



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

APRIL 2021 MINUTES - APRIL 26, 2021
Board Approved – 05/17/2021

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, April 26, 2021 at 5:30 P.M.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:32 P.M.
Upon Roll Call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT: Chairperson Richards; Vice Chairperson Brooks; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Cancel & Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Leiper; Jack Redman; Keith Walsh; Sharon Kimble; Deb Dunphy Smith; Attorney Tom O'Connor; Heather Maxwell; Lisa Donoghue; David Arce; Gary DePace; Michael Guyder; Lauren Kelley and Joseph & Angela Santaniello.

Marcum LLP presented the FY2020 Independent Audit Results

Michael Guyder said the audit went very well. Cara, Sharon and Jack stepped up and gave us everything we needed. On the financial statements unmodified opinions – clean, there were no findings but the financial statements do show a little loss. NHA has considerable cash assets with a current ratio of over 8, it is up from the prior year almost a full point. NHA is in a good financial position.

Lauren Kelley – it was different conducting the audit this year, but it was a pleasure working with Sharon, Cara and Jack.

Chairperson Richards – what are some of the things we need to be worrying about?

Michael –In 2021 there have been Cares Act Expenditures – the most out of the ordinary item. The different sources of funds have different use requirements – Corona virus being more restrictive. IT and controls are a fairly hot topic. NHA systems and IT resources and processes – IT controls are important, more systems are going to electronic file storage with resident files for re-certifications. Controls needed to protect that information is important – we did not report any issues in that area.

Chairperson Richards – Any recommendations from last year we improved on?

Lauren Kelley – last year we spoke about electronic file storage specifically. Prior to COVID 19 creating more of a hot topic around digital tenant file storage and the security issues surrounding it, the NHA was already looking into that. Last year NHA was figuring out how to make that transition. This year we were able to remote in and see how the security works and it seems like it was a pretty seamless transition. From our standpoint it was a nice improvement to see over a 1 year span how the process has changed so much and the Authority implemented it nicely.

The Executive Director and Chairperson thanked Michael and Lauren from Marcum and the NHA staff for all their hard work during the audit. Chairperson Richards thanked the staff at NHA for their work on the audit and to come out with no findings and noted improvements is wonderful to hear. Thank you very much.

APPROVAL OF THE FY2020 AUDIT

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

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards, Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield and Commissioner Cancel.

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer.

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the FY 20 Audit

MOTION

Approve the 3rd Quarter Financials

Gary DePace - It is good to hear that we had a clean audit, and there was a lot more work to it than last year, it has been a tough year. In the 9 month period of the budget and the 75% expenditure level, we can't get much closer. We are under the 75% which is a good sign. It is difficult to spend money as it is hard to find Contractors to do work. We have money in our budget and we did receive Cares Act Funding – Jack is probably taking extra time working on that issue. 400, 689 and MRVP accounts are good financially. All on target as well as overall budget.

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

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards, Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield and Commissioner Cancel.

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer.

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the 3RD Quarter Financials.

At this time, Chairperson Richards announced that Commissioner Silver's term is up and she chose not to renew as a Board Member as she was getting involved with political issues. Chairperson Richards stated that she called Commissioner Silver and thanked her for her service on the Board.

TENANT COMMENTS

Angela Santaniello – Salvo- there is a situation at Salvo with one particular resident who is walking around like a zombie. She is urinating in the elevator, foyer and on the new carpets. It is usually after maintenance is gone and she never cleans it up. The property manager is aware of this. Board of Health has been contacted as well as the Police Dept. who did come and do a wellness check on her.

Joe Santaniello – I am very concerned about her and I am asking the Board for some thoughts.

Chairperson Richards – Cara can you please look into this.

Cara – NHA is aware and we are in the process of dealing with the issue.

Angela Santaniello – how do we handle the situation when she is urinating on weekends? Cara – talk with Jose the property manager.

PUBLIC COMMENT – NONE

STAFF COMMENT -NONE

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 2021 MINUTES

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

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards, Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Cancel and Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the March minutes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION AND VOTE OF THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FORM

Chairperson Richards stated that there are two forms – the traditional form and the new form. She would like to pick a new form tonight as we are behind in the evaluation of the Executive Director.

