the NBHA is under HUD and has done everything it is supposed to do. Mr. Norment explained the North Carolina General Statutes give the City authority to direct the Housing Authority's future. The NBHA was formed about 80 years ago through cooperation of civic-minded individuals and the City. The Mayor appoints members to the NBHA Board of Commissioners. The City and NBHA are in a symbolic relationship, but legally, they are completely separate entities. At the policy level, there is a lot of overlap.

Alderman Kinsey again asked what the complaints were and what others were saying the NBHA was not doing. Alderwoman Harris said there is a difference in operating in how you need to and operating in integrity. She said she knew of constituents who were living in units not up to code and residents who were moved to other housing units and then their unit re-rented to someone else. Mr. Blaney stated that was not true. Alderwoman Harris said she also knew of constituents paying almost \$800 to live in the Housing Authority's units, when the Authority could advise them to get a one-bedroom apartment or live elsewhere instead of taking \$800 from them. That is not affordable living. There have been countless meetings with the NBHA about how they are operating, announced Alderwoman Harris.

Mayor Outlaw said part of the reason for being here today is better communication. Anyone who wants to know about any City committee or meeting can easily watch the meeting on television or pull it up on the City's website. The Mayor asked about the last meeting from the NBHA that was available on their website. Alderman Bengel said the last meeting online was from around July 2018. Mr. Blaney responded the most recent minutes were from November, and the December agenda was posted in a timely manner. Mayor Outlaw said he did not think today's meeting was about what the NBHA has done wrong, but members of the Governing Board have looked at other housing authorities throughout the United States and are excited about other opportunities it is seeing. The Mayor stated the City wants to find affordable housing and partner with investors. The point of today is to try to establish a better line of communication with the NBHA; he did not think anyone wanted to abolish the NBHA. He further stated the City wanted to work smartly at more affordable housing for residents, bring in more investment and 9% tax credits to the City, and establish partnerships.

As the alderman who represents the citizens of Trent Court, Alderman Bengel stated her main objective is the citizens. She stated she and those residents have concerns about customer service and the processes that have taken place since the storm. She noted she had asked for a list of rents paid at Trent Court. The list revealed 60% of people pay under \$400 a month, with the majority of the residents paying \$50-100 a month. However, more than 17% pay more than \$400, with one resident paying \$805 per month, which was concerning to her. The second issue she had was a brand new facility coming on line at Gaston Boulevard with 80 units. She previously asked Mr. Blaney how many residents still in place at Trent Court were senior citizens, and he had responded 30%. She asked him how many he

had counseled about moving to a new unit at Gaston Boulevard, and she stated his response was none because they do not talk about other properties. Alderman Bengel stated today's meeting is not about dissolving the NBHA, but this is about better communication with the residents and the Governing Board. Other housing authorities meet with City Managers and City boards weekly, if not monthly. The end result is better housing.

With respect to Alderwoman Harris' issue, Alderman Bengel stated the X building was flooded. Residents in that building received FEMA funds because their possessions were damaged. That, to her, confirmed the units were flooded. She stated she had gone back and forth with Mr. Blaney about acknowledging the fact there was water in the building. There are people sick in those units, and their doctors are stating there is mold there. What Alderwoman Harris was referring to earlier is a young woman who lived in Building X was sick, and Alderman Bengel made a phone call and was able to transfer the lady to a unit at the Greenville Housing Authority. That lady was not gone a week before her unit was rented to someone else. This is an opportunity to try to correct issues, not just wipe down walls.

Alderman Bengel stated she gets calls from residents seeking help and assistance. They do not call the NBHA because they are concerned they will be kicked out due to retribution. Alderman Bengel said she regularly attends the Authority's meetings and sees concern after concern. She suggested more training might be needed for the NBHA Board or Mr. Blaney. She asked for months to have a liaison between the residents and the NBHA. Her desired outcome from today's meeting is to find out about the options available and how to treat the residents in a better manner. She stated she was not asking to resolve the HBHA today, but said either the NBHA or the City had to step in to address the issues.

