



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

JANUARY 2021 MINUTES APPROVED MARCH 15, 2021

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 6:30 P.M.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.
Upon Roll Call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT: Chairperson Richards; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Silver; Commissioner Laufer & Commissioner Cancel.

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Leiper; Jack Redman; Keith Walsh; Sharon Kimble; Deb Dunphy Smith; Attorney Tom O'Connor; Donyaël Parrish; Jose Cruz; Heather Maxwell; Lisa Donoghue; Maitty Delhoyo; Kaitlin Hanning; Angel Sadlowski; Roy Martin; Jada Tarbutton; Joseph & Angela Santaniello & Heather Culver.

Chairperson Richards – the first order of business is that I would like to officially welcome Edgardo Cancel who is the new Commissioner to the Board. We are happy to have you with us. Commissioner Brooks is feeling under the weather so he will not be joining us tonight.

DISCUSSION: NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2020 FINANCIALS

Gary DePace – As discussed for our 2nd Quarter ending December 31, 2020, November & December represent part of the 2nd Quarter Financials – same applies for November and December Monthly Financials, unless there are other questions.

Chairperson Richards – hats off to the staff and thank you, Gary, it is good we are so close to the budget for the end of 2nd Quarter. .

MOTION – APPROVE THE QUARTERLY FINANCIALS FOR QTR 2 OF FY21

Gary DePace went over the quarterly financials. He explained that we are halfway through the fiscal year budget, and there is nothing alarming showing up. The Maintenance salaries are up 50% due to having 53 pay periods in a year – there are 27 weeks of payroll represented in the first half of the year, but we are on track for the Budget. Administrative salaries are close as well.

Sharon Kimble – I agree with everything that Gary has said. Our budget to actual expenditures are where we expected to be. Budget YTD looks great.

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

VOTING AYE: Chairperson Richards, Commissioner Silver, Commissioner Jones & Commissioner Laufer.

ABSENT: Commissioner Brooks

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Cancel


VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

TENANT COMMENTS

Jada Tarbutton – Salvo – some packages are being stolen at Salvo – FedEx, Door dash, UPS, mail, etc. Sometimes there are 5-7 people waiting downstairs in the foyer for their packages. Can we have a door

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monitor? I feel uncomfortable bringing packages to people. Also, there is a lot of dog poop outside, residents are not picking it up or even putting their dogs on a leash – we need poop patrol. Also residents are concerned about roaches in the foyer. Maybe we should have a weekend housekeeper. Someone defecated on the 7th floor or it was an animal. Have also heard some of the staff has had COVID and is concerned as the staff is like family. There is a dead tree on the property which belongs to the Senior Center and I have forwarded information. City Councilor Jim Nash said that National Grid would take care of it. Would like it if you would address the issue of the dog poop and the monitor and get back to me.

Chairperson Richards – we will get back to you Jada, Cara has about 3-4 things to get back to you on – we will figure it out. Seems like the residents need a reminder on picking up after their dogs.

Roy Martin – Salvo – the tree is on the Senior Center property and they pruned the top so it will kill the tree. It is dying from the top down and there are a lot of dead branches. I would hate to see the tree taken down but maybe you can work with the Senior Center. Yes, there is dog poop all over. A memo should be done to all tenants and put on their door. Maybe the rules should be changed up. If they don't abide by the rules, then maybe dogs should not be allowed. There is a lot of poop in the garden also. Who are the two new people on the Housing Board – has there been any decision. I would like to meet them. Yes, I am going to run for Mayor of Northampton.

Chairperson Richards – one member from the Housing Partnership was sworn in the end of last week and that is Edgardo Cancel. Roy, it is not our decision on who is sworn in. At the end of the last Board meeting I made a statement that it is not our decision and we don't know who the other person is yet. Heather Culver from Florence heights was trying to join in via zoom.

Commissioner Laufer – if she can, have her call in so we can all hear what she is saying.

Angela Santaniello – Salvo – it would be good to have someone monitor the cameras regularly, otherwise it is defeating the purpose. What Jada and Roy said is happening here at Salvo. There are some really unusual things happening here and Jose is aware. Other than that, everyone is trying to stay healthy during Covid.

Chairperson Richards – how is COVID going with the staff, particularly the Managers?

Cara – we had a little scare so we went back to fully remote to keep from spreading the virus. Some staff still has to go in to get the mail and print documents, but that is it.

Chairperson Richards – does the staff hear from the residents by phone?

Cara – the calls go to their cell phones directly. They have a COVID questionnaire they go through before dispatching maintenance.

Commissioner Silver – do you think we can hear from the staff directly about what they are hearing from residents? What are their biggest concerns?

Kaitlin Hanning – I am the manager at Cahill and I take phone calls all day from residents. There have been no complaints on COVID- everyone is following social distancing. Cahill is running well.

Chairperson Richards – good to hear – anyone else?

Commissioner Laufer – it is nice to hear from the staff regarding good support programs that are going to Hampshire Heights. Grow Food is delivering to doors every Tuesday and there are free lunches also.

Elizabeth has been sharing things like snacks, etc. Are you feeling there are residents who are in need of food and how can we help make those connections happen?

