



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

APPROVED JANUARY MINUTES JANUARY 23, 2023

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, January 23, 2023 at 5:30 P.M.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:31P.M.
Upon Roll Call, those present and absent were as follows:

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

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Leiper; Sharon Kimble; Attorney Tom O'Connor; Keith Walsh; Kaitlin Hanning; Amanda Huertas; Danielle McColgan; Mia Weibel; Jose Cruz; Angel Sadlowski; Mary Chapman; Roy Martin and Al Chignon.

NEW BUSINESS

Approve Q2 FY23 Financials as prepared and presented by Gary DePace.

Gary – so basically tonight you’re voting on the acceptance of the quarterly reports which is as of December 31st. We are six months into our fiscal year and based upon the consolidated report that we have it shows we are under-spending at this point so I see no problems with that. We have actually expended 43.47% normally we would be if you were spending everything, would be at 50% so it’s kind of a good way of looking at it saying we’re right on target when it comes to our expenses on the 400 project 689 and MRVP. What we are asking you to approve tonight is an internal budget revision to our Federal 261 & 2 – it is an internal budget but the reason is we had to have some extensive repairs done on our one ton dump truck and because it was over \$5,000.00 it becomes a capitalized expense which means we add it to our extraordinary maintenance expense and therefore requires an amendment to the 7520 account in that program. It is an internal one, it doesn’t have to get submitted to HUD but it does require a Board vote.

Commissioner Tarbutton – you are going to repair one of the trucks you have, right?

Gary – we had to have it repaired. Cara, when it went for inspection it required some extensive repairs?

Cara – as part of the budget that was approved we were putting a new dump body on it because that truck is something we use on a daily basis, we have to do cleanouts and haul it to the dump. It has a lift body. Part of our budget was to replace the lift body and when they went to do that, in order for it to pass inspection it had \$6,564.38 worth of repairs, which were – body alarm, backup alarm, battery and shocks, replaced the tie rods and ends, alignment, brakes, change transmission fluid and filter, flush the radiator and change the coolant and an inspection sticker. It becomes capitalized once it reaches \$5,000.00 and we did have the repairs done.

Commissioner Tarbutton – I was just curious because this is a regular car we get inspections every year and they sort of say look this is about to go out, and about 3 months use of this, da, da, da. It just seems to me this is a huge expense from one year to the next, was this not foreseeable? Who are the people who are working on these vehicles and it seems like quite an expense.

Cara – This isn’t just a regular vehicle, it is the dump truck, and it has a pneumatic dump bed that lifts up to dump the stuff out. Some of those things were - it is time to do it and we planned on doing it. But some of those things were not foreseeable until they took the bed off and why it was an unexpected and unbudgeted item.

Gary – being a one ton dump truck just to replace it right now is upward of \$70,000.00, so it was worth putting \$6,600.00 to get the additional life out of that vehicle.

Commissioner Tarbutton – how old is it and again who were the people who worked on it?

Cara – I included the invoice in the package, the work was done by G & S Industrial, Inc. who did this particular work. It is a 2011 Ford F350 dump truck with a pneumatic bed.

Commissioner Carney – point of reference, I will just say I have a 2002 truck that I just put \$5,000.00 into and that is a 20 year old ruck but it definitely made much more sense to do that than to buy anything new at this point. I agree with the notion that the \$6,600.00 for what would cost about \$70,000.00 to replace is a wise investment at this point.

Chairperson Richards – let me just clarify one thing – we have already spent the money, correct?

Cara – that is correct.

Chairperson Richards – so it is only sort of a re-categorization of the money because it was over \$5,000.00 to capital is that right?

Cara – it puts it on a Capital line item because it is over \$5,000.00 which requires a Board vote. That is just an internal budget it is not a budget that HUD or DHCD monitors or needs to approve, it is just so that it is in the right line item when the financials are done.

Commissioner Carney – I recall hearing about this did we hear about this in a previous meeting? This is not the first time hearing about this. Can you clarify that?

Cara – we talked about it initially when we were doing the budget because we recognized the dump truck lift body needed to be replaced and so we received a quote for that. These were items that were found once they removed the dump body in order for the new dump body to work and for the truck to be where it needed to be and for longevity of its useful life these things needed to be done.

Chairperson Richards – just a point of clarification. We are not talking about whether we should get a new one or whatever, we have already repaired it that is a discussion for a later time, and we are just approving the moving of the item to capital.

Gary – that is correct.

Cara – you are doing two things. You are approving a Motion of the Q2 FY23 financials and a Motion to authorize the 26 1 & 2 internal budget amendment.

