



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Approved –DECEMBER MINUTES

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met at “McDonald House” at 49 Old South St. Northampton, Ma. on Monday, December 9, 2019.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

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

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Jones

ALSO PRESENT: Deb Dunphy Smith; Sharon Kimble; Keith Walsh; Tom O’Connor; Jack Redman; Ron Hebert; Roy Martin; Mary Chapman; Kia Aoki; Jennifer Kirkpatrick and J. Meehan.

EMPLOYEE ISSUES – NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE

TENANT ISSUES

Mary Chapman – McDonald resident since July. Concerned about the letter just sent out about moving vehicles during a snow storm, as well as Building cleanliness and the grounds at McDonald. Sacred Elder and Dan Mihalek are gardeners; they want to work with the maintenance department to do landscaping. Also the buddy alarm system in her apartment is disabled.

Chairperson Richards suggested she speak with the Executive Director.

Cara – Should meet with Maitty- McDonald Property Manager.

Mary – do a letter to Maitty.

Cara – can make an appointment to see Maitty.

Chairperson Richards thanked Ms. Chapman for raising the issues.

Jennifer Kirkpatrick – Hampshire Heights – parking issues – people shoveling and then other people parking in their spaces. Some people say they are handicapped but don’t have a placard. It is hard to access the office at Hamp Heights, no one is there, they don’t hear the doorbell ring. Her unit is next to the office and people are asking her questions. Moved here in May. She received a letter today about the office hours, families can’t go between 9-12 or 1-3. There is a community dinner on Wednesday nights, maybe there could be hours in the evening. Also, can there be a mail slot for rent? Still bringing her rent to McDonald House. Regarding Maintenance – stairways inside the units – a tenant fell, the covering on the stairs is slippery. Gutters – there are ice dams forming – where the gutters not cleaned out? The gutter above her unit is leaking. There is a giant wasp nest in front of the Community Gardens in the eave of a unit.

Sacred Elder – McDonald – still a communication issue – repeated certain issues through the chain of command. In many cases, no response. On the weekend when maintenance was here working to prep for the REAC – they were painting the laundry room between midnight and 9:00 a.m. Food events were not held because maintenance was here all weekend. Mail from NHA does not get to him – send his mail to P.O. box. – did not know about the inspections. Don't send registered mail – he can't get to his P.O. box and it is hard to get to the Post Office to sign. Did not get notification of May, June and July issues. Staff new and old park in reserved tenant spaces. Buddy alarms – voted on it twice. Buddy alarms to remain – many people have been saved. He would like a half hour to talk to the Board.

Kia Aoli – Hampshire heights – have lived here for 17 years, her basement floods and she has complained many times. She is asthmatic and when it gets moldy she can't do her laundry. Are tenants able to pay rent electronically yet? The bricks under the front door have loosened and broken off.

John Meehan – Salvo - Agree with option for payment of rent.

Roy Martin – Salvo – regarding the letter of parking and snow removal. There used to be a sign posted when they would be plowing. People are living at Salvo that are coming in and are troublemakers – can't get rid of them. There is a half dozen unregistered and uninsured cars at Salvo. Stickers on the cars but they are not getting towed. Maria Walton did a great job and she had a good rapport with the tenants. Buddy Alarms – when a tenant moves out the alarms are taken out. A lot of people fought to keep them.

Chairperson Richards – we always put tenant issues on the agenda. Many issues can be dealt with by the Executive Director.

Mary Chapman - that is not happening.

Cara Leiper – have you made an appointment to see me? Mary replied No. Cara – anyone who has attempted to see staff and has not – just make an appointment to meet with me. Jennifer – have you dealt with the property manager? Offices will soon be open five days a week. RSC is there one Saturday a month.

Elizabeth Silver- is there an electronic payment option?

Cara – yes – they have to get certain parts done before fruition. Jack Redman – there are fees – our bank won't connect to our system – they charge .52 cents a check.

Elizabeth Silver – if there isn't an objection - can it be done sooner rather than later?

Cara – would have to go before the Board.

Sharon – staff will have to be trained – ACH to us – involves the bank and software it won't happen in 2020 .

Cara – some people don't have bank accounts.

Chairperson Richards – update next meeting.

Chairperson Laufer – Encourages tenants to keep coming to the meetings even if some issues fall under the Executive Director. Our resident participation has fallen.

Chairperson Silver – There is a tenant grievance procedure.

Chairperson Richards – our job is to make sure things are happening.

Sacred Elder – does the grievance go to you? No.

Commissioner Brooks stated the process begins with the Executive Director, then there are a number of steps to go through. Sometimes it doesn't get to grievance.

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 2019 MINUTES

Commissioner Silver – the last two sentences – Commissioner Silver accepts that – discontent rather than acceptance. Chairperson Richards – agreed with the 360 NAHRO is what she changed her mind on, but is thinking of the 360 evaluation.

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

VOTING AYE: Commissioners Laufer, Silver, 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.

