



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

FEBRUARY MINUTES Approved March 18, 2019

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met at “McDonald House” at 49 Old South St. Northampton, Ma. on Monday, March 18, 2019.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.

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

PRESENT: Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Laufer, Commissioner Silver, Commissioner Jones and Chairperson Richards.

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Leiper; Maria Walton; Deb Dunphy; Keith Walsh; Sharon Kimble; Jack Redman; Lisa Donoghue; Tom O'Connor; Lynn King; Joseph & Angela Santaniello; John Wyda; Brenda Thompson; Ronald Hebert; Roy Martin; Jason Potts; Heidi Sousse; Pat Sullivan; David Arce; Paul Belanger and Wayne Milo.

Public Comment: NONE

Approval of the January 2019 Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Richards asked if there were any questions on the January Minutes. Being none, asked for a motion to approve.

Commissioner Brooks put forth the motion to approve the Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Jones.

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Brooks, Laufer, Jones and Chairperson Richards.

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Silver

Whereupon Commissioner Richards approved the motion.

WEBSITE UPDATE

The Executive Director said the photographers have taken the Public Housing property pictures. The edits from the photographer are due to be emailed back by March 20th for approval. Need the Board member biographies. The Section 8 pages, landlords, and resident document pages are currently pending. I will be asking the Board members to give me a three to five sentence biography to go under their photo. Also, if you can be here a half hour early at the next Board Meeting the photographer will be here to take your picture so that it can be put on the website. That is the April 8th meeting. The completed items are: The frames are 100% done – this is the body of the website, the public housing pages are done, Resident Service Pages, Career pages, policies pages section which is the Admin Plan and ACOP and Board agenda and meeting pages. The anticipated launch is now May 1, 2019.

Commissioner Richards said it has been a long time coming and I think we are all really excited to have a really nice website.

BYLAWS COMMITTEE UPDATE:

Chairperson Richards gave her report to Jeff Jones this morning and told him that she made changes to the bylaws with the suggestions of Commissioner Budgar and Brooks. She had a couple of legal questions before she gives it to Cara and Tom, because we had taken some stuff from the Hudson New York bylaws that we thought might work very well for us. Ms. Silver has looked at them and Chairperson Richards will incorporate those changes and have them ready for the next Board Meeting.

UPDATE ON THE PARCEL OF LAND/TREES BEHIND MCDONALD HOUSE

The City is asking us to donate some land behind McDonald House so they can convert it into parking spaces. It has become quite an issue at McDonald House. Residents have had a meeting and Ms. Leiper has put into the Board Members folder a copy of a letter the Residents gave her this morning. They are against us giving the land to the city because it will eliminate trees; they feel it is detrimental to the environment; taking away garden space, and the peaceful enjoyment of the apartments.

Commissioner Richards asked if anyone would like to bring Commissioner Silver up to date on this issue. Tom O'Connor – When the city reconfigured the parking lot for the new park, they lost parking spaces so they are trying to recapture those so they have asked NHA to donate a .5 acre parcel. They are putting up solar panels to power some of the equipment for parking spaces they will construct. Cara has a map that she will get to Commissioner Silver.

Chairperson Richards asked where this sits right now. The City is asking us and we have not responded one way or the other. Tom – it has been tabled several times but no vote yet, and it is not on the Agenda. Cara figured we couldn't vote since everyone was so new, but she can put it on next month's agenda.

Chairperson Richards asked her if she felt that we would be in a position to vote in May? Cara replied that everyone is still pretty new and she feels the City is going to take it by eminent domain anyway. Chairperson Richards said that she would like to hear from the residents, so for the May Board meeting she would like more feedback from the McDonald residents. Attorney O'Connor said he will reach out to Wayne Feiden to see if there is any more information on this. Cara asked Jack Redman to issue a memo to the McDonald residents asking for their feedback. If Cara doesn't get enough feedback from the residents, she will not put it on the April Agenda. Chairperson Richards asked to have the information Tom gets from the City before doing the memo to the Residents.

MOTION

Allow absent Commissioners to attend any meeting electronically where a quorum is present.

Cara stated that it has been brought up where we had Commissioners who could not be at a meeting, but they could Facetime, Skype or Phone us. Cara checked our bylaws and it is not in there, spoke with Tom, and also reviewed the open meeting laws. As long as the meeting opens with a quorum, then the Commissioners could call in. Since it is not addressed in the bylaws, if we would like to do something like that so we are not scrambling around trying to get everyone for a meeting. If you would like to put it in the new bylaws I am putting the motion forward for that. Chairperson Richards stated that she thinks it is in the new bylaws, under those restrictions. In the meantime, Cara feels that this should be an option until they are adopted. Commissioner Silver asked a question about a quorum. Attorney O'Connor stated that you need three Board members present to have a quorum, then you can do the electronic meeting.

Chairperson Richards brought forth the question if the person who is on skype, etc. allowed to vote? Attorney O'Connor said yes.

Commissioner Jones put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Silver.

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Brooks, Laufer, Jones, Silver and Chairperson Richards.

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

JANUARY 2019 FINANCIALS

Ms. Clifford went over the financials - we are not over budget at this time we are at 58% of the Budget. On line item 4190 we are at 75.46% of our budget, but at the end of February the percentage evens out. The variance was due to the website startup costs and the Hampshire Heights sewer backup. The Insurance Company has reimbursed us for \$20,711.00 which will be credited back to expenses. We are not over budget, it will even out in February financials.

Chairperson Richards asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Silver had questions, she is not familiar with budgets. Ms. Leiper asked her to go to page #3 and tried to go over the information on the financials. Commissioner Silver asked for an orientation. Cara asked her to give her some times when they could meet. Chairperson Richards stated that any Board member that wants an update or questions on the Budget can attend the session as the Financials are complicated. Commissioner Laufer would like to attend as well.

Commissioner Jones put forth the motion to adjourn the February meeting at 7:05 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Brooks.