Commissioner Jones – we have used the traditional form going way back, I am very comfortable with the new form. Elizabeth Silver put a lot of work into the new form, we as a Board have put a lot of work into the new form and I am comfortable with using the new form going forward.

Vice Chairperson Brooks – I echo what Jeff says, I think it is time for a new form to be used as soon as possible. .

Commissioner Jones put forth the motion to adopt the new proposed Executive Director Evaluation form, seconded by Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards, Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Cancel and Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the new Executive Director Evaluation Form.

Chairperson Richards stated that she will send out the new form this week and if the Board can get it back to her she would appreciate it.

MOTON – BY LAWS REVISION

Cara – Commissioner Jones brought forth a question at the last meeting regarding personnel sub-committee and I want to address it now and that is there is a committee in the handbook. I checked with Attorney O'Connor who said it is covered under one of the articles that remains rather than adding it as an exact committee.

Commissioner Jones – thank you it needs to be clear that the committee is available and going down the road if there is a situation, the committee is there. It is important that people know it is there, be it for new members of the public attending meetings or Board Members or for NHA folks as well.

Chairperson Richards – should we do a memo to the public stating the changes to the by-laws and explain how to access that?

Cara – Tom, for applicants or tenants does it need to be spelled out?

Attorney O'Connor – no, applicants and tenants can request a meeting under # 3 – Other chair appointments.

Cara – does it need to be written out in the by-laws?

Attorney O'Connor – I don't think so, it is spelled out in the lease. Personnel manual outlines the process how an aggrieved employee would go about getting in front of that committee. The public would probably voice their concerns at the Board Meeting. Don't need a separate committee voted into by-laws.

Commissioner Jones – I can go either way with this, in the past all committees were listed, we are talking about revised rules, I am fine.

Cara – need to point out an error I made. Above the other chair appointments and members' appointment the Grievance Committee is listed. I apologize for my not mentioning this in my email.

Chairperson Richards – the grievance committee is different, we must have a grievance committee and it must be in our by-laws, that is my understanding. Personnel committee is in our personnel policies.

Cara – I was referring to them as a whole, I am clarifying.

Chairperson Richards – the major changes to the by-laws are the elimination of some committees and the addition of board members and quorum change.

Cara- Yes, the removal of some committees and remuneration of pages. Also the Board is now 7 members instead of 5 and the quorum is now 4 rather than 3. It now states that the Board will meet once a month

instead of the second Monday. It was recommended by the Attorney to take out the second Monday and say that we would meet once a month.

Commissioner Cancel – I don't have a full copy of the revision. The quorum has changed because we added 2 more people to the Board which makes it from 5 to 7 members and the quorum from 3 to 4.

Clarifying that monthly meetings are not a set date?

Cara – yes, correct. The old by-laws stated the meetings occurred on the 2nd Monday of the month unless otherwise determined by the Board. During COVID the meetings were via Zoom and the meetings were all over the place. For this year we solidified the dates and sent them out to everyone. Our Attorney recommends we take out the saying “2nd Monday” and rather say that we would meet once a month at a date and time to be determined.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield- on page 4 there is no longer a Finance, Executive or Governance Policy Committee right? Cara – correct.

Chairperson Richards explained to Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield about those committees and about the open meeting law violation.

Vice Chairperson Brooks put forth the motion to approve the revision, seconded by Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards, Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Cancel and Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the By-Laws Revision

DISCUSSION – BOARD PACKAGES

Chairperson Richards - it was discussed during the January 20,2021 Board meeting the timing of receiving the Board packages and that the Executive Director would get the information out as soon as possible. They normally go out the Friday before the Board meeting. On January 30th the commissioners took advice from the ED that she would get them out to you ASAP.

Cara- it is my understanding they go out the Friday before the Board Meeting for a long time. I try to get them out as soon as I can but in getting them out when I did a day early this time, I missed an item that should have been on the agenda. Thankfully the next meeting is in three weeks. They tried to get this item under “Other Business” on the agenda because they did not want to wait but our Attorney said that it needs to go before the Board. I am a conduit of information and I can only push out as quickly as possible after receiving information for the Board. I am not comfortable giving information piece mail to the Board.