Jack – I coordinate the food delivery for the elderly properties with 418 bagged groceries with perishable items delivered weekly, they are also getting a box of non- perishable items. Two people come in every week to help - Donyaël who is administrative staff at Salvo and Maitty who is the property manager for McDonald and Florence heights. Our RSC Danielle, also helps make food deliveries weekly.

Donyael – I get very positive feedback. My family sometimes helps deliver the food - the quality of food is good and everyone seems happy with it. They sometimes put in add-in like eggs and fresh baked bread or at Christmas, cookies. Every week it goes smoother and smoother.

Commissioner Laufer – what are some things the Board can do to help make that better Donyael?

Donyael – right now there really isn't anything else to be done.

Commissioner Silver – this might be an appropriate time to get information out to the residents. Things are posted on the website like the extension of Mass Health enrollment, SNAP increases, information on the stimulus payments, etc. We could put information in their bags for those who don't go onto the website.

Donyael – that is a good idea – that would be a good outlet as we see them every week.

Chairperson Richards – it is good to hear some of your experiences – I worry about you and I worry about the residents, so we thank you so very much for all you do and your kind attention to our residents. As a Board, we appreciate it.

Commissioner Laufer – it would be wonderful to get updates at our meeting because it's such a positive thing you are doing and it sounds like a lot of hard work and it is just great to hear food security is being addressed in our community. It is a sensitive subject just for tenants to talk about so for you to take the initiative to provide it for tenants is really a big deal so I commend you on that.

Commissioner Silver – is it just the two sites receiving food?

Jack – no all properties are receiving food. Our staff delivers to the elderly/disabled and Grow Food delivers to the family sites with some help from the schools depending on the site. In addition to providing school lunches at the family sites. Angel Sadlowski, the Section 8 Manager – in addition to answering phone calls, her and her staff also volunteer in the delivery of food – her staff tries to come up with ideas to help make it run smoother. There are no complaints about food delivery. Amanda comes in a half hour early to help Donyael at Salvo before the food delivery.

Angel and her staff answers all Sec 8 calls. The receptionist is only in the office a few times a week. Her staff is volunteering and taking phone calls. Our department is very busy – we are going through re-certifications.

Jack – asked Angel, how about landlord payments? Some landlords are struggling financially.

Angel – the landlords are being paid by the 5th of every month – they are amazed with the great customer service our team provides and the prompt assisting of residents. One veteran is very pleased with the help he has received, he said it is very hard these days to get someone to even answer the phone. They get all types of calls from Landlords with the changes that are going on.

Chairperson Richards – it is remarkable the jobs that you are doing during this pandemic.

Heather Culver – Flo Hts. – I would like to give you an update on what I have been personally doing during the pandemic. I have reached out to Manna to get extra food in my household. I got a car in December to help pay it forward as Manna is doing home deliveries. I volunteer with Manna to network as a lot of people don't know what they are doing.

Jack Redman – Heather, have you spoken to Netanya about this service?

Chairperson Richards – Jack, can you reach out to her after the meeting? Jack – yes, I will have Maitty and Netanya reach out. Danielle our other RSC, has also helped to connect folks with Manna. Salvo and Cahill residents have been connected.

Cara Leiper – I appreciate Edgar saying that that staff at NHA is awesome. When the pandemic first started I have to say that I have a great team that helps out. It has been a very difficult year and I am proud of my team – they have done an impeccable job to keep up with the work. They are scanning mail, processing hundreds of invoices – everyone has pulled together and not only pulled together but as a family.

Jack Redman – it is also really scary – every day when we go into the office, there are people who test positive, our maintenance guys are sanitizing common areas twice daily 7 days a week. Every chance we get we are providing masks for the staff and sanitizing. We are using a new machine for spraying and it is ruining the locks on the mailboxes so we had to change the product we were using. We hear from Cara all the time of how appreciative of us she is. Deb and Arnie go in to the office to go through the mail. They are touching the mail and CDC has said in the past that you can possibly get COVID through the mail. Hopefully the second week of February we can start getting COVID vaccinations . Staff is anxious to receive the vaccine – they are giving 110%, but it is also scary for the staff to be working during these times. Residents are anxious to get the vaccine as well. Cara is working with RSC's and the Board of Health to get the vaccinations set up.

Chairperson Richards – Very nice to hear. Happy that vaccinations will be prioritized.

PUBLIC COMMENT – NONE

Cara stated that cameras at Salvo are up and running. They are waiting for a lens but the wiring for the elevators is in. We are working with the Vendor and the State regarding something with the firewall blocking access to live feed. Since the cameras became live, we have assisted the Northampton Police about 15 times. Regarding the new carpeting – DHCD requires that the old carpet is to be recycled – we are having a hard time finding a place to do this. The new carpet is in and ready to be installed. Regarding the Playground at Hampshire Heights – Jack has been having meetings at the family properties. We are right now in the middle of our annual audit and staff reviews.

APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 2020 MINUTES

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

VOTING AYE: Chairperson Richards, Commissioner Silver, Commissioner Jones & Commissioner Laufer.

ABSENT: Commissioner Brooks

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Cancel

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to adjourn the January meeting at 7:22 P.M., seconded by Chairperson Jones.