Alderman Best stated after Hurricane Florence, there was damage to units and residents were displaced. Those residents received vouchers through HUD. She asked if the NBHA or management were under any legal obligation to help find them housing because of the voucher system. Mr. Blaney stated he did not believe so. Mr. Norment said legally that is a very broad question. HUD encourages affordable housing, and the Housing Authority's contract with HUD is to focus on housing authority property with a responsibility for managing their property and making sure that they have as close to 100% occupancy as they can. Affordable housing is not just a housing authority issue, but also a regional issue. There is no legal obstacle for cooperation. Alderman Best then noted legally, it is up to the Board of Alderman and everybody to help citizens find affordable housing.

Alderman Kinsey asked Joe Anderson, former Chairman of the NBHA, if the Authority was able to come together after the storm to make decisions about what needed to be done. Mr. Anderson said he would answer in a way to provide a bigger picture. He stated in terms of the NBHA's Board composition, his recommendation is to get quality people to sit on that Board, stating it is not a quantity issue, but a quality issue. Because of the storms, the responsibilities of the Board members obviously increased. In terms of the operational efficiency of the NBHA, it is doing what it needs to do and is in compliance. However, in terms

of stakeholder management, he would give the Housing Authority a less than passing grade. Part of that is due to storm fatigue, people being overwhelmed, and infrastructure being very old. His recommendation was to knock it all down and move people into better housing rather than put Band-Aids on the current Trent Court facility. Mr. Anderson expressed concerns with today's questions, stating the issue is more of a "what" than a "why" question: what can be done to fix things, and what can be done to move forward? If the City takes over the NBHA, it will have to deal with all of the bureaucracy of HUD instead of making simple management decisions. He voiced a belief in looking at best practices from other housing authorities and if practices are found that the NBHA is falling short of, then it should adopt those practices quickly.

Addressing Mr. Norment, Alderman Kinsey referenced the statement made earlier that there is no obligation of the Housing Authority to do certain things for its residents when a storm comes. He then asked if there was truth to Alderman Bengel's complaint that residents had not been taken care of and had been ignored. Mr. Anderson said a lot of this is perception. His perception is if you have a housing authority where 95% or more of the residents are not complaining, then that is passing. However if you have 1-4% who are complaining, you should fix those issues if they are valid. He further stated he thought the NBHA tried to do the best it could, but reminded everyone that the Housing Authority is dealing with old infrastructure. He stated he had seen infrastructure repaired, only for the problem to represent itself days later. The issues of the X building were reviewed by a mitigation company, which found no moisture in the building. If the City takes over the NBHA, it will inherit the same problems, and nothing will change. The City will then have involvement that is more direct and have to run ground on what to do. He suggested a liaison is needed between the NBHA and City. The Authority is currently on an island by itself trying to do the best it can with its limited resources. The inherited source of the problem is the old infrastructure.

Based on what they had heard about the goings on and what needs to be fixed, Alderman Kinsey asked Mr. Blaney how he plans to take care of things. Mr. Blaney suggested some of the issues would be best discussed in a forum that would allow for more cooperation and collaboration with an ad hoc committee consisting of some aldermen, NBHA committee members, staff and Mr. Stephens. Alderman Kinsey stated he felt the NBHA could do better with collaboration and partnership instead of having stones thrown.

Alderman Bengel asked if the Board desired for the City Attorney to give a brief on the options. Mayor Outlaw responded this was a fact-finding meeting to make the NBHA aware of some of the City's concerns. He was trying to figure out how to bring funds to New Bern to expedite more affordable housing units. He stated there was a need for better communication and for meetings to be opened to the public to allow the public to be more involved.

Alderman Bengel announced she had placed at all of the aldermen's seats an article entitled "What Everyone Gets Wrong About Affordable Housing", which she received from Rob Overman, a member of the NBHA Board. It discusses myths about affordable housing, and she suggested the Governing Board read it.