Thursday December 12th is the REAC Inspection for Florence Heights and McDonald House. In preparation for the inspection, US Housing Consultants conducted a pre-inspection with staff on 12/5 and will return for a final walk-through on 12/11/19.

December 17, 18 and 19 DHCD will be out with a consultant to complete inspections of our accessible units. The consultant will be completing a full analysis on how much it will cost to convert non-accessible units to accessible.

We are expanding our office hours at most of the properties, more information in January.

One of our RSC's decided to return to her previous employer and utilize her Master's degree to become a licensed social worker.

Our Assistant Executive Director accepted a position closer to home.

At this time, we will not be filling the Assistant Director position but have hired two Property Managers and a Resident Services Coordinator that will be starting between December 16, 2019 and January 13, 2020. We are excited to welcome these three individuals that bring years of housing, resident services, and local experience to our existing teams.

Commissioner Silver – Property Managers available in the evenings? Cara – staff can schedule a later appointment. Commissioner Silver – how would they go about getting an appointment? Cara – email, voice mail or drop off a letter. Drop boxes have been ordered – we ordered some but they were the wrong kind.

Chairperson Richards – Request from Commissioner Jones – appointed to Labor Board of the Western Mass Labor Federation. His meetings will now be on the 2nd Monday of the month. He would like the NHA board meeting to be on the third Monday of the month.

Cara – The Board needs to modify the bylaws.

Commissioner Silver – Not on the agenda. She was under the impression that Commissioner Jones does not intend to renew his appointment.

Cara – he would like to be re-appointed.

Chairperson Richards – contacted the Mayor. He suggested Board Members to have Mr. Jones' input especially as a Labor person.

Cara – 2020 dates? Commissioner Laufer – send email to commissioners.

Commissioner Silver – do we need to change the bylaws?

Chairperson Richards – yes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION – HAMPSHIRE HEIGHTS PLAYGROUND UPDATE

Jack Redman stated that the playground has been approved. The City Council will approve it in February after two readings.

Chairperson Richards – terrific on moving towards approval! It will be a wonderful addition.

DISCUSSION – CDBG FUNDING

Received \$95,000.00 in CDBG funding. In June 2020 installing roll in stall showers, etc.

Commissioner Brooks – where will the roll in showers be? Cara – all at Cahill.

DISCUSSION- MODIFICATION OF FORMS

Chairperson Richards stated that she looked at two forms – 1. Commissioner Silver's as a result of the grievance committee and 2. The NAHRO forms. Board liked Commissioner Silver's form with some changes. Commissioner Silver – she did not get any responses or suggestions. This followed the job description of the Executive Director – did not see places that could be cut.

Chairperson Richards – based on facts, you had no comments. This should be put on the next meeting.

Commissioner Brooks – I never saw the revised forms.

Chairperson Richards – Executive Director evaluation forms by the Board at the next meeting.

Discussion of the 360 NAHRO evaluation and asking staff, residents, and other community personnel. Do we do the 360 or not?

Commissioner Laufer – Table the discussion until the other 3 evaluation forms are looked over.

Chairperson Richards – would like to move forward in January for a vote. The other three forms are up for discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

NEW BUSINES

MOTION – ACCEPT AMENDMENT #9 TO CONTRACT FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (CFA) FOR FISH # 214105 FOR SALVO CAMERAS.

DHCD Capital Improvement Fund - \$5396996.00 has been increased to \$5411996.07.

Asbestos was found in Salvo - \$15,000.00 for remediation.

Chairperson Richards – can you explain?

Cara- Salvo has asbestos. Cameras cannot be installed until removed. DHCD to pay.

Commissioner Brooks – I thought the asbestos was removed? Not in the elevator and the 7th floor ceiling.

Chairperson Richards – Is there any more asbestos?

Cara – All the buildings have it.

Chairperson Richards – is there more asbestos in Salvo and will they give us more money? Cara – as we do projects.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

Commissioner Laufer - What specifically is the policy around towing vehicles? Does the vehicle need to be moved by a certain time?

Cara – part of the lease is for residents to remove snow around their vehicle. If we plow then someone else parks in that spot. We schedule when to move vehicles so we can plow. If a car is cleared of snow, we won't tow.

Commissioner Laufer – DHCD raised the limit of assets tenants can have from \$2,500.00 to \$5,000.00. Can a notice be sent to residents?

Cara – can send an email in between meetings.

Commissioner Brooks – I thought it was always \$5,000.00. Cara – Yes for Federal.

Cara said the Holiday Parties for Florence Heights will be December 21st and December 23rd for Hampshire Heights.

Northampton Neighbors is coming in on Wednesdays to do a Holiday Party.

Chairperson Richards – individual residents can become members of the Northampton Neighbors.

Cara – yes, but a McDonald tenant threatened them when they came here.

Commissioner Silver put forth the motion to adjourn the December meeting at 7:50 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Laufer.