



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

APPROVED JULY 18, 2022 JULY MINUTES

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, July 18, 2022 at 5:30 P.M.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:31 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 & Commissioner Carney.

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Leiper; Jack Redman; Sharon Kimble; Attorney Tom O'Connor; Kaitlin Hanning; Jose Cruz; Keith Walsh; Amanda Huertas; Danielle McColgan; Mia Weibel; Tara Martin; Angel Sadlowski; Angela Santaniello; Gwenevra Nabad & Mary Chapman.

The Executive Director noted that there was a scrivener's error on the Agenda. The Motion to Authorize Executive Director to execute FY23 AUP audit engagement and contract with Lisa Fallon, CPA should be a resolution which would be - Resolution # 2022-14.

TENANT COMMENTS

Angela Santaniello Salvo #425 was with other tenants at the Forbes Library. We are in the process of developing a tenant association working with the Mass Union of Public Housing tenants working on a steering committee and working on developing an election committee. We are starting the process however, it does take a little time to make sure we do it right. Everything seems to be going well in that effort. We are having an ice cream social on Thursday with hopes that we will have more people interested in helping do the election committee. All in all everything seems to be going well. I just want to thank again the partnership we have with Northampton Housing because working with the Property Manager, the Executive Director and Senior Property Manager in following the rules you have in place always seem to rectify some of the problems that we have. As long as we have documentation and we are actually going through the motions of what you have requested we are able to actually make this a better place to live and a better place safety wise. I just wanted to say thank you.

Chairperson Richards – thank you.

Gwenevra Nabad – Hampshire Heights # 19D - we are doing similar things at Hampshire Heights. We would love to have a bulletin board back where people can see it. The Community Room – we would like to work something out so that we can gain access to the room again. Thank you.

K. Chapman McDonald #201 - the necessity of internet, a necessary utility. The Community Room could be Wi-Fi enabled. We would also like our space that we used to have as tenants there is a room there and I think you are using it as storage. If you can communicate with us on important matters in a way other than just sticking things on our doors it might help because some people don't even open their doors but once a week. I have borrowed hot spots but people don't have internet – internet is \$200.00 a month that is just a little too much for someone living on social security or whatever. Key policy is way burdensome, I tell you it is nuts. Please re-visit it. This is our home and the fact that we have to have a letter from our Doctor saying we need a spare key to our home – it kind of makes us feel like people have been telling you please treat us like humans. We really like working with you, we don't like asking for the same things time and again. Thank you for listening, sorry to complain, I am just saying what people are asking me to say.

49 Old South Street, Suite 1 • Northampton, MA • 01060

T 413-584-4030 • F 413-582-1350 • TDD 711 • 

Gwenevra Nabad – Hampshire Heights # 19D - the garden gate that went up last spring is already broken and residents are complaining that a lot of the pollinator plants have been uprooted. The other day I went to harvest some basil which I put in my car and I got back in a couple of hours later and all I could smell was cat urine. That is one of the issues of not being able to keep an eye on things. Some of the incidental things that happen in the community garden where people can't see what is going on and the loose animals that get into those plots. Thank you.

STAFF COMMENT

NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT

Margarita Morales – with the Mass Union of Public Housing tenants - I have been working with residents at Salvo House. The way the Mass union works with the residents is in goals to provide a structure to work with their neighbors and improve their community. There are many benefits to organizing a resident council. They will get to know their neighbors and bring in services and programs to their community. They can work with property management to improve their homes and can work with security to create a safer community. A tenant organization must be democratic and represent everyone at the property. A democratic tenant organization seeks to include everyone in the decision making but insuring all residents are aware of meetings and agenda items by making decisions through a transparent and inclusive process and by holding fair and open elections. Representing everyone means that all communities are taken into account and the process supports everyone's participation and that is our goal throughout the process of helping the residents in your community.

Cara – thank you Margarita I am so thankful for you helping our residents. I have been working over the last couple of years to try to get tenant associations at the properties and I am very, very thankful for you and your help and the work that you do. So thank you on my behalf.

Margarita – thank you, I am glad we are here to support the residents and hopefully develop a partnership relationship with the Housing Authority.

Chairperson Richards – thank you from the Chair and the Board.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Cara read the ED report to the Board with updates and events. Our collaboration with the Northampton Public Schools continue to grow at Florence Heights and Hampshire Heights. We have seen great turn-outs at both properties and this past week received announcements that we are now able to allow grab and go meals as well which will allow us to serve more residents. Our team has worked extremely hard to make this effort successful and I am grateful for our staff. The vegetable gardens are thriving at many of our properties. Many residents are enjoying the opportunity to grow fruits and vegetables for themselves and to share with neighbors. Also a representative from Fallon Health was out to speak with Forsander and Tobin residents. We had a great turnout and residents are enjoying their one contact inclusive medical needs assistance.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – you mentioned something with the food truck. Is that the same one that is in Amherst?

Cara – No, we have a collaboration with the Northampton Public Schools to provide lunch for children on summer break and it is larger at Florence Heights and Hampshire Heights. It used to be in order to participate the kids had to sit at the table and eat their lunch, now they are allowing us to have grab and go meals so it really allows more kids to grab their lunch and to go back where they came from.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – That is great.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 2022 MINUTES

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the June minutes.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I have been having computer problems and I wasn't able to download the package and documents for some reason. After several attempts sometimes it would look like it would go in and sometimes not so I am going to abstain from the minutes' approval because I wasn't able to thoroughly go over it.

Cara – Jack, if you could please email Commissioner Tarbutton the PDF that has the packet you sent me as well.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I just sent him an email, it is the whole package you guys sent me. It normally goes through and I can look through stuff but not this time.

Cara – we are going to send you a PDF that is a complete scan of all the documents.

Jack – I am doing that now.

Chairperson Richards – Thank you for letting us know. Technology even after two and a half years is still an issue.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion – Corticelli Street Update

Cara – the person interested in purchasing the property has paid the deposit and our Attorney has drawn up the purchase and sale agreement and it is moving forward as we expected it would.

Chairperson Richards – are we still expecting the closing by fall?

Cara – yes, I think Attorney O'Connor said we would be looking at a closing sometime in August.

Attorney O'Connor – that is correct Cara, the current date on the purchase and sale agreement which has not been signed yet as I am on vacation this week, so I expect that to be signed by everybody this week, the current date is August 18th to close so it is sooner rather than later. The purchaser is eager to get it done as are we.

Chairperson Richards – that is actually good news – after we close that will be it for Corticelli Street, right?

Attorney O'Connor – correct.

Chairperson Richards – we are moving, thank you so much everyone.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield - I am wondering if you could tell me again who the lucky purchaser of Corticelli Street.