Mayor Outlaw asked if any of the NBHA Board members wanted to ask questions or make comments. Barbara Lee stated the Governing Board had its reasons for wanting to deal with the Housing Authority, but as a member of the NBHA Board and a former City alderman, she knew why an authority was formed years ago. This is a sensitive issue because of knowing so many people who live in the units. She said one must admit that the storm is something that never happened before, and everyone was feeling his or her way through it. Her concern was for the people who live in the units and making sure they were taken care of. Mrs. Lee stated she did not know what brought on the fight between the Board of Aldermen and the NBHA, and Alderman Bengel responded it was not a fight. Mrs. Lee said she perceived it as one and was glad to hear it was not. She said the Board of Aldermen could attend the NBHA meetings and express their concerns to the Authority and tell them they are not doing things right. Alternatively, the Board of Aldermen could have called a workshop with NBHA to discuss things that the Aldermen felt should be done. Mrs. Lee stated the NBHA wanted to do what was right and said it is not a power thing or witch-hunt. There needs to be a sit down to talk. Many of the NBHA Board members have a lot of experience with the Housing Authority. They have all been in the shelters and knocked on doors to talk with citizens. Of course, some residents are saying things because they are in a crisis. If the Governing Board can work with the NBHA, the NBHA is most willing to work with the Governing Board to wash out the concerns. If there is a best practice, Mrs. Lee said there is a need to sit down and talk about it so the NBHA can emulate it. As a citizen, if the Governing Board wants to sit down and talk about how to make a difference, Mrs. Lee stated she would be there, whether she is on the NBHA Board or not.

Mayor Outlaw said part of the concern is the NBHA meetings are not taped or aired, and minutes are put on their website five to six months later. The desire is to open the door to public awareness. A large percentage of complaints about affordable housing in New Bern is voiced to the Governing Board, and they get complaints on a daily basis. He stated the Governing Board did not want to run the NBHA, but had to have some means for constructive dialogue and resolution to the issues. If there was any kind of misconception that this meeting was to abolish the NBHA Board, he did not think anyone would see that happen today. There is a lack of public awareness because of the way the NBHA takes care of business. Mrs. Lee responded the NBHA welcomed cameras and anyone to their meetings.

Aldermen Bengel announced some members of the Governing Board had held numerous meetings with Mr. Blaney since the storm. She was unaware as to whether Mr. Blaney relayed the concerns expressed to the NBHA Board. Mrs. Lee responded now that the City has had this meeting, the NBHA Board has heard and understands the concerns. Mrs. Lee asked that the members of the NBHA Board who were in attendance to stand in recognition.

Alderwoman Harris said her frustration was with all the conversations she has had with Mr. Blaney. She stated when Alderman Bengel or Mayor Outlaw attends a NBHA meeting and briefs her on the meeting, she is concerned by Alderman Bengel's report that there is no vision or authority. When it was presented that there should be a liaison between the NBHA and the City, the offer was turned down.

Alderwoman Harris stated she would feel more comfortable moving forward if there was a liaison. She further stated her frustration lies in the ability to take care of the residents. Based on the three options that were presented in the beginning, she had been leaning toward those options. Some of her friends live in the units and have a problem with customer service. Moving forward, Alderwoman Harris expressed a desire for an open line of communication and a liaison from the NBHA to the City.

Alderman Aster said his big concern is when he receives phone calls or meets with residents who have complaints and he asks if they have discussed their concerns with management, their response is they are too scared to because they are concerned they will be kicked out. After the hurricane, Alderman Aster said he was called to meet with residents at 10 p.m. who did not know what to do next or where to go. Some of the Governing Board had recommended that the NBHA call for a meeting of residents in the parking lot, if needed. As far as he knows, that meeting never took place, although it was suggested two or three times. There is a major lack of communication between the NBHA and its residents.

