



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

June 10, 2019
APPROVED JUNE MINUTES

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met at “McDonald House” at 49 Old South St. Northampton, Ma. on Monday, June 10, 2019.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

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

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

ALSO PRESENT: Maria Walton; Deb Dunphy; Sharon Kimble; Lisa Donoghue; Tom O'Connor; Lynn King; Angel Sadlowski; Roy Martin;; Peter Cushing ; Toni Parizo; Tim Kowalski; Lise McGuinness; Alisa Klein; Emily Rosenfeld; Steve Nash; Lindsay Slabich; Mary Witt; Tom Barrup; Chris Aiken; Jada Tarbutton; Brenda Thompson and Walter Mozgala.

Approval of the May 2019 Minutes

Commissioner Silver asked why there were so many pages (58) to the minutes? Chairperson Richards said there were different summaries available and they thought they would put forth the long version and see what the Board thought. Maria Walton said it was a different way of doing the minutes this time, they were done by the recording.

Commissioner Brooks put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Laufer. Commissioner Silver Abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chris Aiken from 25 Corticelli Street passed out a letter regarding 18 Corticelli St. which is owned by NHA and the condition of the property and the affect it is having on the neighborhood. There were many residents who came to the Board meeting thinking it was part of the agenda this evening. Ward 7 City Councilor Alisa Klein also spoke about the dangerous condition of the property and the neighbors have been dealing with this issue for 20 years and desperately wants to see some action from the Northampton Housing Authority.

Chairperson Richards thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and said that she feels their pain. The Board has discussed options, Jack Redman gave an update. They are applying for a grant funding to maintain the house. NHA is committed to making changes. To demolish the property you need permits and there are laws to go by. There is an issue with lead paint and asbestos and the cost of removal is between \$40,000 and \$80,000.00. NHA is going to try for CPA funds to help.

Chris Aiken asked if when the process to design a new house comes into play would the neighbors be able to make comments. Jack Redman said right now we are in the early stages of fact finding but will

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commit to meeting with the neighbors. Chris Aiken asked if Jack would be the one they would reach out to for questions – yes.

Chairperson Richards said things work best when neighbors work with City Boards. If there is a variance or zoning change there will be public hearings that they can attend.

Commissioner Silver spoke that she is relatively new to the Board at NHA and said there had been an agreement with Habitat for Humanity taking over the property, but that fell through.

Commissioner Jones thanked everyone for coming and to keep pushing NHA on this subject, this is an embarrassment. He said he sits on the CPA Board and encouraged the residents to go to their meetings.

Commissioner Jones apologized that NHA hasn't done anything on this property.

EMPLOYEE ISSUES: NONE

TENANT ISSUES

Roy Martin – Salvo – They need their corkboard back and everyone would be happy. Regarding Corticelli St. – bats eat bugs – thinks the house could be refurbished.

Jada Tarbutton – Salvo – Residents asking about the bulletin board. She had some furniture that she wanted to sell and it would be nice to have a bulletin board for that type of thing to post. She said the VP of the Tenants Association wanted to be in charge of the board, and there were a group of people that were controlling what was posted. She also is tired of the racial stuff going on at Salvo. There is a person who lived at Salvo that was racist against Spanish people. Someone asked her to help them file a complaint, which she did.

Sacred Elder – McDonald – There are communication issues here. The dialog between the neighbors of Corticelli St. and the Board is better than what the tenants get of NHA. He has received no response from last month's meeting regarding the 8 issues he brought up. Also, the heat should be on from September 15th to June 15th and it was turned off again, there is a tenant who is cold and needs the heat on. This has happened several times in the past. When bringing up tenant issues with the Executive Director it gets personal real fast. Regarding a tenant that was involved in drugs she said "I'm going to get those "f.....rs if it takes months, etc. "On Thursday June 6th she talked to him outside and then called the Police on him. No charges were brought, but the Police did a report. The ED also told him that she was going to get rid of employees – Kim Gonzalez, Michelle Taylor, Sharon Whitmore, Michelle Moriarty – who are all now gone, as well as Tom O'Connor. He asked her is she going to fire them and the ED replied no, I will make it so they leave. Privacy violations – before she came here, she had the media look up a tenant. There are retaliatory issues and more transparency is needed. Please respond – we have burning issues here.