Cara – Commissioner Tarbutton I don't have that at my fingertips but I can email that to you if you would like.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield - I would.

DISCUSSION

Basements at Hampshire and Florence Heights

Cara – we are at DHCD's disposal for the state property of Hampshire Heights anyways for driveways, walkways and basement remediation and we continue to reach out to them to push it along but have not received any update from them as of today's date.

Chairperson Richards – so we are waiting. Continue to the next month's agenda.

Cara – we are waiting.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – are you saying that both basements at Hampshire Heights and Florence Heights – both of them have to wait on something you are looking to – are they separate and equal?

Cara – Hampshire Heights is State and Florence Heights is Federal and it is in the Capital Plan. We have known issues at Hampshire Heights and we are working with DHCD to do this very large million dollar project at Hampshire Heights. Florence Heights is in the Capital Plan as well.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – so you don't have anything on either of them because you are waiting on what now?

Cara – waiting on funding agencies because they fund it and they drive the projects as well because they approve all the funding and they drive everything with the project.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – how long has the problem been at Hampshire Heights?

Cara – Hampshire Heights is built on clay and as far as I can tell it has been an issue since it has been built and it is even part of the lease that they are not allowed to store anything in the basement and that they acknowledge that there is water that comes into the basement. That was something that Attorney O'Connor and the prior ED had dealt with. It has been a very long time and it is because it is built on clay so when it rains there is no place for the water to dissipate to and therefore it pushes into the building. Originally we were going to do the walks and driveways but when we really started having a lot of basement issues - we actually have 1 unit right now that we can't have someone move into as a result of it - and DHCD moved it up on the timeline for us. When they came out to look at everything they said that because this ground is clay and so problematic, both of these items need to be done at the same time. Meaning the basements, driveways and walkways. At that point it made it that the project was going to cost much more, just doing driveways and walkways is much less than incorporating the basements. They required us to push it out to be able to fund it as it is well over a million dollars.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I just don't understand if this basement has been flooding since even before you and I have been here – 8 years – my question is that you mean to say that people are living in a facility built on clay that flooding is routine?

Cara – it is not one basement, Commissioner Tarbutton, there are 80 apartments at Hampshire Heights and it is an issue property wide. It is my understanding that back in the day they had to make a decision years and years ago – do we provide housing and say these people can't use the basement, store anything down there and have them acknowledge that water comes into the basement - or not provide housing period. It is my understanding they decided to put it in the lease that water comes in, put it in the lease they aren't to put anything down there because they knew there was water in there so they were able to provide low income housing anyway.

Chairperson Richards – is that saying that people know before they move in that there is flooding?

Cara – correct.

Commissioner Carney – we had this discussion last month as well and I understand it is a continuing one. I just want to reiterate what I mentioned last time having been a City Councilor representing that

area for over 14 years and having been on the Housing Authority prior to that, so I am talking 20 years ago. So what I learned as a new commissioner to the Housing Authority at the time, and then our state Rep. was Peter Kocot who had been raised at Hampshire Heights housing and prior to him had been Ed McColgan who had also been raised at Hampshire Heights, we are talking to back to when was this built – 50's and 60's? They knew since they were children and having represented that area that everything up Barrett St. and all the way down Jackson Street, that entire area geologically, now we actually inhibit a lot of building in that area because of the wetland and the marsh. Basically saying that most of the property that was built in the area would not be allowed now by right because of the implications of water, so it is a serious problem and I think Director Leiper made an important point that the decisions were made well before our time, before I was born, I think. Do we provide the housing anyway, do we knock it all down, what do we do about the water? I think the fact that there are some advances technically there are still some mitigating things that are being tried. Obviously there are some State and Federal funding to help us explore ways to continue to mitigate the water. I just want to repeat because I think I mentioned this at the last meeting that this isn't new, it certainly predates, Commissioner Tarbutton as you mentioned, it predates me from 20 years ago and it predates the previous two State Reps. that lived in that very housing project. That is all I will say.

Cara – thank you Commissioner Carney.

Commissioner Cancel – I have two concerns – A.) From my personal experience folks aren't necessarily being explained before moving in that there is water intrusion into the basement. It was not explained to me, I had to deal with the issue until I brought it up as a concern and the Housing tried to mitigate the problem unsuccessfully, unfortunately, because the current resident is still dealing with the same issues. I found out through that process that there is an amendment provision in the lease that says do not store things in the basement, we are not responsible and so forth. I don't believe this is explicitly being explained to tenants before they move in. B.) Just letting the tenant know there is a water problem in the basement is not enough to provide safe housing to folks because the problem does not stay in the basement. The problem goes through the entire unit. The mold that builds up, the lack of quality of good air from the basement travels through the entire home, therefore preventing people from really having good physical health. I myself had to get nasal surgery from living in the apartment I lived in even though as much work that was done to fix the basement and the water that was coming in there, the air that travels throughout the apartment makes it really, really unhealthy for folks to breathe. One problem that I noticed for myself when I was living in the unit was that what really helps a lot is to open the windows and let the air flow. For those folks and thankfully I didn't have much of this issue, but those folks that suffer from seasonal allergies, in the winter it is not much of a problem but you are letting cold in and you are spending more money on utilities. In the summer all that pollen that comes into the home as you open the windows is also problematic. It is bad either way whether you open the windows or not. The fact that we are supposedly alerting tenants of the water in the basement problem does not resolve the issue of bad air quality through the entire units. We have a lot of folks dealing with these issues at Hampshire Heights. Unfortunately mold does travel into separate parts of the units. I think it is a really, really bad problem that I think we really need to think about seriously on how to take care of and again, I think the fact that we have known about this for all this time and we haven't made it a priority to take some really aggressive action to try to deal with the problems. It is becoming an even bigger problem. I know at Florence Heights there are a few units dealing with the same issue including the community center. At Florence Heights if you go into the basement it is horrendous the amount of wetness and amount of mold that builds up in that unit. I really would like for us to figure out what to do about this problem.

Chairperson Richards – thank you Commissioner Cancel. Director Leiper, I think Commissioner Cancel raises some very legitimate points. I am wondering if we can continue this to the next agenda and you can maybe brief us on two things – how can we accelerate the issues and how can we inform the tenant

in a better way that there are issues with water in the basement. Does that serve your two questions really Commissioner Cancel?

Cara – just so everyone at this meeting knows, we have spent well over \$40,000.00 on studies and design plans over the last 3 years and it is in our Capital Improvement Plan to deal with it. It is my understanding and Jack correct me if I am wrong, because I know you had the last communication with DHCD – is that it is in the design phase for starting the project – is that correct Jack?