Sherrod Banks, a principal of Banks Law Firm in Durham, approached the podium to address the Board. He stated his firm has represented many housing authorities, and he has seen housing authorities and municipalities have these discussions in the past. It is much easier to deal with the real issues than some of the rumors about this meeting. His firm represents eleven housing authorities in North Carolina. The only housing authority board in the state to have eleven members is New Bern. That does not mean eleven cannot be a good number, but it is a difficult number that most of his clients have found hard to manage. The Chair (Mr. Anderson) said earlier the quality of the appointees is more important than the number, and that is true. The skillset brought to the Board helps keep the Housing Authority moving in the right direction, along with competent staff. Based on his experience, he firmly believed five was too small of a board because of quorum issues; seven was a very functional number; and nine was functional. Most housing authorities, in time, have dysfunction with the bodies that appoint them. Several years ago, the Durham Housing Authority had a joint retreat with their entire board and the City council to discuss affordable housing issues. They negotiated the agenda ahead of time, and the meeting was well planned. Both learned an awful lot about each other and was able to trade ideas. This retreat became the springboard for the Durham Housing Authority and the City of Durham's joint planning for at least four or five major properties in or around the city. They held a retreat twice and have been working hand-in-glove since then. There is a council person sitting on that authority's board, which gives a concrete relationship. Mr. Banks stated he has also represented the Charlotte Housing Authority, and when they had a retreat three or four years ago, the people who run the authority also joined in the retreat and shared presentations. Mr. Banks suggested the Board of Aldermen consider a retreat or something similar to restart the relationship in a concrete way to learn about what the NBHA is doing or not doing, stating he firmly believed it would be extremely productive. He was hired by the NBHA to help with the Trent Court transformation plan, which was finalized in 2016. It is a long-term plan that rolls out in 15-20 years, although he stated he understood affordable housing is a more urgent need. He expressed the need to carefully plan the

acquisition of properties for the construction of new houses and carefully plan the rehabilitation of properties for the preservation of affordable housing. All of this takes extreme planning and resources. The NBHA needs the support, understanding and partnership of the City, which cannot happen unless both parties are at the table and understand what each party brings to the table and can do for the citizens.

Victor Taylor of 2817 Walter Drive said he once lived in Trent Court, and it flooded a lot in the 1970's. Hurricane Florence was an unheard of storm with 13 feet of storm surge. When he was on the Governing Board, he nominated a very skilled and educated person to sit on the NBHA Board, but that person was denied for personal reasons. Mr. Anderson and Attorney Banks said a mouthful. When the Mayor and Board of Aldermen choose to replace the four current vacancies, Mr. Taylor suggested the nominees be skilled, qualified and have a heart for people and not nominate them for personal gain or monetary reasons.

Rev. Robert Johnson, Pastor of Ebenezer Presbyterian Church at 720 Bern Street, thanked the Board of Aldermen for allowing citizens to attend and hear from the horse's mouth the truth about some of the problems and issues concerning the NBHA. Many rumors came about because of lack of communication. Rev. Johnson stated he was encouraged the Board of Aldermen saw the need to build an open line of communication between all the boards that represent the City and to which the Governing Board makes appointments. He felt today's meeting was a healing meeting and an opportunity to come together and reason about the concerns.

Mark Best of 878 Hwy. 55 West stated he previously sat on the Planning & Zoning Board and used to work extensively with the NBHA during his years at Craven Community College. He is an advocate for people, and he thinks that is one thing that is missing. In 2007 or 2008, Hatteras had a huge layoff. People who had been working for years had a situation occur that had never happened to them before. The College joined with Hatteras to identify their needs. Some employees had emotional issues because this was like a death to them, since they had been working at Hatteras for years. Some needed to know what resources they had and be trained on how to use those resources. Mr. Best explained what he was saying was people complain when things happen that have never happened before. The NBHA Board had to deal with issues it had never encountered. The question is what was done to meet the needs of the people who were going through things they had not had to deal with before. In the case of Hatteras employees, the College stepped out and asked about their needs and concerns. There was paperwork employees had to do for the first time and apply for unemployment. Some had never used computers. Therefore, the College brought resources to those individuals and met their needs. After the storm, citizens needed to fill out FEMA forms, but most of them did not know what to do with the forms because it was their first time dealing with that situation. They did not know what other resources were available to them. Mr. Best asked the Board of Aldermen to consider in their process the needs of the individuals and the fact those needs have not been met. The Choice Neighborhood Initiative ("CNI") plan recommended a resource center be set up so people could have a place to go to and ask questions, although that recommendation could have been dropped from the plan.

Barbara Sampson, a citizen, said she was not the representative for Trent Court residents, but she wanted to speak on their behalf. She felt empathy for them. Residents have told her they have not been given a list of other affordable housing options. She wanted residents to have hope. Ms. Sampson stated the residents do not understand all of the legal jargon, so she herself attends meetings so she can relay information to the residents in a way they can understand. The apartments on Gaston Boulevard are for a certain age group. She asked where residents could go who are not eligible for Gaston Boulevard because they do not meet the age requirement. Ms. Sampson closed by stating her mother, Ethel Sampson, was still a good candidate for the NBHA Board.

