



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

MARCH 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 7:06 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

EMPLOYEE ISSUES: NONE

TENANT ISSUES

Heidi Sousse - Salvo – what is the garden policy for each year? Start working on the plot the first day of Spring? Cara responded that Maria is working on it – it will be on the agenda for April. Will there be a meeting with Maria on this? Dirt needs to be turned over and it takes time, needs to sit for 2-3 weeks after being turned over. May 3rd is too late.

Pat Sullivan – Salvo – is the land Northampton Housing’s or the Gazette’s? Attorney O’Connor needs to check the plot plan. Cara thinks it is part ours and part Gazette. Did Maintenance rototill last year? The tenants think not. Roy Martin thinks he came twice. Cara thought Pete rototilled, she will check.

Erika Krause – McDonald – are we getting a TV so we can see people who are coming here? She had it when she lived at Salvo. Roy Martin said tenants at Salvo used to have it and they want to know why they still don’t have the TV for visitors. Also said that Mr. Orenstein is parking in the handicap spot designated for Marilyn Clare – something needs to be done about that. Commented that the Board Member Election today was like the “ME TOO” Movement – 3 women and two men – it seems like this is happening throughout the City. Maybe it should be put in the NHA bylaws that it should be three men and three women on the Board. Commissioner Jones stated that it was a fair vote of the Five Board members. Chairperson Richards said the bylaws and the government calls for 5 members on the Board, and that we cannot change.

Commissioner Laufer asked Mr. Martin – why didn’t you say that when it was three men and two women?

Roy – didn’t they bring it up at the City Council that they wanted two more people on the NHA Board? Chairperson Richards – Yes, as the Home Rule Petition, and so far that has gone nowhere.

Roy – Why shouldn’t we have residents from Salvo and McDonald – have three residents on the Board to represent tenants.

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Chairperson Richards – I am going to stop you right now Roy, because that is a proposal that is in a Home Rule Petition that has to be dealt with. We have no control now, and right now it says five members on the Housing Board, and we are the five members. . There is always going to be an imbalance, whatever it is.

Roy spoke about the garden plots – there are 192 apartments at Salvo- people want a garden plot. A lot of people last year couldn't get a garden plot. Debra Horton has the biggest plot. Originally the plots were smaller so more people could be involved. He takes care of the flowers out front.

Jack Redman sent out a letter to the tenants about the garden plots.

Chairperson Richards stated to Roy - point well taken, I think what you are asking is to have the plots appropriated fair and equitable. Roy said maybe have a lottery, and yes, last year the plots were rototilled but some tenants didn't want theirs rototilled.

Angela Santaniello – Salvo – Northampton Neighbors had their meeting last month, will also have one this month. Chairperson Richards thanked her for their activity in this program.

Commissioner Laufer asked if the Northampton Neighbors is a separate organization from the Northampton Housing Authority. Angela stated that the program gives help to people free of charge who are 55 and over and anyone can be a member. Chairperson Richards said you can sign up free on the internet. They have different activities throughout the year. Commissioner Laufer asked if the members have to live in one of the buildings? The answer is No, anyone can be a member. Commissioner Laufer was not sure a lot of the residents knew about it, so she wanted to make it clear.

Joseph Santaniello – Salvo – they are encountering a small snag due to Detective Robinson's work schedule. He is informing the Board members that it is not up and running yet. If the tenants see something, call the Police, don't take action yourselves.

MOTION TO APPROVE WORK ORDER FOR TOBIN MANOR ROOF REPLACEMENT FISH # 214108

As required by DHCD we must complete the work order scope of services signature page. This is in regards to Fish #214108 which is the Tobin Manor Roof Replacement. DHCD is already in process of this project and we are just about ready to go out to bid for it which they handle, but they require me to sign this document and I am asking the Board to approve the signature of document and submit the form.

Commissioner Jones made the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Brooks.

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

VOTING NAY: None

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

MOTION – APPROVE THE AGREEMENT FOR TREE PLANTNG AT CAHILL WITHIN 20 FT. OF PUBLIC WAY WITH THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON

NHA has been working diligently with the City to plant trees at no cost to the Authority to provide shade on and around the property at Cahill. There is a form that they would like us to sign giving them permission to do this. In an effort to demonstrate our commitment in support of the City of Northampton I am asking the Commissioners to grant the City Tree Warden and DPW to plant trees as shown on the attached map. Land under the provisions of mass general law chapter 87 section 7 and the noted trees shall be protected public shade trees under section 1 of chapter 87. The agreement allows the Tree Warden or his/her designee to enter our land to inspect, cut, trim and remove noted trees. The trees shall be within the jurisdiction of the tree warden and should not be cut, trimmed or removed by anyone other than the tree warden or his deputy except upon a permit in writing from the Tree Warden.

Cara feels this is really good idea, we have had to take down a lot of trees. She is asking permission to sign the document and take the necessary action to go into agreement with the City.

Commissioner Jones asked when did this process start? Cara responded several months ago. Commissioner Jones said that if this is a payoff for the receipt of land at McDonald House, he is not interested.

Cara said this started well before the land at McDonald House was brought forth.

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Went over the February report. Went over rents collected, delinquencies and re-certifications and work orders. Cara said she got married and her name changed from Clifford to Leiper. 100 % of the units at Forsander had K9 inspections for bed bugs; several units are being heat treated. The housing staff has been working with the Extermination Company, our Attorney and the Resident Services Coordinator to ensure that the issues are dealt with accordingly.