Jack – yes, Sharon literally just paid the bill for Waterfield Design, the consultant who came back out and is actively pursuing this so they are finalizing what is called the work order phase. The work order phase is what drafts the bid documents so that it can be publicly bid for contractors to actually do the work. We are making good progress unfortunately it is the timing of COVID that forced us to have to put this off and as you mentioned Cara, it is in DHCD's hands. We are staying on top of them, I send an email monthly to see where we are, but it is starting to pick up the pace.

Chairperson Richards – that sounds good and let's keep it on the agenda. In the meantime I am still hearing the question about do people know when they move in to the apartments that there is an issue and if there is, any way you can accelerate letting people know that would be helpful.

Cara – I can't speak Madam Chair without looking it up who moved in.

Chairperson Richards – ok, I guess we are speaking in the future.

Cara – property managers go over the move in paperwork and it is actually part of the lease. The property manager doesn't read the lease verbatim to them but sits with them for them to read the lease. If the Board wants us to point it out more clearly we can do that in the future. We do provide pallets for them because the washer/dryer hookups are downstairs as well, but we are trying our best to get it resolved.

Chairperson Richards – thank you for that information it is very helpful.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – it is very interesting you are talking about this and I am not jumping the thing but I heard something like this was happening at Cahill but I have never been there to see it. I went to Hathaway Farms once same area, I am not saying it is the same thing. I don't understand how people can live there and we say well I told you about it. I just think it is wrong on so many levels and the very fact that it has been going on this long. My internet is acting the fool, I'm calling Comcast tomorrow and I am going to say for a whole day I couldn't go to a meeting so I expect \$20.00 off. Do you give them less rent a \$100.00 less rent because they have to deal with mold. I am now going for shots for allergies I've never had. That messes with your body, this is a health issue this is a human rights issue in a sense. Give them a voucher and send them somewhere like an emergency. If there was a fire you wouldn't want them living in a fire damaged place you would say go through the Red Cross to find you some other types of living that is habitable, that is human that you can live in. The very fact that this is going on and you say well we don't really go over it – go over everything, this is a matter of our health. Think about people dealing with lead and all the suits that came from it. So you can't just say ok this is in our building and they probably aren't going to know anything, I am not saying you are saying that, I hope and pray you are not but I think you need to take that into consideration if it is uninhabitable and just as bad and oh well. I know what I am going through here and I am on the 6th floor so can you image that's not how people should be living. I ask everybody should go live there for a month and tell me how you feel.

Cara – the point I think that some people are missing here and I understand it is a serious issue, I take it as a serious issue, is we have been working hard to get the issue resolved based on the fact that it has been for many years. To do what you are saying would mean to close all the units - that would be 80 families out of housing - and I can't just issue 80 vouchers to people and re-house them. Not to mention for them to find housing with a voucher is problematic too. If there is mold we address it immediately, people aren't just living there every day with mold and all that stuff. If there is mold suspected we have it

tested. We are very proactive about this situation so it is not that for the last 8 years we have been doing nothing, we have been working toward getting it resolved and soon the construction will start to do that.

Commissioner Cancel – I think the main point we are missing is these units should not be rented. Having a disclaimer or not these units should not be rented. We need to figure out how to relocate folks. I will tell you this there is a lot of units with basement water problems but not all the units have the issue. I have had neighbors who have said I don't know what you are talking about I never had that issue in my place thankfully. So that is good, I don't think we need to relocate 80 units but I think we really need to do a serious investigation on which are the units that are really bad that are causing folks to have asthma and serious health issues and find a way to relocate those folks into a safer home. That is our responsibility as a housing provider.

Chairperson Richards – thank you Commissioner Cancel I am going to put this on the agenda for next month and I am going to ask Director Leiper and the staff to give us an update and their thoughts on some of the suggestions.

DISCUSSION

Racism, Diversity & Cultural Sensitivity Training

Cara – I received a call from DHCD today and they have some concerns and have graciously offered to provide us with Racism, Diversity and Sensitivity training. It was the director who called me today. Their risk management Attorney is on vacation and so when he comes back she will reach out to me again to schedule it. The other training – I have been in contact with Mass NAHRO to get the Board member training done. I need to know if commissioners are available on any Saturday in September from around 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you can let me know your availability so that I can get that scheduled ASAP. I don't want his calendar to fill up. I will find out more about DHCD providing the training and get back to you all.

Chairperson Richards – Thank you Director Leiper I have also reached out to a couple of people who have expressed interest and asked for any ideas they have.

Commissioner Cancel – I would like to suggest that we make it mandatory for both staff and Board to go through the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training at least once every couple of years. I think that would prove beneficial to the entire organization.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I did get the documents from Jack – thank you. I think that that's pretty great, I sent you something from the Mel King Institute that was free. I don't really think once a year, I think it is ongoing because it is not just one thing, there is racism there is classism, there are all kind of issues going on. I can tell you that in other groups I am with DEI trying to make a concept of diversity, equity and inclusion is ongoing it is not topic specific. It is ongoing. I do think that NAHRO, so many of them are out there and the very fact that it hasn't happened since I have been on the Board is mind boggling, it's like it's not there if we don't see it, it's not there. This is something that is mandatory I think even if you can't go that day because there are many things I went through there is so much that is out there but many times they have had a variety of these and then they record it and you go and listen to them and they have breakout sessions, that is the part that is not recorded, it is ongoing for folks. Many Board members have a life, I don't, but some people have a life and they can't schedule their times, it is ongoing and it is stuff you do before the group then come into the group. It is something that people need to think about. Once we do this with the Board then bring it to the staff, bring it to the residents, we all need this, we are all living together and some don't know how to communicate with each other and there are all kinds of stuff going on.

Chairperson Richards – Thank you, Commissioner Tarbutton I agree, I agree with everything you said. I am actually familiar with some of the Mel King stuff who I worked with back in the 60's and 70's. Please get your Saturday time frames into Cara so we can schedule something and I hope the Board can attend because I think it is important. I think it is important for us to come together.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION – Executive Director Contract Renewal Term: 7/1/23 to 6/30/28.

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

Commissioner Tarbutton- Springfield - I think that it is going to be next year in June before it comes up and I personally don't understand the hurry. I understood there is something I see in the packet but I think we need to go to some of these trainings first. I would like to have a Motion we table this, I don't know what the hurry is and I don't know. If you guys know that I have brought up some concerns and we can't ignore that. We get some mediation in here so we can figure out how to live with each other, work with each other, we can realize that all Board members are to be treated equally regardless of our status and we start treating people with respect and not doing unethical things on every level, I guess I will say that. We are not ready I don't want to say no, I just want to say we can table this until we can work on some of our stuff.

