



# NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

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## Amended & Approved –NOVEMBER MINUTES

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met at “McDonald House” at 49 Old South St. Northampton, Ma. on Monday, November 4, 2019.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:30 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:** Maria Walton, Deb Dunphy Smith; Sharon Kimble; Keith Walsh; Gary DePace; Tom O'Connor; Angela and Joseph Santanello; Brenda Thompson and Erika Krause.

**Second presentation of 2020 Budgets & Transfer of funds to Section 8 to offset admin. Fees by Gary DePace.**

Commissioner Jones stated that when looking into the Salary schedule for the Maintenance Union, there is a job that went from \$21,042.00 to \$19,052.00. Gary explained that an employee left and a new person came in at a lower rate.

Commissioner Silver stated that she is concerned with the schedule of salaries – individual and salaries and position and salaries. She also looked at the Maintenance contract, and knows there is a union steward. On the Administration there is a lot of subjectivity without understanding. Cara responded that if there is a line item that needs clarification she can help. Commissioner Silver would like more background on positions and the variation in percentages of increase. 3% is overall, but some get lower and some get higher. Cara replied that it is spread out across the board. Commissioner Silver said that she accepts that but did not agree.

Commissioner Jones put forth the motion to approve Resolution #'s 1182, 1183 & 1184 proposed operating Budgets of the Northampton Housing Authority for fiscal year Fy20 to be approved as presented by Gary DePace which includes the schedule of all positions and salaries page and DHCD Executive Director Salary & Qualifications Schedule pages in the amount of \$149,385.00, also move to transfer of funds to section 8 in the amount of \$100,000.00, seconded by Commissioner Brooks.

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

**VOTING NAY:** Commissioner Silver

**OPPOSED:** Commissioner Silver

**Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motions.**

Chairperson Richards thanked Mr. DePace and the Commissioners for their work.

Mr. DePace explained to the Board that their role is similar to that of a School Committee. The school committee looks at the Superintendent's contract and no one else. The Executive Director looks at who is doing what, and that is her role – to oversee the staff.

Commissioner Silver said the Board's job is varied. She is concerned about morale and those who are making less money than someone else.

## EMPLOYEE ISSUES – NONE

## PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE

## TENANT ISSUES

Angela Santaniello said the Neighborhood Watch is going well and Maria is good to have at Salvo and they are working with the Police Department. Joseph Santaniello thanked Maria stating that she makes time for them.

Commissioner Laufer asked if Maria goes to Salvo. It was stated that the office is there and she takes an active role at Salvo.

## APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 2019 MINUTES

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Minutes.

## THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Went over rents collected and work orders, move in's and move out's.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### DISCUSSION – HAMPSHIRE HEIGHTS PLAYGROUND UPDATE

Jack Redman stated that he and Netanya Orti8z attended the CPA meeting last month and there is another meeting On November 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers. They are encouraging residents to go to the meeting. Jackson St. School is near Hampshire Heights and they do have an after school program that ends at 5:00 p.m. The playground can't be used during the day when school is in session. The parents at Hampshire Heights are for the playground. If there is a playground on site, their children don't need to cross the busy street, they can stay right on the property and other parents could watch each other's children.

Commissioner Jones suggested to Jack to have Tod Weir from the First Churches to attend the meeting, he has strong arguments for Hampshire Heights. Since 1951 nothing has been done to the property.

Commissioner Jones will recuse himself but he can speak in favor of the playground.

Chairperson Richards said that Jackson St. is a high traffic area, where crossing guards are not always there. Commissioner Laufer stated that she would be at the meeting. She stated that as a single mother going to school she doesn't always have time to do things with her son. She feels if a playground was installed it would be used a lot. The residents will also have children attend the meeting as well.

CDBG is giving \$150,000.00 to the project.

Chairperson Richards said it is a good opportunity for parents to relate and share in the kids.

### DISCUSSION – WEBSITE PRESENTATION AND UPDATE

Chairperson Richards said the website is beautiful!

Cara stated that the website took a lot of work and there are still areas to check. Jack did a great job on this.

Commissioner Laufer asked if residents were able to pay their rent on the website. It now says you can pay rent at McDonald. Jack stated they are working on drop boxes for all the properties and the staff is accepting checks now.

The Board members chimed in and said the website looks great! Commissioner Silver said that she would like to see articles about doing public benefits for people. Maybe we could have a column for public benefits and links to apply for assistance. Jack said the RSC tries to incorporate this into the newsletters. There is also new Medicare coming in 2020 and will try to get information on the website.

#### DISCUSSION- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION UPDATE

Chairperson Richards stated they used last year's policy and procedures for this year's evaluation. Two forms were presented tonight for discussion – one is the NAHRO form and the second is a form the Governance Committee worked on. Chairperson Richards asked if there were any comments. The new evaluation had a lot of questions about staff and the ED's interaction with the staff. Commissioner Laufer stated that Board should figure out a way of getting the staff input or not have the questions on the form. Commissioner Laufer stated that the NAHRO evaluation gets to the point but not an opportunity to make it personal to the Director. She liked the second form which adds the tenant and public relationships which are crucial to the evaluation.

Commissioner Silver stated the form the committee worked on has more detail than the NAHRO form. They went through the job description and checked duties – which is reflected on the new form. Can use the NAHRO form but it doesn't cover all parts of the job and its specifics.

Commissioner Brooks said the new form is probably best but that Evaluations can be too subjective. The truth behind the evaluation gets lost and can be over complicated. NAHRO is too general, the 2<sup>nd</sup> is too complicated in spots but it is workable.

Commissioner Jones – NAHRO evaluation is disappointing – simplistic. Likes the governance committee form. Like Commissioner Brooks stated, it can go into too much detail and would like online comments.

Commissioner Laufer – online would be good.

Chairperson Richards – comments are helpful and thanked Commissioner Silver for her hard work. The Board to review and comment to the Governance Committee before the January meeting with any changes. The Governance Committee worked on a 360 evaluation and included staff and public comments. After she saw the NAHRO form she switched her opinion to using the NAHRO form for the future evaluations.

Commissioner Silver – the Board has limited involvement with staff, tenants and municipality. Would like feedback – what is the relationship between the Director and these three entities. It is important for the Board to know this and they can't fairly evaluation without these pieces.

Chairperson Richards said this is just a discussion. The Board is to think about it and discuss again in January. It will be on the agenda and will be interested with the tenant's responses.

Commissioner Laufer said she is happy to see tenants attend the monthly Board Meetings, some meetings there are no residents attending. Please keep coming and invite your neighbors.

**Commissioner Brooks put forth the motion to adjourn the November meeting at 7:26 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Laufer.**