The Public Housing Team is working on obtaining additional bids for the Intercom System at Forsander. The Board voted in November 2018 to authorize the executive director to spend \$12,000 to install the intercom system. Maria Walton met with the residents in December 2018, then Cara and Jack met with the residents in January 2019. A test system was agreed upon and scheduled for installation in January. Upon arrival of the system, additional wiring was necessary and too complex for staff to install in-house. A two wire system was purchased similar to the system at Cahill and staff was also unable to install in-house. A bid for \$43,000 and a bid for \$68,000.00 was received. We are waiting for two more bids to come in and it will be put on the April meeting agenda for approval. We did confirm that Knox boxes are in place for use by the Fire Dept., Police and EMS and additional keys have been provided to residents at their request.

A memo will be going out to the residents to keep them updated.

The public housing team has adjusted the annual recertification process to include presentation briefing at Salvo house to insure timely completion of all 192 certifications due by May 1st. An additional 30 plus certifications have been completed at this time compared to last year. Feedback received has been positive. Public Housing team plans to send out a survey in April for feedback on the process comparative to last year's recertification to see if we can further improve the process. There are additional forms that are required that weren't previously used and there is a lot of confusion as to what is new and why it is new.

We finalized all staff participating in the Fair Housing Training through MCAD in February.

Commissioner Laufer – as of right now the tenants at Forsander don't have an intercom system?

Cara – correct.

Commissioner Laufer – But you have been diligent with providing residents with extra keys and keeping them aware of what is going on.

Cara – yes, we have had meetings and have been providing extra keys. Also providing a lock box for keys for PCA's etc. to be able to get into the building. Residents are upset but we are doing the best we can to get a solution and it is costly.

Commissioner Laufer – we need to hire a contractor because we can't do it in house?

Cara - Doing it in house- the electricity needs to run from the basement to their units and it is too far. We had an electrician check it out. We tried a different type and that did not work either. The next meeting she will have bids for three companies who have their own equipment, etc.

Chairperson Richards – How long will it take once we select a vendor to install?

Jack – 7 days when signed, 2 days per building to install. Electricity needs to be run to each apartment from the basement. It should be up and running two weeks from approval for the first building. Cara –

we may also have to now get approval from the State, because it is not just a \$10,000 to-\$20,000. Item. We are talking \$50,000 plus and that will delay it.

Jack – trying to keep it under \$50,000.00 so we don't have to go through sealed bids. We have received bids of \$43,000 and \$68,000 and it started out at \$12,000.00 so there is a huge difference.

Chairperson Richards asked what happens if we take the \$43,000.00 bid and it costs more?

Jack – A change order would happen.

Cara – have been meeting with residents and keeping them aware all along.

March Director's Report –

Went over rents collected, work orders, move-ins and move-outs. On March 5, 2019 a fire occurred at Cahill and the resident was put up in a hotel and then re-housed to McDonald. The resident was already on the transfer list. Resident Services and Public Housing team ensured that the resident was accommodated in her relocation and services were put into place.

As of March 11, 2019, 53 of the 192 re-certifications have been completed for Salvo House. Staff anticipated another 75 to be completed before the end of the month. This puts us in very good shape in meeting the April 15, 2019 notification to residents. The AC policy that we have been working on - we have obtained three other local housing authority's policies on air conditioning and the Management team is in the process of renewing then meeting with Maintenance and residents to present to the April Board Meeting.

We applied for \$95,000 CDBG funding for installation of (3) ADA handicap ramps and automatic door openers at Cahill (2) roll in showers and funding for elevator cameras for Salvo house in conjunction with the already approved funding for cameras in the 2019 capital improvement plan.

There was a flood at McDonald caused by a resident. The Public Housing team has been working with the resident, her family, and Highland Valley Elder Service to insure that the resident has the necessary services in place.

The Tobin Roof Bid meeting was on March 6th, the bids are due in March 21st and the Board will be presented with the lowest bid at the April meeting.

A reminder to the Board for a five sentence biography before the next meeting. She will send a reminder to come a half hour early to have pictures taken before the meeting by a professional photographer.

Chairperson Richards asked how many characters are needed for biography? Jack printed samples of other housing authority bio's that were passed out. Five sentences needed.

Commissioner Laufer said that she is getting rave reviews on Ms. King. Is there any chance of getting another RSC for Florence Heights and Hampshire Heights.

Cara responded that the majority of Lynn Kings salary is through a state grant for elderly disabled. I put before the Board a while ago to have a second RSC position put into place to cover the two family properties and McDonald house elderly which is a Federal Project. That was approved. We just haven't been able to do that as we have had other things going on that needed taking care of.

Chairperson Richards – what is the projected time table?

Jack Redman – we found someone but they found another job at a higher salary. Human Resource is posting the job, as well as other positions. The RSC needs a level of education and experience. They are also hooked up with TOVAH and they train Lynn and work with her every day to get done what needs to happen in conjunction with us. The pay is good, but people want more.

Commissioner Laufer – is it a full time position? Yes

Cara – we did have a resident who recently moved out who fit the position but she thought it would be a conflict of interest. Also the State and Federal says we should hire residents.

Chairperson Richards – what are the educational qualifications?

Human Resource will send the posting to Cara who will email Board Members. We should also send it to Peg Keller at the City.

Commissioner Silver asked if there is an orientation for Commissioners? She would also like to meet the staff – are there training packets?

Chairperson Richards asked her to share her ideas and she can take them to Cara and see if they can put something together in a formal way so that if in the future there are other people who need it, we won't have to re-create the wheel.

Cara – there hasn't been a process in the past. She sits down with the Board Member but she did not get to Elizabeth Silver. She does have some handbooks for her that are very helpful - Commissioners handbook. She will order the third edition for all the Board members when it comes out.

Chairperson Richards said she took the training on line, it was long but extremely worthwhile.

Cara will send Commissioner Silver the link. Also Jon Hite gave Cara the Roberts Rules for dummies book which she found helpful.

Commissioner Jones put forth the motion to adjourn the March meeting at 7:55 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Brooks.