



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Approved May 18, 2020
MAY MINUTES

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met “Virtually” on Monday, May 18, 2020.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 4:11 P.M.

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

PRESENT: Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Silver, Commissioner Jones and Chairperson Richards. Commissioner Laufer joined the meeting at 4:20 P.M.

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Leiper; Deb Dunphy; Sharon Kimble; Jack Redman; Lisa Donoghue; Heather Maxwell; Alex Jarrett and Katherine Messina.

Chairperson Richards thanked the Board Members for their flexibility on the meetings. This will be a regular meeting and they will be taking comments. Chairperson Richards also thanked the residents for following the rules during this pandemic. Also, thanked the staff as they are frontline heroes. She asked that residents give their name and where they live and have 3 minutes to speak. Cara – staff can unmute by caller.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alex Jarrett- Ward 5 City Councilor - said he has been receiving calls from residents about the community gardens at NHA properties. He encouraged the Director to allow the gardens as it provides food for residents and social distancing can be done.

Cara spoke that she and Marilyn have spoken about this.

Cara – there are not enough plots for all to enjoy and it entails a process to hold a lottery. The plots are not 6 feet apart. They are adhering to DHCD guidelines and to Governor Baker. They are doing “robo” calls and writing to residents. NHA has been working with Grow Food and the Survival Center to help provide food to residents. 600 deliveries were made this week. As soon as the 6 foot social distancing is lifted, they can proceed. Residents are asked to bear with us. NHA is running a full page ad this week with information.

Chairperson Richards stated to Mr. Jarrett that she appreciates that the City of Northampton is interested in what the Housing Authority is doing. The residents live in very close quarters and NHA must do the right thing where no one is at risk. Hope to be opening soon.

Cara – NHA does not take this lightly. Some of our communities are akin to nursing homes or a cruise ship. We are following what DHCD and Governor Baker is recommending. Safety First!

Alex Jarrett – Thank you - I appreciate your concern for safety.

EMPLOYEE ISSUES None

TENANT ISSUES

Katherine – Salvo – asked when the staff would be back on site. Cara – the Governor released the guidelines in four stages. We are waiting for guidance and we are still working remotely. Staff is still going to the office and properties. We have hurdles to overcome because offices can't do the 6 foot distancing right now. The RSC's are available daily and staff are taking calls. Katherine said she appreciated receiving the food delivery and the masks and supplies.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 2020 MINUTES

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE APRIL 30, 2020 SPECIAL MEETING

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

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Jones, Brooks and Chairperson Richards.

VOTING NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Silver and Commissioner Laufer.

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

ADOPT THE FEDERAL 2020 INCOME LIMITS

These are published by HUD and will take effect immediately.

Chairperson Richards – commends the staff on changing resident's income at this time.

Commissioner Jones – how did the numbers change from a year ago? Cara – income limits are opened up so that residents can find housing – there was not much of a jump. If affects incoming applicants.

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.

MOTION FOR CHANGE ORDER FOR EXTENSION OF TIME DUE TO COVID-19 DELAY ON SALVO CAMERA INSTALL FISH # 214105

Goodless Electric asked for an extension from May 13th to July 13, 2020, due to Covid-19.

Chairperson Richards – they are wise to do this as anyone on site is vulnerable.

Commissioner Brooks – do you think we can finish Salvo this year? Cara – hope to start in July. Will be making the side entrances to Salvo alarmed and an emergency egress only. We are going by DHCD guidelines.

Chairperson Richards – are they asking for July for the installation? Cara – complete by July 13th.

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SIGN CPA FUNDING CONTRACT FOR HAMPSHIRE HEIGHTS PLAYGROUND

The CPA funding for the playground is \$200,000.00. They would like to meet with residents in June and go out for Bid in July, start the project August or September. This is paired with CDBG money. Allow

Cara to be the authorized signatory.

Commissioner Silver – if the residents can't congregate should we use this money to do this?

Cara – Parks are opening Monday, and playgrounds will be in phase 2. We still need to go through with the process to get the bids, etc.

Commissioner Silver – I worry we may be jumping the gun. Backlash where we might be in stricter orders. Need to be prepared for having a playground that won't be able to get used.

Commissioner Brooks asked if the Board should table the vote.

Commissioner Silver – Tabling will not make that much of a difference to the deadline – can we use the money somewhere else?

Chairperson Richards – Cooley Dickinson Hospital also has projects on hold at this time.

Commissioner Jones – if the project is delayed indefinitely the money would have to be returned to the City and NHA would have to re-apply. Not sure how long the Block Grant would continue. He agrees with Commissioner Silver that we will probably get a second wave of the virus and it will push back the project. River Valley Co-Op expansion will be starting up again. We should go ahead but we might have a bump in the road.

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Laufer

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

MOTION TO ACCEPT LOWEST BIDDER FOR TRASH CONTRACT

This is a contract for all sites for three years. Waste Management came in at \$82,000.00. Republic Service came in with \$71,073.48 for all properties at \$5,922.79 monthly.

Commissioner Laufer stated that she is impressed with this company – they are always on time, they do a great job with clearing out the trash quickly.

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

Whereupon Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

MOTION TO APPROVE POSTAGE MACHINE CONTRACT

This is a five year contract. Previous contract expired 2/29/20 at a cost of \$711.00 per quarter. The new contract using the State Contract Procurement will be at \$445.44 per quarter.

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.

At this time Cara stated that she is putting a full page AD in the Daily Hampshire Gazette on Thursday and Saturday regarding COVID-19 information in regards to the Housing Authority.

Commissioner Silver stated that there has been a lot of silence in between the Board Meetings and she would like to receive updates. Also regarding the change in the Board Meeting time, would like to be asked for availability. Cara responded that this time only, the meeting was held early due to the planning of various items.

Chairperson Richards said that it was helpful receiving the April updates. She gave thanks to the Staff, Residents and Board members.

Cara – NHA was having issues with visitors and also problems at Salvo. McDonald has a Police officer from 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. checking properties. Also you can get updates on our website. If there is anything else of concern, email her.

Commissioner Silver – she has been sending items to be posted on the website to Cara and Jack – is this useful or should she stop? Cara – it is useful, however, they did not receive some of the items. We are posting what you sent. They are trying to do daily updates, right now they are dealing with care packages for the residents and now trying to get them cloth masks and helping residents with their angst. She will be better with the website. Commissioner Silver stated that she will continue to send items.

Commissioner Jones - regarding the email of April 29th pertaining to Salvo and people coming in the back door and visitors arriving before the police are there for the 7:00 p.m. shift. One officer is diligent, the others sit in their cars. Both doors should be covered. What is the Authority doing in regards to the letter?

Cara stated that she is working with Chief Kasper and officer Borowski – it is \$5700.00 a week for one officer. We are looking at the current cameras at Salvo and not using the side doors as an entrance but put an alarm on these doors. This will be posted to residents. We are looking for a battery that will last long enough and be loud enough.

Chairperson Richards – I have seen none of these emails and I am interested in these issues.

Cara said they had the wrong email for Marilyn but now is correct. NHA receiving information from the neighborhood watch – could not get the City of Northampton to issue a “No Visitor” for the Housing, but I did it anyway. NHA has tried really hard in this situation - Safety First.

Chairperson Richards – I am concerned with what the residents think; this is all very important business.

At this time, Commissioner Jones put forth the motion to adjourn the Board Meeting at 5:01 p.m.