



# NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

---

Approved –October 12, 2018

## MINUTES

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met in Regular Session at “McDonald House” at 49 Old South St. Northampton, Ma. on Thursday October 11, 2018.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.

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

**PRESENT:** Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Hebert, Commissioner Budgar, Commissioner Richards & Commissioner Laufer.

**ABSENT:** Chairperson Jones

**ALSO PRESENT:** Cara Clifford; Maria Walton; Deb Dunphy; Sharon Kimble; Keith Walsh; Betsy Medina; Netanya Ortiz; Lynn King; Jack Redman; Tom O'Connor; John Wyda; Roy Martin; Heidi Sousse; Ron Terren; Peter Cushing; Edgardo Cancel; Erika Krause; Susan Benedisuk; David Arce; Jason Potts; Toni Parizo and Jim Nash.

Ms. Clifford held a Public Hearing on the Annual Plan, 2018 HCV Admin. Plan & 2018 Public Housing ACOP.

Roy Martin, Salvo Tenant, said the meeting was not posted in the Buildings. Ms. Clifford states that it was posted at NHA as per the Daily Hampshire Gazette Ad we posted.

No one else from the Public spoke, at 6:41 the meeting was then turned over to Vice Chairperson Brooks.

### EMPLOYEE AND TENANT ISSUES

Employee Issues: None.

### TENANT ISSUES:

Ron Terren – Forsander – The area behind “N” building is all mud and the grass is not growing. Give him grass seed and a rake and he will take care of it.


Heidi Sousse – Salvo - new Maintenance Porter Allen Wheeler is awesome! He fixed her crumbling wall – he is attentive to detail – a great pick! All Maintenance guys are great. She decided the first Wednesday of the month if Maintenance Men Month and she bakes them cookies.

Peter Cushing – Forsander - Thanks for the vent cleaning. Regarding door locks – will they be getting a door release or intercom buttons? It is difficult for residents on the second floor who can't make it downstairs to open the door. Cara – We recognize the issue. We put in new locks in order to comply with the law. Peter – when will there be a meeting with the tenants? Jack Redman responded there will be quarterly meetings with all the properties. Forsander will be the second week in November.

Toni Parizo – McDonald – happy to see the vents cleaned. It was a different company than was used when Forsander was done. Jack responded that Go Green did the vent cleaning. They blew out debris all over – she has dust all over her dishes and behind her refrigerator. Jack – did you notify anyone at NHA about this? Toni is getting a letter from her Doctor that she has no safe place to store her food. Jack – Maintenance will be at her apartment tomorrow to clean. Toni – Aren't the vents supposed to be

---

49 Old South Street, Suite 1 • Northampton, MA • 01060

T 413-584-4030 • F 413-582-1350 • TDD 711 • 

sucking in? Cara – yes they are. Toni – outside her apartment the vent is blowing quite a bit. Cara – those are fresh air exchanges. Toni - regarding Maintenance union rep – Mike Harris is the boss? Cara – he is not – he is a Senior Service Tech. Toni – shouldn't one of the lower guys be the union rep? Cara – that is between the union and the employees.

Susan Benedisuk – McDonald – When is the elevator getting fixed? Cara said tomorrow morning, there is a notice posted by the elevator.

Roy Martin – Salvo – The lady that lives next to him Apt # 528, may have mold. Since the vents have been cleaned she now has small flies in her apartment. She should call NHA but she is afraid to complain. He also got flies when his vents were cleaned but he put out moth balls. Jack Redman said he was not aware of the situation. Cara – if a tenant is hesitant about coming to see us, Roy can come to the meeting with them. Jack – during the vent cleaning, a maintenance person went to every apartment with the cleaning crew. There were three units that had some issues and Jack and Lisa personally went to the units and had them cleaned again. Roy also stated that the phone system at NHA is awful!