Commissioner Jones – past ED Jon Hite had a process of getting the Board minutes out two weeks after the meeting and the packets went out later. The minutes should be done within two weeks via email. Also, there have been complaints about the minutes not being up on the website and the backlog is growing. When the draft minutes are approved, they should be posted two weeks after the meeting. Also, receiving the Board packages on Thursday really helps, it makes a big difference.

Cara- Let me explain the backlog email regarding the minutes. The initial email to the Commissioners regarding the complaint was on April 8th and it was resolved on April 13th. The individual said nothing has been posted since December. January and February minutes were not approved until March and we did fail to post them on the website as we were doing vaccination clinics at the time but were posted at NHA properties. They were posted in April on the website.

Commissioner Cancel - I agree that the extra day of receiving the Board packets does make a world of difference but I understand how hard it is to get it out- great job in doing that Cara. Also, during the meeting can items be added to the agenda?

Cara - No., because we could become in violation of the open meeting law.

Chairperson Richards - you can do that by sending an agenda item to me then I can request it to be on the agenda to Cara so that she can add it. During the Board Meeting we can only deal with what is on the agenda and posted. There is a section of the agenda for "Any other business" but that is only for emergency.

Attorney O'Connor - you have 48 business hours before the meeting to add to the agenda. Try not to sneak in things, it could cause an open meeting law violation.

Chairperson Richards - Cara and I work on the agenda. Cara finalizes and it then goes to the City Clerk to be posted. By law nothing can be talked about that is not on the agenda.

Cara - once posted we are allowed to make changes up to 48 hours before the meeting. After Friday, nothing can be changed or added when the Board meeting is held on Monday.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield - thank you for the clarification. I would like to talk about things and how to present them.

Chairperson Richards - I will call the new Board members and discuss this with them.

Cara - Debbie is retiring but has agreed to stay on and attend the Board meetings and type up the minutes. Since she won't be working it won't be a problem in getting the minutes out within two weeks.

Chairperson Richards - do we agree to get those minutes out in two weeks?

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION #1188 - APPROVE DHCD CONTRACT FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (CFA) 5001 AMMENDMENT #10.

The State provides housing subsidy so DHCD has increased aid to \$1,207,439.00 to the revised award amount of \$6,619,435.07 and has extended the contract from June 30, 2022 to June 30, 2024. This amendment will take effect immediately.

Commissioner Cancel - do we have that amendment in our packet? Cara - yes, you do have that information.

Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Vice Chairperson Brooks.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards, Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Cancel and Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer

Therefore Chairperson Richards approved the resolution.

MOTION

Approval of Certificate of Substantial Completion of FISH # 214119 for Salvo Carpeting

This project was completed by Frank Higgins and Company and was signed off by the Architect, Donald Pulfer on April 5, 2021.

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

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards, Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Jones & Commissioner Cancel.

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer

ABSTAIN – Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield
Therefore Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

MOTION

Approval of Consultant for McDonald House Capital Fund elevator replacement.

McDonald house was built in 1965 the elevators are always breaking and it is difficult to get parts for repair. We found a consultant – B Squared Engineering who will help us with this project to replace two passenger elevators.

Chairperson Richards – is this one of the first projects of the Capital Plan?

Cara – no, this is for a federal property this will be done as a capital project.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – will there be one consultant or more or is this so you can seek a consultant?

Cara – They are an engineering firm and the State has a pool of contractors we can choose from and then we don't have to go out to bid, we can use one of the firms.

Commissioner Jones – have we done this before? It is unusual to hire a company to do the bidding.

Jack Redman – DHCD usually does this for the state. This a federal property and HUD does not help us.

These are old elevators and they know exactly what is required as it is very complex. This consultant will know what is required and will deal with the prevailing wage and do the sealed bid. This project is in the 5 year Capital Plan

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Jones.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards, Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Cancel and Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer

ABSTAIN – Vice Chairperson Brooks

Therefore Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

Cara noted that the next meeting will be May 17th at 5:30 P.M.

Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to adjourn the April meeting at 6:45 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.