



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Approved – MAY 14, 2018
MINUTES

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met in Regular Session at “McDonald House” at 49 Old South St. Northampton, Ma. On Monday, May 14, 2018.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:36 PM.

Upon Roll Call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT: Commissioner Brooks, Commissioner Hebert, Commissioner Budgar, Commissioner Richards & Chairperson Jones.

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Clifford; Deb Dunphy; Jack Redman; Maria Walton; Sharon Kimble; Jason Potts; Betsy Medina; Keith Walsh; John Wyda; Larry White; Ronald Terren; Peter Cushing; Walter Mozgala; Barry Grimes; George Friend; Jasmine Ryan; Katie Rose; Edgar Cancel; Brenda Thompson; Roy Martin; Rosa Figueroa; Wayne Milo; Christine Haigney.

Christine Haigney from McDonald asked everyone if they had any objections to her recoding this Board Meeting. No objections, so she put her phone on the Board Meeting table for recording.

EMPLOYEE AND TENANT ISSUES

Employee Issues: None.

TENANT ISSUES:

Susan Henderson – Cahill – said she has called NHA twice about grouting her tub and floor. Also regarding smoking – she has COPD. In 2012 Cahill became a no smoking building. Butch Fortier is smoking in his bathroom and it is seeping into her bathroom, she had to put cardboard over the vent in her bathroom. Chairperson Jones asked if she called NHA about this? She replied that there have been four written notices. Jack Redman will follow up and schedule a meeting with Ms. Henderson.

Barry Grimes – Salvo – 11 people are smoking out on the benches and smoking is a major problem. Contacted Jack Redman about a tenant who has oxygen tanks in her apartment and is smoking. Signage isn't doing anything, there needs to be enforcement. Ms. Clifford responded that new signs have been ordered, the bike racks have been removed, she thought about removing the benches, but people wait out there for the bus. Also contemplating a smoke machine. There is a three strike process then it goes to legal, then to court.

John Labeque – Salvo – asked if people have really been reprimanded about smoking. John Wyda said an NHA authority needs to go and talk to people smoking. One Maintenance person said that Mr. Wyda's floor at Salvo reeks of smoke.

Jack Redman said he has been asked where 25 feet from a building is. There are signs on a pole showing no smoking from this point. There are also designated smoking huts.

Ron Terren – Forsander – said oxygen is not flammable.

Edgar Cancel – Hampshire Heights – said he is the president of the Hampshire Heights Tenants Association. He asked if he could have a meeting with his board and the NHA board. He also spoke about the cameras – residents have mixed feelings.

Ms. Clifford stated that she responded to Mr. Cancel's email of Friday, May 11, 2018. The NHA Board cannot meet with the Tenants Association – she or Jack Redman can come to the properties.

Mr. Cancel feels Cara has some facts wrong on her email and he wants to address them. His family has always been involved with the community and he wants to continue. He feels there is a lack of response and communication at NHA.

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Christine Haigney from McDonald thanked everyone for their time in coming to the Board Meetings. She has done a lot of reading - our system doesn't clean out smells. She received a warning about smoking - need to prove a tenant is smoking. There are smells even in the elevator. Can we install filters? Regarding the air conditioners - she can't afford to buy a new air conditioner and you can't put it in front of the sliding glass door. Also, they have to be emptied every three hours and they are five gallons - very heavy.

Peter Cushing - Forsander - The post fence at Forsander is rotted. Main dumpster - can we have a retaining wall or fencing? Also, the vision lines need to be re-done. Backfill around buildings - he can get it free. Jack Redman to check out.

Ron Terren - Forsander - wants to take the benches from McDonald and bring them to Forsander.

Walter Mozgala - McDonald - thanked NHA for the \$100.00 air conditioner refund.

Larry White - Salvo - people are in the elevators with non-lit cigarettes in their mouths- TV room - there is someone in there leaving a cigarette behind. Also, someone was outside smoking - Larry asked the person about smoking and the person said he could smoke there; Larry asked him if he signed a lease - has not seen that person again. In the Laundry Room there is a daughter of resident with kids that was using three washers, this stopped another tenant from doing laundry.

Roy Martin - Salvo - Tenants don't want to smoke in the huts. Confusion with the 25 feet from building rule. When is the Salvo Tenants Association going to be running again? Ms. Clifford responded that you can have one any time but the consensus is that the tenants like it the way it is and having the RSC helping out. If there are residents who want a tenant association again, have them call Jack Redman.

Edgar Cancel said that many residents at Salvo didn't like the leadership of the Association.

Chairperson Jones wants to have a Tenants Association at every site; sometimes they self-destruct, goes through a cycle and here we are.