Chairperson Richards – Commissioner Tarbutton I understand your issues but what I do want to inform people is that the last contract took 11 months with DHCD.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I understand that I think you wrote that there. She will get paid, she will get retroactive, the sense of urgency. Cara is compensated pretty well, got a raise, got COVID stuff, got this, we'll be fine, she won't be destitute if she does she can move in here with me, you won't be that way. That shouldn't be a reason.

Chairperson Richards – let me explain the issue. If she doesn't have a contract she then won't be able to work so we will have to go into the process.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – that hasn't happened that is a probability, you say ok it happened before – we don't know that, it is kind of like saying they can't be dating, how about the children. We are not there yet that is not the best excuse for it.

Commissioner Cancel – have contracts always been done for 5 years and who decides that?

Cara – the initial term when you first hire an ED DHCD sets the guidelines for all ED contracts in the State of Mass. Both with terms and amounts of money etc. When you first hire an ED it is only allowed to be a 1 year term, next is a 2 year then a 3 year and every succession renewal after that is a 5 year. They, being DHCD, I apologize, recommend that you bring it before your Board 12 months before the expiration. The current contract expires 6/30/23 and really quite frankly, if the Board doesn't want to renew with me I need to be able to have time to secure another job.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I think every professional, I know I used to work at the University, every professional that I know always had their resumes out there looking so it is not like “oh, I didn't get this job, I will be homeless and penniless.” I would think that would be something you have been doing all along. I don't know why but I just came from one seminar that said what makes a Board effective. New ideas, new this, change. I think when you came in you came at a point I wasn't here with Hite, but I heard there were issues but there are issues with everyone. I think maybe you have done what you have done here but there is a lot of other stuff that needs to be done, professional development for tenants, staff and Board would be one and some other issues I don't want to get into right now. I think these are things that are very, very serious and for us to say Oh a whole year. I know Marilyn you are always saying DHCD sets the standards. I talked to other ED's - just because they set these standards or ceiling it doesn't mean you have to abide by it. It is like I have a womb but it doesn't mean I have to have a

baby, they are just guidelines. That should be taken into consideration when we start talking things like well they did it, it's not me, I am just going by them that's the salary to be comparable with everyone else. I think that we are not there because we are not with some of the other comparable quality of life for residents as other LHA's are. I don't think we need to rush into this. I think we need to think of other options, not only you but people on this Board need to think about other options that will be better for our tenants and this town. Because we have to remember this is one progressive town that prides itself that attracts people for how progressive we are feeding our people and taking care of our people. There is a wealth of knowledge right there and I don't think the tenants in public housing here benefit from that. I don't know because it is not just here there are a lot of problems and I have been studying what happened at Chelsea Housing Authority, one was the Chair and Lawyer did everything the person wanted them to do. I am just concerned with that and I would like to feel a little better about which direction to go. Other than this we haven't gotten together to talk about our goals, we don't even have a committee, don't even have committees. We haven't even been abiding by the by-laws to have committees. I am not saying no, I am just saying table it. As my Grandmother would say, what's the hurry? You will get paid.

Commissioner Jones – question – we all had to fill out ED evaluation forms. Did you ever get all of them back and do you have a report about what you found when you received those?

Chairperson Richards – No, I didn't get all of them back. I have most of them back so I haven't finished it yet. But what I can tell you from that report basically is that there isn't anything on the report that would prohibit renewal of the contract. Even though I see them as two separate issues. I see a performance evaluation and opportunity for us to let the ED know some of what our expectations are for the future and have us set some concrete goals and have him or her maintain or achieve those goals. That is what I can tell you at this point and the answer is no, I do not have everyone's back.

Commissioner Jones – that would be one basis for me to hesitate to do this. I think the document we were sent was a blank template contract with essential boiler plate language that is in every ED contract that I have seen. But also point out that there is language in that the Board does a yearly evaluation of the ED. Reading between the lines of stuff I am hearing tonight should the Board feel the ED is not up to snuff there is a provision in the contract to remove the ED for cause. It is true, I was the chair of the hiring committee that brought in the current ED and we were handcuffed by DHCD in the length of contracts and basically pretty much everything else and pretty much all the boiler plate language that folks are reading – that is just how it is done. It did start out 1, 2 and 3 and then we are currently up to 5. I think there is language in there. I would be very curious why all the evaluations aren't in. In the past these have been turned in a timely manner and we have been able to proceed in part based on that. I kind of feel that we are at a loggerheads of sort realizing the 11th month and DHCD and we all know if you have any kind of experience with DHCD, they are notoriously slow, the most obvious example is trying to get approval of yearly budget. You really have to just go way out and it is like we will have to come back and re-visit this because they are unable to even get to us for months on end. I will leave it there.

Cara – I think we are only missing one – is that correct Madam Chair?

Chairperson Richards – I just want to say one thing. I sent the evaluations out maybe 3 or 4 weeks before our last meeting asking for it to be returned by our June meeting. Which it was not. I extended it and I got my next to last evaluation the beginning of this week, it was very far beyond the due date, it was not in any way shape or form near the due dates. One evaluation I have with consistent rating with no comments which wasn't really that helpful. I just wanted people to know that.

Commissioner Tarbutton- Springfield – I get what you are saying about DHCD they actually advise only and I got that from them today. I was in the University so I know the whole thing about funding you are expecting. I can live with that. That is the industry we are in. In the performance evaluation I have been

asking for information because when I do an evaluation it is like when I am being evaluated from theater I want to do comments, I need some information from folks. I am not going to be pressured, not just do dot, dot, I have a lot of comments and the more I am doing the evaluation the more examples I am getting. I think the most examples I have come from Salvo even though I am supposed to be a Board member for the whole place. It is very incomplete, one thing you may want to do to be helpful is why don't you do a blind one or an anonymous one. People do that all the time because I think there is some pressure not to say anything in your position, it's unfortunate. I think that happens, I think there are probably staff members who aren't even here who don't participate. One thing that really hurts my heart is that you have not even at all even asked for the evaluation of residents. They count, they matter and I can't believe people here would think huh- hear them, it may not be what somebody is preaching, it is happening and I think that's wrong, wrong, wrong. I got chastised and almost asked to be removed from the Board. I wanted to do a survey here and I wanted to bring it to the Board to say this is what is happening here at Salvo can we do this all over. I remember when I first got in there was this whole thing about survey monkey it seemed like it was a really big deal. Then I got a phone call saying somebody is a bully because of that so you don't even hear the voices. Randomly DHCD may ask clients. I wish they asked me, I call them and tell them. I don't know how you can look yourselves in the mirror without including residents, staff, even the option of being anonymous. I don't understand it guys you really need to re-evaluate yourself and what you are doing. This isn't what Northampton is about. Maxine Walker, I am not done claiming my time. Guys, don't see things narrow, we need to expand to include - what you afraid of? If I could put it on the agenda I would have said look what is happening at Salvo let's try to do this, you have to pay for it for everyone else you didn't even consider it.