Alderman Bengel asked Attorney Davis whether the statutes pertaining to housing authorities would allow the Governing Board to impose a requirement that the Authority's Executive Director must report to the Governing Board or make a monthly report. Mr. Davis replied the statute does not contemplate that, but the parties could agree to it.

Bill Frederick of 2408 Turtle Bay said he has been on the NBHA Board for six years. When he first took seat in 2012, the board meetings were held in a dining room at the Sheraton Hotel. Since his time on the board, all meetings have been opened to the public and are advertised and posted. While he could not speak for the entire Board, he and the ones he has spoken with have no problem with the idea of televising the meetings. He commented every member of the Board of Aldermen signed up to be the recipient of complaints, noting that is their profession. The NBHA was criticized soundly for the Craven Terrace project because too much money was spent. Mr. Frederick said multiple funding sources were utilized, but no City monies were spent. In the process of that project, 44 units were eliminated. Those 44 units are committed to the Gaston Boulevard project. More units need to be built, which is what is proposed on Carolina Avenue. Since 2012, he has been aware there were 114 units in Trent Court that were at immediate risk for destruction by flood. Since that time, the federal government has issued notice that they will not repair any more projects that are within a flood zone. There was never a question of if the Trent Court units would be lost, but a question of when. During the hurricane process, it was sudden, disastrous, and confusing. That is something the Housing Authority can work on. As to the size of the NBHA Board, Mr. Frederick stated, "a camel is a horse designed by committee". Alderman Aster stated he understood he signed up for complaints when he became an Alderman, but said when he recommends citizens take their complaints somewhere else and they will not because they are scared, that is another problem. Alderman Aster asked how many people from Trent Court could move to the Carolina Avenue property. Mr. Frederick said the original planning is limited to 88 units. Alderman Bengel said 24 units could be transferred and explained she was told at the last meeting that 30% of the 80 units could be moved. Mr. Frederick said there are other ways to look at that and that there is a possibility that project could become an entire replacement for 88 units at Trent Court. The buildings at Trent Court are old and reached their useful physical life probably 40 years ago. They have been patched repeatedly and when they fall apart, they fall apart big time. Alderman Bengel commented a concerning statement made by Mr. Frederick was not if the Trent Court units flood,

but when. Mr. Frederick said everyone knew they were in the flood plain. Alderman Bengel said her concern was there was no plan to move the residents when the flooding happened. Noting a flood could happen again next year, she asked if there was now a disaster plan. Mr. Frederick said there is not a plan to his knowledge and that is a fallacy that must be corrected. He said he found it appalling people would feel uncomfortable going to the NBHA staff, noting he has dealt with that staff for six years and could not imagine them threatening anyone. The woman who handles evictions is personally humbled by what she has to do.

(Alderman Kinsey momentarily stepped out at 11:20 a.m.)

She is doing a very good job, although it is a job no one wants to do. In May 2012, there was in excess of 120 police reports in Trent Court. In May 2014, there was none. The NBHA Board has made that difference in two years. He noted Craven Terrace, which is now a private organization, and Trent Court are probably one of the safer areas in town.

Alderman Best said she knew numerous people who live in Trent Court, and they are good, law-abiding citizens. She has talked with some who used to and still do live there, and many of those people are happy where they are. They said they may pay \$400 a month or more, but they can afford that because their electricity is included. They cannot pay rent and utilities somewhere else. On the other hand, she has talked with residents who are not happy. Alderman Best noted there would be an unbalance in any rental situation. She said she has had several residents tell her how nice it is to work with Tawana Smith. Alderman Best said she may have had two complaints and acknowledged there would always be complaints from someone. She expressed hope that the Governing Board could come together and work with the NBHA, citing the citizens are the responsibility of the City.

(Alderman Kinsey returned at 11:23 a.m.)

With respect to Alderman Best's comment about Trent Court being home to some residents who want to stay there, Mr. Frederick said there are third and fourth generations there and many people who live in Trent Court feel that is their neighborhood and universe. It was very destructive for them to be displaced. Alderman Kinsey commented the City did not have a plan either, but was working on a disaster plan and would like Mr. Frederick to be a partner with the City.