At this time, an HCVP participant spoke about City Councilor Ryan O'Donnell wanting to add 6 members to the NHA Board of Commissioners. She said NHA has 618 apartments and Section 8 has 1200. She believes Section 8 participants should be included on the Board. Vice Chairman Brooks advised her to talk to the Mayor. It is important to think this through – HUD and DHCD would have input. Ms. Clifford told her to make an appointment with her to discuss her options.

Ward 3 City Councilor Jim Nash asked if he could speak. Vice Chairperson Brooks noted that this was not usually allowed. Ms. Clifford stated that it would be in violation of the open meeting law, it is up to the Board members to allow this because it is not a normal procedure during Board Meeting. The Housing Authority must follow the bylaws. Commissioner Budgar put forth a motion to grant this request, seconded by Commissioner Richards. Mr. Nash spoke about the proposed order to expand the Board 6 more people – there will be hearings by committees for input. It is valid regarding the people of section 8 not being represented. He would like to see more residents be a part of meetings via the Tenants Association. His appeal is to have the Tenants Association Board, Housing and tenants work together to revitalize the Tenants Associations.

Ms. Clifford spoke about the HUD observation where they say NHA is not a City Body, we are a private entity. The Board Meeting minutes indicate that we host significant resident interests and comments at its Board Meetings. It should strive for sufficient time to be spent on PHA operations and finances. Commissioner Budgar stated that the Public should be able to speak. Cara responded that NHA has to follow the bylaws.

Erika Krause – McDonald – said she was confused about the Section 8 wanting to be part of the Board. Cara told her that the Section 8 program receives federal dollars but they don't have representation.

Vice Chairperson Brooks asked for approval of the September Minutes. Commissioner Budgar asked to have them tabled as they just received their packets and did not have time to read through them.

**OLD BUSINESS:**  
A/C Policy Tabled

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**MOTION - ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO THE PUBLIC HOUSING ADMISSIONS & CONTINUED OCCUPANCY POLICY & SECTION 8 ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

Commissioner Budgar – anything in this plan different than what we have now? Any significant items?  
Cara – Board approved the updates previously, now we had the Public Hearing so now we can approve.  
Bulk of the changes were from the 2017 plan – VAWA.

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

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Budgar, Richards, Laufer and Vice Chairperson Brooks.

VOTING NAY: None

Whereupon Vice Chairperson Brooks approved the Motion.

**MOTION - ADOPT THE 2018 ANNUAL PLAN & RELATED POLICIES & CERTIFICATION**

Commissioner Budgar – had we seen this plan before? Cara – yes.

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

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Budgar, Richards, Laufer and Vice Chairperson Brooks.

VOTING NAY: None

Whereupon Vice Chairperson Brooks approved the Motion.

**MOTION – APPROVAL AND INCORPORATION OF THE REQUIRED HUD VAWA LANGUAGE TO THE FEDERAL LEASE AGREEMENT**

Updated Federal lease – removal of language and update.

Commissioner Budgar asked if NHA still has the right to terminate a tenant due to criminal acts, etc.

Jack Redman – the language is from the old HUD rule – we can now update the language. Commissioner Budgar – so we can still retain that right? Yes.

Attorney O'Connor stated that the amended language is more inclusive and broader.

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

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Budgar, Richards, Laufer and Vice Chairperson Brooks.

VOTING NAY: None

Whereupon Vice Chairperson Brooks approved the Motion.

**Discussion:**

**Emergency contract with Waterfield Design Group to conduct a study regarding Hampshire Heights basement flooding issue in conjunction with DHCD (\$5,500.00)**

Cara Clifford signed off on the contract.

Commissioner Budgar – timetable for remediation? Any running water?

Cara – total investigation – building sits on clay, there are cracks in the foundation, water coming out of the basement walls. The study is necessary, DHCD is requiring it and NHA doesn't have the money to pay for it. Commissioner Budgar – how many buildings? Cara – all of them.

Commissioner Laufer – are they going into all the buildings or just units with problems?