Chairperson Richards – I don't know whether you were here or not but the Board was presented a survey which was developed by former Commissioner Silver. We voted on it and we also voted not to make it a 360 which was staff and residents and all of that. We voted on that so that we voted on.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – that was before I got here.

Chairperson Richards – Commissioner Tarbutton let me finish please then I will recognize you. It is the Board's responsibility to evaluate the ED from their perspective and to not remain anonymous but to sign the evaluation. Tom, am I wrong about that?

Attorney O'Connor – sorry about that, I think you are spot on with that analysis Marilyn.

Cara – also, Madam Chair if you recall and some members weren't on the Board at the time, but you consulted with the HR Attorney who said that a 360 review for this position was not appropriate and that is why you had him come to several Board meetings to present. That is why the Board decided not to do a 360 review based upon legal counsel advice from the Attorney Morgan, Brown and Joy who DHCD put us with for Human Resource matters.

Chairperson Richards – moving forward it would have to be changed, that is the rule at this particular point. Does everybody hear that anyway?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – guys I don't know what you mean by 360 I don't get technical terms but I don't understand how somebody whether or not you would take it into consideration how you wouldn't want to get any clients and ask their opinion and ask them to do a survey. People hate Comcast but every phone call they ask how did they do, what you liked and didn't. This is what I am talking about, we need to grow, this is a part of moving forward is to get feedback and I don't know why tenants feedback isn't that important whether you take it into consideration or not. It is there why don't you ask, I am also a resident too and they have voices and you should listen to them. I am on another board and they gave one with people's signature and the president went to the staff and board and said listen here is my email this is anonymous give me your thoughts on this, you don't have to say who you are because I like to hear from people where they can feel free to share their thoughts and opinions. The

people who wrote in actually said what wonderful things the survey thing did. I don't know what folks are afraid of, that is what's wrong with this group in some ways. The LTO's should have an input and we are just about getting LTO's and that is something we are going to exclude.

Chairperson Richards – ok, thank you.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – please don't do that, I am not done, I don't see you doing that to anyone else.

Commissioner Carney – I would like to make a point of order to the Chair.

Chairperson Richards – yes.

Commissioner Carney – we have been addressing the topic for a little bit of time now – and I think the typical process is to allow all Commissioners to at least chime in at least once before getting back to other Commissioners, not to interrupt Commissioner Tarbutton and I appreciate the four times now that you have spoken on this matter, but I would like to hear from Commissioner Cancel who has his hand raised and then I would like to speak.

Commissioner Cancel – Commissioner Tarbutton is one of our representatives for our tenants and to me our tenants voices matter a lot. Unfortunately, I feel we don't take residents voices under account. I do agree that residents should have an opportunity especially tenants organizations to at least have a survey and be able to weigh in on these types of decisions. In regard to Board members, I do agree that it should not be anonymous, I agree with the concept and the policy that the Board should sign it. I think this is done the right way. However, I would like to bring forward the idea of perhaps looking at this issue again at another meeting because some of these decisions were made by a completely different Board. Maybe a couple of people are still on the Board but this was a different Board who made the decision not to make it a 360. I recognize the fact that we had some legal advice, I would like myself to learn what that legal advice was and why was it recommended that it is not 360. But I do believe that at least the staff and tenants who are affected the most by these types of decisions – ED evaluation & Annual Plan. As it is I don't believe we give our tenants enough opportunity to weigh in on the Annual Plan – because 4 people attending our last Annual Plan meeting with residents is really sad. Either there wasn't enough notification or promotion of this event because I know myself from talking to many other residents that a lot of people would like to participate in that process.

Chairperson Richards – Thank you, Commissioner Cancel can I interrupt you to just remind you, I hear what you are saying at this point that is not the way the Board has voted to operate. It can be changed in the future – I hear you, I hear you, but at this point we need to make a decision whether to proceed with the process of contract renewal based on the information and the Board decisions that have been made so far or not. Knowing that it takes a year for DHCD to act.

Commissioner Carney – yes, thank you.

Commissioner Cancel – I am not done talking.

Commissioner Carney – ok, I will defer back to Commissioner Cancel to finish your statements and I would like to be able to say something myself.

Commissioner Cancel – thank you, Commissioner Carney I do not appreciate being cut off it is not the first time it has happened.

Chairperson Richards – I just have to say that the Chair has the alternative, prerogative to limit conversation to a certain amount of time. I haven't done that because I want to hear from everybody. Because I hear repeating that is when I go to someone else, I am sorry.

Commissioner Cancel – you not only interrupted me but you also shot down the idea of bringing this back to the Board for discussion and voting again.

Chairperson Richards – No, I didn't.

Commissioner Cancel – you said there was opportunity in the future and I understand you are trying to deal with this situation now so I will leave it at that but I do want this to be re-considered as a Board and I do not like being interrupted.

Chairperson Richards – thank you for your comments.

Commissioner Carney – I guess I raised this initially as point of order because it really feels like things are getting a little bit out of hand. I agree with the Chair and having had to chair numerous meetings myself, it is difficult to limit discussions but that is the duty of the Chair. That is the job. Other things that we can do to limit discussion are, well something that I am going to propose at the end of my statement here. The statement being that we have a motion on the table which is to put forward the template, the boiler plate contract that typically takes the 11 or 12 months. We got a little off topic because we started talking about the ED evaluation and I understand why because it is referenced in the boiler plate language of the contract. At the same time I think it is a separate issue and I see no reason not to move forward with starting the process. We have already voted on most of the items – we have voted on the salary. My sense is I would like to move forward with this, we have heard and I have heard from all of the Commissioners except Commissioner Brooks. I would like to hear maybe if he has anything more to say and then I would like to move the question.

Vice Chairperson Brooks – my position is this. Everyone has done quite a bit of talking at the last two meetings about this. I think the Motion is on the floor, it has been seconded and we should make a vote on it right now.

Commissioner Carney – then yes, I would like to move the question, Madam Chair.

Chairperson Richards – thank you, Commissioner Carney so we will move the question.

Commissioner Carney – I think you need a second.

Chairperson Richards – no, we had a second.

Commissioner Carney – no, you may need a second to move the question.

Vice Chairperson Brooks – I will make the second to move.

Commissioner Carney – now you can call your role.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards; Vice Chairperson Brooks; Commissioner Jones & Commissioner Carney.