Jane Morrison - McDonald - she has a heat sensitivity problem but can't afford a new air conditioner - she needs another \$100.00. Jack Redman is trying to find better pricing for the tenants. She said the air conditioners have to be emptied every four hours. Ms. Clifford said there are different types. Ms. Morrison said people are having a hard time getting them into their apartments. Ms. Clifford said if that is the case, ask NHA for help. This is a safety issue in the high rise apartments.

Walter Mozgala - can we get a change machine for the washers and dryers?

Ron Hebert - McDonald - it was a poorly timed rush job to get the new air conditioners. Then we got a notice for a \$100.00 refund of rent. He went out and bought a new table to put the air conditioner on and it is difficult to empty.

Brenda Thompson - McDonald - said that Mr. Cancel did a lot at Florence Heights.

Approval of the April 2018 Minutes

Chairperson Jones asked the Board if there is any discussion of the minutes.

Commissioner Hebert put forth the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Brooks.

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Brooks, Hebert, Richards, Budgar and Chairperson Jones.

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Jones approved the April 2018 Minutes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Approve Executive Director to enter into an MOU with the City of Northampton for purchase of sand, salt & gas. Executive Director has not heard back from the Mayor - tabled.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION TO APPROVE QUARTERLY FINANCIALS

3RD Quarter Financials - we are under budget. FY2018 Budget was approved last week.

Salvo cameras have been approved by DHCD. Commissioner Budgar asked if there is anything we should be concerned with. Ms. Clifford said No - we are good financially. Commissioner Budgar asked about the \$88,867 DHCD gave us? Sharon Kimble responded that it goes into an unrestricted operating fund - they don't like us to go below 20% and we are at 60%. We can't just spend the money. Commissioner Budgar asked if we heard anything from the proceeds of the lawsuit? Ms. Clifford said not yet.

Commissioner Brooks put forth the motion to approve the financials. Commissioner Richards seconded the motion.

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Brooks, Budgar, Hebert, Richards and Chairperson Jones.

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Jones approved the Motion.

MOTION:

Discussion regarding Garden Grant and the amount and motion to approve

Last year the Grant was \$500.00. Motion to have the amount of the grant based on the size of the property – between \$300.00 and \$500.00. The replacement of picnic tables and grills will be taken out of the laundry fund. At Salvo there are 7 garden plots and 16 residents are interested, there will be a lottery for the plots. Commissioner Budgar asked how many are we short? He hopes that next year we can accommodate everyone. Tobin Manor is interested in having garden plots. Edgar Cancel has also been working on this for Hampshire Heights. Ms. Clifford said that at Florence Heights and Hampshire Heights they are thinking of garden boxes. Ron Terren said that he has three raised beds that someone can have. Jack Redman is working on this project.

Commissioner Budgar put forth the motion to approve, Commissioner Richards seconded the motion.

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Brooks, Hebert, Budgar, Richards and Chairperson Jones.

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Jones approved the Motion.

At this time, the Executive Director's Report was read.

Ms. Clifford went through the total rents collected, re-certifications for the month, and wait list numbers. The Budget was approved on May 8, 2018. A Fish Number has been assigned for Salvo cameras. Five new speed bumps and signs have arrived for Salvo House. We have two evictions this month.

Employee Update: We still have (1) Workman's Comp still pending. One employee who was previously out on medical leave resigned on May 11, 2018.

Commissioner Budgar asked about an update on our Corticelli Property. Attorney O'Connor is working with the City. It is loaded with asbestos and lead – if we take it down it counts towards our funding – it is a hazard. Commissioner Budgar asked about the NHA website – Jack Redman responded that he is waiting for a third quote – he has had quotes from \$2,000.00 - \$16,000.00. NHA is allotted \$10,000.00 for technological improvements. He is working with Springfield Housing as well.

Commissioner Budgar also asked if the Personnel turnover has quieted down. Ms. Clifford said she cannot predict the future – it is hard to find employees who have a good work ethic. Commissioner Budgar also wondered if on the No Smoking issue – if NHA was tough enough on enforcement. Ms. Clifford said this law is new and not sure how the courts will be, a Judge probably won't evict a tenant for smoking. Mr. Budgar replied that we need to find ways to turn the screws on this. Ms. Clifford said the smoke machine can help. Brenda Thompson asked if it would read positive in another apartment where they aren't smoking. Ms. Clifford replied no. Jack said our policy says that we must provide education on non-smoking. Our RSC will help implement. The deadline for being completely smoke free is June 30, 2018. Commissioner Budgar asked what will change as of June 30th. Jack replied that we will be in full compliance to enforce the third strike with a 30 day notice to quit. Commissioner Budgar then asked if NHA is allowed to deny applicants who smoke? That answer is No.

Note: For those attending the Board Meeting – on the counter at McDonald were five handouts regarding falling air conditioners for anyone to take.

At this time, Chairperson Jones asked if there were any questions or any other Business.

Commissioner Hebert put forth the motion to adjourn the meeting at 900 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Richards.