Cara – all buildings.

**Discussion:**

**Internal Control Policy as directed by HUD**

Review and table until November/December. Sharon Kimble said it should be done by the November Board Meeting. Maybe ask for extension.

Commissioner Budgar – page 8 procedures – Does it also include a Board Member who is a tenant who votes for things for their Building? Attorney O'Connor responded, "Yes", it is included in the regulations with the Conflict of Interest. If a vote is for their Building, they should recuse themselves.

Commissioner Richards - Declare perceived conflict?

Commissioner Budgar – There have been times in the past when a tenant has voted for things in their building.

HCVP person talked about the air conditioning problem this summer at McDonald – if Section 8 had representation, governance that is inclusive, they would have had a say. It was brought to her attention that NHA does not purchase air conditioners for Section 8 tenants.

Ms. Clifford said she will email the Board on Friday when the policy is due.

### Discussion:

#### Review of August and September Financials

Commissioner Budgar – is this where they complained about too much time spent on tenant comments?

Observation 3 – Page 1 – the paragraph is cut off - wants to see the whole thing.

Commissioner Richards – Review the bylaws – what is policy and what is operation. HUD seems to be focused on policy.

Cara – There is a Board Member Training Video – she will get a full copy of the HUD review.

Commissioner Richards said the most valuable part of the meeting is the tenants speaking.

Cara responded that the Housing Authority is not a city entity and should not be run like a city.

Commissioner Budgar – We are here to serve tenants not shut them down.

Commissioner Richards – HUD says they are not spending enough time with finances.

HCVP person spoke about fiduciary responsibility – she is nervous about Commissioner Budgar's yelling and swearing at the Director- she does not feel safe – don't fight at the meetings and use bad language.

Commissioner Budgar apologized to her but is appalled at what HUD is saying.

Commissioner Richards – is this a funding or a recommendation?

Cara – it is an observation.

Commissioner Budgar – if we put in the bylaws for public comment would it get kicked back?

Cara – put it in there and if it gets kicked back, ask them why.

Commissioner Budgar – are there any areas over budget or under budget? Cara – No. Commissioner

Budgar – Any word regarding the money we have in a CD? Cara – No. Mr. Budgar – any changes to the Budget? Cara – yes, she is meeting with the team and looking at guidelines, will put it together for the Board.

Commissioner Budgar – Capital projects for this year on target? Cara – FY19 – no budget yet. The fee accountant certifies it and then goes to the Board and then Cara approves it.

### UPDATE:

#### By Law Review Committee update:

Commissioner Richards – they requested bylaws from other Authorities (4 or 5). Mass. Ones are pretty identical except for New York. Mission statement is included – clarifies policy vs. administration or practice. They will meet with Ms. Clifford before the November Board meeting and then have Attorney O'Connor review. Commissioner Budgar asked if there was any Board member that wanted them to look at anything.

Commissioner Brooks asked that since he is a McDonald tenant – should he recuse himself for certain things?

Attorney O'Connor said he will get a copy of the Conflict of Interest regulations to Cara, Commissioners Budgar and Richards.

At this time, the Executive Director's Report Was Read

Went over the rents collected, recertification's, waiting lists, etc.

The Annual Resident Advisory meeting was held on August 8, 2018 with residents agreeing with the capital improvements but stressed concerns of possible mold and requested the vents be cleaned in every unit and common areas. NHA had Go Green complete vent cleaning at McDonald House on 9/13/18 . Also Tobin Manor was cleaned as well as Salvo at the end of September.

On 9/27/18 DHCD Budget Guideline was released. The Spanish VAWA was completed. Carpeting will be replaced at Tobin Manor in the entranceway for \$5,200.00. We are also replacing a trailer for Maintenance for \$4500.00.

Commissioner Budgar asked about public safety issues at Salvo. Ms. Clifford cannot discuss at this time.

Commissioner Budgar put forth the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Richards.