VOTING NAY: Commissioner Cancel & Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

Chairperson Richards – where do we go from here, Tom? The Motion carried.

Attorney O'Connor – the Motion carried, we move on with the agenda.

RESOLUTION # 2022-14 – FEDERAL PLACESSETTER FOR FY23

Cara read the resolution to the Board.

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

Chairperson Richards – I just want to say this is par for the course, we do this every year because DHCD really doesn't have their guidelines together. We are putting our current budget, moving it forward until they tell us exactly what the new budget and allocations will be. Is that correct Director Leiper?

Cara – yes, that is correct.

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

VOTING NAY: NONE.

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Resolution.

MOTION

Authorize Executive Director to Execute FY23 AUP Audit Engagement and Contract with Lisa Fallon, CPA.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – did you submit her resume and her approval with the Better Business Bureau – did you have any information on that other than her name that you put to us Board so we can decide on this and know about this person?

Cara – DHCD, they are responsible for compiling the list of approved vendors for this AUP audit and there is only a small handful of agencies that they allow. She is on the list of DHCD's vetted CPA's.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – can I see then what comments are on this person. I don't know her from eve, but I would like to think we would have some kind of input in who the person is and what her credentials are and what her references are.

Cara – DHCD vets through all of that.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – so did you ask for them, what any of that was or did you just say oh you did it and DHCD you do everything and that's fine with me – is that what happens?

Cara – no, DHCD makes the regulations because they provide you with the funding, so you have to follow their regulations. They require an AUP audit annually and they say we require this audit and you may only use one of these people to do it. She happens to be one of those people.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – they gave you how many before and you say she is the only one available – how many did they give you?

Cara – over the last 5 years we have been using Marcum which used to be Guyder & Hurley but there is term limits on how many times one particular auditor can do the same place, so our people did the audit for the number of times they could. We had to reach out and pick someone else off of the DHCD list and we reached out to all of them and Lisa Fallon was the only one who had the availability to do it. Because she is on the DHCD list I am certain that their legal team has vetted appropriately since they are doing this audit for them.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – like my insurance they have a list of people you can go to when you have a wreck and you need to get your car repaired. I get that but I would still like a bit more information about her but that is fine.

Chairperson Richards – any information to Commissioner Tarbutton would be helpful.

Commissioner Carney – I think I had my questions answered by Director Leiper. I understand there is a very small list of DHCD approved auditors and the one's we have used in the past, we need to rotate off by regulation. We have had to do that at the City and other places. I understand there is a small pool and Lisa Fallon is among that small pool. Not only is she the vetted candidates, but she is the only one available. That helps me make my decision. Thanks.

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

VOTING NAY: NONE.

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

DISCUSSION

G Drive and Board Member Access to Board Meetings/Minutes

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – Motion to table. One of the reasons being because I didn't realize you were putting it on the agenda which is great. The person who I wanted to give a presentation is away so I mentioned it but I would have someone else come in to discuss it better. Maybe that is something in the interest of time that can be tabled to another time.

Chairperson Richards – so you Motion is to table?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – yes.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield made the Motion to table the G Drive Member Access to Board Meetings/Minutes Discussion, seconded by Commissioner Carney.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards; Vice Chairperson Brooks; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Carney; Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield & Commissioner Cancel.

VOTING NAY: NONE.

ABSENT: Commissioner Laufer.

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

Chairperson Richards – that will be on the agenda next month.

DISCUSSION

Legal Opinion Presented by Attorney O'Connor Regarding Commissioners Requesting Support for Elected Board Positions

Attorney O'Connor – my legal opinion on that question is that it is clearly protected political speech. It is protected by the first amendment. I looked through many, many cases and where you see the issue briefly touched on, not directly, is regulating political signage. The courts use language like “well this isn't like speech”, basically saying that can't be regulated at all. Some signs can be regulated in terms of where you place them and how big they can be and things of that nature because they can be an obstruction and things like that. But they then reference political speech which is extremely protected first amendment content. So I see no way that asking for support from any one isn't first amendment protected political speech.

Cara – yes, I actually also reached out to DHCD and I participated in a training and they said it is very common. We currently have a Board member that is telling people that some illegal activity happened wherein I was asked by the Chair at the time to place a call and find out if they would have support if they were to run again and I did so. DHCD's stance is that it is acceptable, it is not illegal. I had asked Attorney O'Connor to present just because I really wanted it 100% clear whether or not that was legal or not, so thank you, Attorney O'Connor I appreciate that.

Chairperson Richards – I just want to thank Attorney O'Connor and Director Leiper. I want people to know that I wasn't the one who was illegal.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I was in the same meeting and it is so strange I didn't hear them say that with DHCD. It is very interesting because as I said Cara called me, first she said she didn't, Cara called me a couple of days before in the evening and said I need your assurance. I know the power of dynamics is strange because I am still a tenant but I am still technically her supervisor. But she needed my assurance that I would vote for Marilyn as Chair and not vote for Elizabeth Silver who I didn't know, because Elizabeth was a mean old bully and poor old Marilyn is probably going to leave if she doesn't make the Chair. Now it is very interesting that you guys are like well it is ok, it is a first amendment right, where everyone I have talked to - Attorney General, Ethics Commission, DHCD said this is

unethical, lacks integrity, and unprofessional. That an ED, who is not even on the Board, who is calling and then she says “ok I am going to call Marilyn right now and she is going to call you back.” What a pressure on somebody just joining a Board and you guys say that’s ok. I don’t think anyone other than you guys in support of what happened but I am not surprised. I am not surprised that the Attorney would agree with that because I think an Attorney for NHA is for all of NHA and I wouldn’t want anyone to be subjected to any lawsuits or not. This is going to be ongoing and now I have to do something about this because it is wrong, wrong, wrong. If I was a supervisor and I told a subordinate of mine and I am not a subordinate but I am a resident and if I said I want you to do that and I can’t believe in any way that anybody would think that is right. Just shame on you all and Marilyn you called back, you didn’t ask me to vote for you, you acted like you were talking to me, but shame on you. Everything she wants you have been there for her, you have done it, she choose you right. But it is unfortunate talking about another Commissioner who I didn’t know very well to put her down, shame on you guys. Shame, shame, shame.

Cara – question – I literally just was on the phone today with the Director of The Dept. of Economic and Community Development, DHCD. Commissioner Tarbutton has stated that DHCD told her it was unethical and I would like to know who she spoke to at DHCD that said it is unethical.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I will have them call you and I will have the Commissioner call you as well.

Chairperson Richards - you have to be recognized please. Thank you.

Cara – I would like the name in this public meeting as to who you spoke to at DHCD that told you it was unethical because the legal team and the Director of DHCD that I spoke to today said that it was not illegal.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – highly illegal for you to call me and ask me to give you – I am confused can you re-state it.