Toni Parizo – McDonald – for months she has been asking for help regarding the mold issues in her apartment. The machine in her apartment is no longer working. Keeps asking for filters for her air purifier. She is getting an autoimmune disease and she needs help.

Commissioner Silver – Jack – what has been done for her? Jack responded that he could share the documents he has with the Board. The most recent report on her apartment came back clean. Toni was present when the test was done as well as Jack and Lisa Donoghue. Toni has been offered alternative options. Should the grievance committee follow up on this?

Peter Cushing – Forsander – Thank you for working on the bedbug infestation. Communication is poor with the Housing Authority. The new satellite office took up his exercise room – the tenants association should have been informed beforehand. Voices are not being heard – property managers need to talk to tenants.

Dan Mihalak – McDonald – Cleanliness at McDonald is coming along, however, there is one tenant that leaves feces and urine around when they sit and he has been sick because of it. He has a Doctor's note and he went to the Board of Health to report the situation. Tenant should not be living here.

Jada Tarbutton – Salvo – she agreed with Sacred Elder on how the guests from Corticelli St. were treated. She listed to a tenant at Salvo and tried to help him, and the Board and managers should listen to tenants also.

Roy Martin – Salvo – There is a tenant at #528 in Salvo that has mold in her apartment, she has gone to the hospital and admitted for three days because of it. She has called NHA several times and nothing has been done.

OLD BUSINESS

Air Conditioner Policy – and By Laws Committee will be disbanded now.

Commissioner Silver did not understand that this would be dis banned, believes the Air Conditioner Policy should not be.

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

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Jones, Brooks and Chairperson Richards.

VOTING NAY: NONE

OPPOSED: Commissioner Silver

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Laufer

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION #1178 – Adopt the new HUD Utility Allowances.

Commissioner Silver asked if the language was identical to past languages. Sharon Kimble said they use a template from HUD.

Commissioner Laufer asked how the residents are being informed of the changes.

Jack Redman – it goes with their recertification packages at their next annual recert. Section 8 residents get a copy and 30 days notice of rent change.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the resolution.

RESOLUTION #1179 – Adopt the new HUD Income Limits used for all Federal Programs

Commissioner Laufer asked if this will be in the next recertification package. Jack Redman said this is for Federal only, does not affect current residents.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the resolution.

RESOLUTION #1180 – Adopt the HUD FY20 Budget Place Setter

Commissioner Silver asked when the FY20 Budget starts. Sharon Kimble said that DHCD does guidelines. The Federal Budget is due July 1st. The Budget usually gets approved by October, until then we stay with the FY19 budget, and stay conservative. NHA usually gets a 5% increase, but we are staying conservative.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the resolution.

RESOLUTION #1181 – Adopt new By Laws.

This committee consisted of members Budgar, Richards and Brooks. Commissioner Silver took over for Commissioner Budgar. Commissioner Silver had a few corrections – Section 3 on page 3– attend should be attends, provide should be provides, etc. Page 5- meet “monthly” not month. Page 4 – section 6 – Authority should be the Board. It should be clearer and more precise.

Commissioner Brooks asked who is the other Board member on the Finance Committee other than the Treasurer. It is Chairperson Richards. Check this out with DHCD and HUD.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the resolution.

MOTION – Bulletin Board Quantity, Placement and Sizes

The draft was drawn up by Commissioners Laufer and Silver. If there is misuse of the bulletin board, the grievance committee will handle it. There will be two encased bulletin boards and one corkboard for anyone to post items. The postings will be an 8 ½ x 11 page and the type will be 14 point.

Roy Martin asked if the Bulletin Board will be where the mailboxes are or somewhere else.

Commissioner Silver replied that it will be in the Salvo Community Room or Lobby – the Executive Director to approve.

Jada Tarbutton does not want to put her name and apartment number on the postings. Commissioner Silver said, “that gives ownership to what is being posted.” Commissioner Laufer said, “that if you want something posted anonymously, give to Lynn King, the RSC.”

It was decided that there would be a mailing to all residents of the policy draft so the Board can get feedback. Will vote on this at the next Board Meeting,

Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to table, seconded by Commissioner Laufer.

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved to table the Bulletin Board Motion.

MOTION – Authorize the upgrade to server storage for going green.