Pete Monte of 1510 Tryon Road announced he was on the NBHA Commission, and the Commission would be coming to the Governing Board soon. He referenced the CNI plan, stating everyone needed a copy and should look at pages 87 and 93, the latter of which covers Trent Court. The first two buildings the NBHA wants to build will be on the east (Tryon Palace) side with parking underneath the buildings. Mr. Monte stated the CNI plan was a good plan that residents, the City and others took part in. Mr. Monte read some of the Mayor's introduction in the plan, noting the plan is available online at choicenewbern.com.

Alderman Bengel said she was well aware of what the future holds, but the discussion is about the present and how to help citizens who were flooded out and

in transition. She expressed a desire to make sure there is communication, a strong NBHA Board, and a strong Executive Director.

Alderman Odham thanked everyone who took time to come to the meeting, and he voiced appreciation for the comments made, as well as the meetings held with Mr. Blaney since the hurricane. A lot was discussed today, including Craven Terrace. Thinking back over the previous term of the Governing Board, it took a lot of meetings to make the Craven Terrace project happen. There has not been many meetings lately. What is missing between the joint venture of the NBHA and the City is communication. Expressing no disrespect to Mr. Stephens or Mr. Blaney, Alderman Odham noted they are paid staff who take direction from their boards. The boards set the policy and vision, and staff is paid to carry that out. Emergency and evacuation plans have to be set by the boards. Some deliverables that can come out of today's meeting is to have a joint work session between the two boards to hash out a policy.

Alderman Odham made a motion to direct the City Attorney to come back next Tuesday with resolutions providing options for five, seven and nine members on the New Bern Housing Authority Board, seconded by Alderwoman Harris. Alderman Bengel expressed a desire to amend the motion to see only two resolutions with options for seven and nine members. Alderman Odham responded all three options could be available to allow the Board to have that discussion, if desired. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

Mr. Anderson approached the podium and thanked the staff for working diligently to meet the needs of the residents, noting there are legitimate complaints in terms of communication that need to be addressed. Two final comments he made was to say it is all about the residents, but it is also about the money. He wanted to make sure everyone understood the NBHA is fiscally sound. The Authority could have easily blown through money during the hurricane, but it made good financial decisions. Mr. Anderson stated Mr. Blaney took several hits today, some of which may be well deserved. Staff right now are all working in one room on folding tables and has been doing that since the storm. They are working under the pressure of not having their small offices, but they are still maintaining their work ethic just as they were before the storm. The reason the NBHA has legal support (The Banks Law Firm and Ward and Smith) is because legal support is needed with all of the HUD regulations. It is money well spent.

Alderman Aster asked Mr. Anderson if the NBHA Board had applied to FEMA for temporary office space, noting they would supply an office. Mr. Anderson said when he transitioned off the Board, they were looking at that. The nice thing about being in the New Bern Towers is staff is close to the residents. They are aware of some good options, but have not followed through yet. Mr. Anderson confirmed they were aware they could apply for temporary space through FEMA.

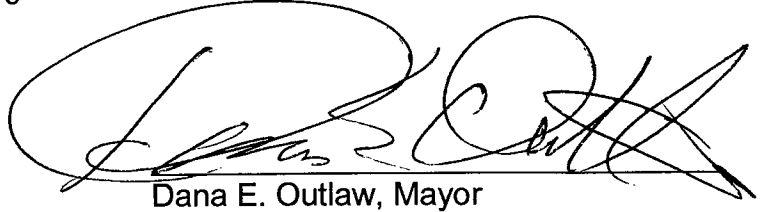
4. Adjourn.

Alderman Odham made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderwoman Harris. The motion carried unanimously 7-0, time being 11:35 a.m.

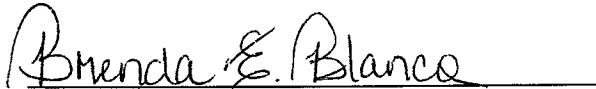
The attached documents are incorporated herewith and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

NOTE: For additional details and information on the Board of Aldermen meetings, please visit the City of New Bern's website at www.newbernnc.gov. Video and audio recordings of the meeting have been archived.

Minutes approved: February 12, 2019



Dana E. Outlaw, Mayor



Brenda E. Blanco, City Clerk