Chairperson Richards – excuse me, in order to make this meeting civil I need to recognize you and right now Director Leiper has the floor. Please finish Director Leiper.

Cara – I would just like to know in this public meeting who you spoke to at DHCD because who I spoke to at DHCD is Christine DeVore, the Director and their legal team, Sara O’Leary. I would like to know who you spoke to that told you it was unethical for the Chair to ask me to call you to say whether or not you would support her if she ran again. Who did you speak to?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – wait a minute let me get that corrected, I spoke to Sara O’Leary.

Chairperson Richards – excuse me, can you please ask to be recognized.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – ok, I’m sorry, she asked me a question I thought I would answer.

Chairperson Richards – ask the Chair to be recognized, please.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – Chair can I be recognized, Simon says, please, please, sugar and spice.

Chairperson Richards – no, just please, just be recognized please. Go ahead.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I spoke to Sara O’Leary to and what’s his name Martin Rooney, he was the person of it. I also spoke to Scott Cole with the Ethics Committee and I spoke with Mass NAHRO and I spoke to about 3 other people. I have stuff written down and what you did that was unethical and I also called the City Solicitor. What you did you calling me asking me to give you your assurance that I would vote for Marilyn and you calling another Commissioner a mean old bully, that’s appalling.

Cara – Ok, I will email Sara O’Leary and ask her because she actually spoke to me today even though she is on vacation about this issue and it is not unacceptable for the Chair to direct the ED to place a call and say would they have your support. Thank you very much I will send an email and once I get the information back, I will let you know as a Board.

Chairperson Richards – I just want to say for the record I never ask anybody how they would vote. I told a couple of people that I was going to be running and I would hope they would support me. That is it. That is it.

Commissioner Carney – I noticed this and a couple of other legal opinions that are agenda items for discussion tonight and it seems as these are follow ups from the last Board meeting or last two Board meetings where this issue was raised. I am hoping this will be the last Board meeting where we will talk about this particular thing because we do have legal opinion that has been given to us. If people feel like we need to have something in writing from NAHRO that explains exactly what that is because a lot of things are being tossed around such as - unethical, unprofessional, shame on you. These types of things I don’t think need to continue at least not tonight in this Board discussion. So I would like to move on if we can to the next item if there isn’t other discussion. We have already heard what was done, what was said, we spent a lot of time and we are already well beyond our normal meeting time. Again, I would like to put this one aside and move on to the next, there is no action item to be taken here. If there is one, it would only be asking since I heard Director Leiper say she was going to send an email if there could be a clarification in writing from NAHO regarding the conversations between the various Commissioners and Director and what not, then that can be shared in writing, but not necessarily for further discussion, I don’t think among this Board.

Chairperson Richards – thank you, Commissioner Carney and I would ask Director Leiper - can you please clarify that, get those remarks and send them out to Board members.

Cara – Chair, she is on vacation so we will need to wait until she returns but I will call Christine DeVore, the Director and let her know what is going on.

Chairperson Richards – It would be good to have that in writing but thank you, Attorney O’Connor for helping us and thank you for your opinion.

DISCUSSION

Legal Opinion – Voting on Minutes When Absent

Attorney O’Connor – thank you, I think it was Commissioner Carney that brought this up at the last meeting. I would like to thank her for directing me to Roberts Rules of order because to me it was a major well no you can’t vote when you haven’t been there, doesn’t make any sense, but it turns out that is wrong. You can vote when you haven’t been at the meeting although the comment says the better practice is to Abstain. It seems counter intuitive to me to vote on minutes where you haven’t been at the meeting and you are voting on minutes that you really have no knowledge about. The better practice is to Abstain. Commissioner Tarbutton is a good example today – it was very reasonable, she didn’t have the minutes in front of her so she couldn’t accurately decide whether they properly reflect the meeting from the month before so she abstained. I think that is the better practice, but to be very clear, Roberts Rules does not require it.

Commissioner Carney – thank you, Attorney O’Connor I brought it up to Attorney O’Connor. That is helpful because on many other governmental bodies we had a common practice of approving minutes, maybe it is a different term than approval, maybe it is acceptance of minutes. Example - the entire Council would accept minutes or maybe approve of various sub-committees even though we didn’t attend those meetings ourselves. In the case of receiving minutes in advance even though you weren’t in attendance I appreciate there is that qualifier saying that the better practice may be to abstain but certainly they should be reviewed before voting either to accept or to approve.

Chairperson Richards – I guess my thought is if we have a quorum which we have to have to have a meeting, and the minutes are approved, could others say read but approved? That is a question.

Commissioner Carney – I think he clarified that, you can approve them.

Attorney O'Connor – you can approve them or abstain. Personally as the Attorney in me, I would never vote yes on something I haven't read or have no knowledge of but again, Roberts Rules do not require them.

Commissioner Carney – it would be another matter if you haven't at least received a written copy of the minutes to vote on them so I think if you have a copy of them that is what allows other members even though they weren't present, to approve the minutes. Personally because I think in order to even have a meeting we have to have a quorum that sort of solves that problem is that a logical conclusion or not?

Attorney O'Connor – No, that makes sense but then you still have the Motion and the Motion gets seconded and voted on so there would be the possibility that the minutes might not carry because there have been an abstention or two even though you do have a quorum so that would be the possibility. It would be unlikely for that to happen.

Chairperson Richards – what should we do Tom?

Attorney O'Connor – in the handout that I included in your package it references that the way we actually do the minutes that I have seen done in boards that I have advised and boards that I have sat on and here in Northampton that there is a motion that is seconded that is voted on but it is not even required under Roberts Rules that we follow that procedure. The Chair basically asks for any amendments, if there aren't any the Chair declares that the minutes are accepted. Kind of along the lines of what Commissioner Carney was saying. We have done it this way forever, I suggest we keep doing it this way because it is just our practice. If that issue came up I think you can solve the problem as the Chair by doing that.

Chairperson Richards – I think in the future what we should do is the minutes are accepted instead of the minutes are approved. Does that solve the problem?

Attorney O'Connor – do you still intend on still having a vote, a motion that is seconded?

Chairperson Richards – yes, we have to have a motion.

Attorney O'Connor – I think you can do it either way.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – For the last 3, 4 or 5 minutes I wasn't able to hear anything and according to Cara she said you could see me but I couldn't see or hear you so I don't know what the discussion was about so I will have to not partake in any vote that is going on there.

Chairperson Richards – thank you I think moving forward we have a plan. Thank you so much.