Commissioner Silver asked for a summary of the options and what it is for.

Jack replied that there are not many options; new server was bought in 2015 and they normally have a five year life span, the server takes up an entire room. We will need to purchase a new server next year. With File Vision now, it needs increased storage. Commissioner Silver asked if DHCD is required to sign off. Jack – No it is under the guideline limit..

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

DISCUSSION – Salvo House Security Cameras.

This project is an estimated \$11,000.00 over budget just for the specs. NHA does not want to move forward, until a more reasonable architect is found. Nangle was approved by DHCD, and we will ask for approval next month. It was noted that when the projects affect residents, it should be brought up more at Board Meetings. Roy Martin asked who is looking at the cameras we now have. There are 8 cameras at Salvo and they have been there for many months.

DISCUSSION – Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) Score

This is for Federal only, not HUD- pertains to McDonald and Florence Heights and we are scored every other year. We scored an 89 which is good – HUD looks for any score above 80. Last year we were at 98.8 % occupancy, this year we are at 97.8% occupancy which gave us a 4 point loss on the score. We had a REAC inspection 4 years ago, and the score won't change until we have another inspection.

Commissioner Silver asked about the origin of the 7 point gap.

Jack – REAC score of 88, under 90 is 33 points. Jack will get Commissioner Silver a copy of the inspection. It entailed buddy alarm cords, blocked egresses, etc. Overall NHA did well.

Chairperson Richards said that the report may be helpful; Jack will get it to the Board Members.

MOTION – Air Conditioning Policy discussion and clarification.

Would like to delay this until next Board Meeting. Tenants will not be charged for electricity until the Board agrees on pricing. Commissioner Silver would like to see a copy of the lease we give to tenants. Attorney O'Connor will provide copy. Chairperson Richards asked for a copy of the entire lease to the Board.

Commissioner Brooks put forth the motion to table the Policy, seconded by Commissioner Silver with the notation that there will be no charging done to residents until the final policy is done.

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved tabling the Air Conditioner Policy.

The Executive Director's Report was read.

Went over rents collected, bad debt write off, recertification's, move-in's and move outs and work orders completed. Bed Bug Update at Forsander – The public housing team is pleased to announce that our extermination contractor conducted an inspection of the Forsander Community Room and the last apartment on Monday, June 3, 2019 and they confirmed we are bed bug free. NHA is starting to paint and order new furniture in preparation of the re-opening of the Forsander Community Room on Thursday, June 13, 2019. NHA will also be hosting a barbeque on Thursday, June 20, 2019 to kick off a safe summer! Lastly at Forsander, we have started to test intercoms in “P” Building. We are asking our residents if they currently have internet and would like to volunteer to be a tester, to let us know in writing no later than Tuesday, June 11, 2019.

Thank you to Goose Berry Farms in West Springfield for donating flowers to the Walter Salvo House. Also, to the Northampton Public School students for volunteering their time at the Joan Tobin Manor by washing windows on 5/23/19.

On Saturday, May 18, 2019 the Healthy Hampshire, United Way, Cara Leiper, the Maintenance Staff all came together at Hampshire Heights to successfully assist the residents in setting up their gardening beds.

To better serve our residents we are currently working on opening an office at each site and the anticipated date is June 17, 2019.

NHA has one new hire – Maintenance Service Tech – Alan Baillargeon. Commissioner Jones asked about the comments from tenants from last month's Board Meeting – how was it handled? Are the tenants aware?

Jack Redman replied that letters were sent to tenants and Lisa made phone calls. Chairperson Richards asked if each individual was responded to you and Jack said yes.

Commissioner Silver asked to hear the summary of reasonable accommodations for Air Conditioners.

Chairperson Richards asked how long it took to turn over a unit?

Jack said from 3 – 21 days.

Commissioner Silver spoke about solicitation for welfare recipients for Snap, Mass Health. When letters go around it would be good for the Housing Authority to sign these letters to help out tenants.

Chairperson Richards thanked the staff for pitching in tonight and for the Board getting their pictures taken.

Jack Redman will be sending out a letter regarding the new offices opening and the website being up hopefully in August – testing needs to be done and the website will be mobile friendly for those who don't have a computer, they can use their phones.

Commissioner Brooks put forth the motion to adjourn the June meeting at 8:30 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Silver.