DISCUSSION

Public Television Broadcasting of Board Meetings

Cara – I put it on the agenda but I haven't had time to find out how much it would cost yet. I don't know if we have to get equipment or hire a company or what that would involve but I put it on the agenda so that it just doesn't go by the wayside. But I do think that you should think about the fact that any public records request, that anybody can request these meetings and get the link that is good to them for 30 days. I really recommend so that we can keep the public records request that it stay that way.

Northampton Open Media has not reached out to me as Gwen Nabad has placed in the chat, but I have reached out to them to find out if there is a cost and to get more information on it.

Chairperson Richards – I guess from what you are telling me Cara, that we should put it on the next agenda as unfinished business.

Cara – sure, if the Board wants to consider it you guys tell me. Do you want this to go on public television broadcasting of Board meetings or have it be where people can continue accessing whatever they want? Right now your bylaws do not say that you are going to put them on public TV broadcasting. People can attend the meetings as they occur and they can get them after. I guess what you need to think about as a Board if you want to do that then it would need to be voted on. I will continue when I get back to just gather information on it and present it to you at the next meeting.

Chairperson Richards – my suggestion is that and we explore the option. If possible at an expense that is reasonable to us. I want to remind people they can always tune in by zoom or by using their phone. We will explore that and I think it should go on the next agenda.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I think people should see what goes on and I have contacted the Open Media and I didn't see the cost. I think it is a public interest. Look around you how many people in meetings maybe 4 or 5 not even and not every resident knows how to use the zoom link. As a matter of fact there are some people in the Library now who are going through some training with the Mel King because they said please help me, I don't know how to do that. There is a conference room so they can go through the 5 week training. This is what I am talking about guys where there is a - I am not going to say a cultural elite - you can say well they can do it on the phone or they can do it on the computer, do you realize not everybody knows how to do that? That people who were here that our constituents, the people that we serve don't. They, at the very least, I am still going on, but they at the very least should be able to see what is going on, hear what is going on. You may get more people who are more interested if you just think about that. I don't know why people wouldn't want to do that. The very fact that you can get something and then it's like it's only going to be on for only 30 days- uh, let it be there for everybody to see anytime, it is a no brainer to me.

Chairperson Richards – thank you Commissioner Tarbutton point well taken.

Commissioner Cancel – I think I was a proponent of this idea as I would find it a lot more accessible for a lot more people just like the City Council and School Committee meetings get broadcast. I don't think there is a cost, it would just be a matter of coordinating with Northampton Open Media volunteers or a volunteer that would be willing to do this on a regular basis once a month. That is of course if the meeting is being held in person. I am not sure about the logistics of recording the meeting that is being done via zoom. But I do agree with Commissioner Tarbutton that this would hugely increase access particularly to tenants and other folks from the community that might be interested. I think in the effort of also being as transparent as possible it would be a great thing for us to be able to broadcast this on the Northampton Open Media and I am looking forward to the discussion next month.

Chairperson Richards – thank you, I agree and we will get back to you and put it on the agenda for next month. If we can find enough information maybe for a vote.

Commissioner Jones – on the Community Preservation Committee all our meetings are recorded. Back in the day when we met in person it was just one simple camera on a tripod and then the local public TV outlet would at some point re-broadcast it. I remember watching a couple of them when I missed a meeting. That is doable. I would think the cost would be minimal, I don't see why that couldn't be done for this body if that is the way the Board wants to go. The only thing which I don't think is much of a problem is this Board and this Authority is a quasi- public entity. We are not a department of the Mayor's office or City government in the way the School board or the City Council is or even the CPC for that matter. I don't think there would be an objection if we wanted to put it on NCTV whether we could, I am assuming it would be ok. But I would think the cost would be rather minimal. As far as how long the recordings last I have no idea. I don't know if they expire in 6 months or a year or they keep them all – no idea.

Chairperson Richards – thank you Commissioner Jones I totally agree and we will explore and see what we can do – I am in agreement.

Cara – we are now keeping the zoom meetings as long as zoom allows us to so that whenever there is a public records request we can provide that. It provides the video and the audio the only thing is because of our security for our computer and our IT solutions that is the only reason why it is only available for 30 days. Let's say the person requests it and doesn't get time to watch it in the 30 days or they want to re-watch it, all they have to do is ask for it again and we will have them re-send the link. The other thing is

Commissioners I will respectfully ask if you hear about people that would like to join the zoom meetings and can't seem to get on or can't join by phone or via zoom, we have full time resident service coordinators. I would absolutely love for you to let the property managers know so that we can do a referral because our RSC's will help them learn the process. How to call in if they don't have zoom or help them to be able to zoom. Also each of the properties has a computer for people to be able to log in with internet access. Each property - Salvo, Cahill, all of those, people can join from there as well. We encourage participation. I encourage Board members if you know of people who are saying they don't know how, to let me know so that I can get the RSC's to help them out and that way they can be a part of it as well. Thank you.

Chairperson Richards – we do have a resource thing when we send out our Board packet. So as much as we can get into that, that would be helpful. I know right now there is the bylaws and something else, I can't remember. That would be helpful, I think in having people understand what is going on if there are any documents that can be shared.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I think it is a little simplistic to say ok there is a computer at the facilities and they all work and whatever the case may be – yeah it is. There are people who are on the computer who aren't wanting to go to this meeting. You have to think about it, people who wear glasses they can't really see in those screens right there. All I am asking you is for a little bit of a thing is put yourself in their shoes, at the training at the Library it is a big projector for folks and then they have an owl and then they have things for people who are deaf. That's the consideration I give when I am trying to help somebody be a part of training. Make the common areas Wi-Fi and then maybe people can come in right now and participate when these meetings go on in Salvo house. There was a donated hot spot that is how some people are participating. It is with the person from Neighborhood watch who brings people around. It is not as accessible as you say, it seems easy, they can just go in and get on the laptop or go in there and it is not.

Cara – if you have people that want to get on that don't know how to make a phone call to dial in or join via zoom, please refer them to the RSC's because we would love to have them. Thank you.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I think it is just not that easy for folks to do. I wish it was they would be here every day if that was the case. Also someone asked when will we go back to regular meetings that aren't zoom? There is a new strain going around so I always get a little nervous but I don't think it has been talked about so maybe we can talk about it at the next meeting.

Cara – this isn't on the agenda for us to discuss so I think Attorney O'Connor would tell me that I can't talk about it. Although the virus is still very much active, they are starting to implement mandatory face masks again and so if you would like me to add it to the agenda for August you can let me know but we really can't talk about that at this meeting.

Chairperson Richards – Please add it to the agenda. Perfect, sorry I brought it up because I know better.

Commissioner Carney put forth the motion to adjourn the July meeting at 7:34 p.m. seconded by Chairperson Richards.