Chairperson Richards – let's authorize the budget move first.

MOTION

Approve Q2 FY23 Financials as prepared and presented by Gary DePace.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

MOTION

Authorize 26 1 & 2 internal Budget amendment.

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

Chairperson Richards – good, so we have a truck that now is in good condition and also have financials that are looking pretty good.

Gary – I would say we are doing good.

TENANT COMMENT

Mary Chapman – McDonald #201 – just wanted to touch on a few things. I wrote a letter to the Executive Director and I shared some comments and concerns from tenants here and I really got a lot of flak for that and she left off with a threat which was kind of shocking to me. I don't like threats, I don't think anybody does. I was told the staff felt bullied by my comments. I am sorry you all feel bullied but that is the way it is, people are saying things - you don't want to hear them then you need to tell people we don't want to hear what you like or what you don't like. For some reason I thought this was a democratically run deal. I shared the concerns of the tenants here. They were valid concerns and complaints, whether you liked it or not it doesn't matter. I am glad to speak for people who are afraid to speak to you. I don't know why they are afraid to speak to you, but they are. She asked me to quit sending these emails because the staff felt bullied, I am not quite sure why they felt bullied because all I did was share the concerns and the comments of the staff. I will continue to speak up for people who are fearful of speaking. People are afraid of you, you lead with punitive words, you say do this or else. In fact the last letter from the ED said keep your negativity to yourself. If this continues I will be forced to refer you to the Attorney for lease violation. So what is it you don't want to know what works and what doesn't work? I would really like to know because we are kind of left here in the dust. Please do let us know how we can share our concerns that is going to be acceptable and I will not be threatened by a lease violation. She said she will be forced to refer me. Usually if someone says they feel forced to do something someone is like threatening them with something. If someone is threatening the ED they need to stop because she is feeling forced. There is a huge lack of communication between the residents and the staff that needs to change and open up. It really needs to open up because we are a really captive audience here, what can I say.

Roy Martin – Salvo #529 – Marilyn I was going through a lot of my past records when I was running for Mayor. I ran across a letter you sent me that you were running for City Council at the time and a little patch that said "Vote for Marilyn Richards". You invited me to your house for a little lunch with other people. Thank you for that letter I am going to put it in my book – I am writing a book now. Also, all the apartments from the 7th floor down had water damage over the weekend. I wonder how that happened – did anyone look into it to see what happened? Oh, that's right you can't answer – maybe you can have it in the comments a little later. Everything seems to be going ok here, that young lady that works in the office is doing an excellent job, she is right on top of things. Jose seems to be perking right up lately. People say a lot of bad things about Jose but I can't find much wrong with him even though I grouch at him at times. Cara – I see you doing a fairly good job but Cara I think you are taking on too much work on your shoulders. Someone said now you moved into Easthampton. Taking on all these different places might be too much on you girl, I hope not but that is up to you.

Al Chignon – Salvo #329 – the building looks good, they did a decent job cleaning off that black and green mold. Nice to see the vents are cleaned. A lot of people with allergies especially myself have been having a lot of problems with this. I hope we can keep it up and maintain the vents in keeping them clean and try to get rid of some of the other mold around the building. As far as the office goes, I think the girl in the office is doing a great job and I thank Jose for taking care of matters that I have come to him with in the last month or so.

STAFF COMMENT

NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Cara read the report and gave updates.

Resident Comment Follow UP –

One resident at McDonald stated that the washers and dryers were not kept clean enough. We are inspecting twice daily, a.m. (inspection and clean) and p.m. (inspection and clean if needed). The same resident complained that residents do not have access to the minutes. I emailed this resident a link to the website and an area with instructions on how to view the minutes.

Several residents of Salvo informed us about a non-resident named Mr. Oliver stating police were involved for him stealing packages from the property. The Property Manager reached out to NPD and they had no reports or calls regarding this person at our address.

Update/Events

The April meeting date change from 4/17/23, however that is Patriots Day. We need to have it on 4/24 due to the timing of the annual plan.

Based upon the parking lots and sidewalks at HH being delayed due to the water mitigation must be completed first, we have asked DHCD to separate the walk/lot of Cahill from that project.

We are currently in the middle of three of our annual audits. The AUP being conducted by Lisa Fallon, the EHV voucher program by HUD and our federal audit by Marcum.

The first elevator at McDonald House is complete. We are awaiting the State elevator inspector to sign off. Once that is done, we will put it back on line and begin car number 2.

The Northampton Dept. for Health and Human Services hosted a vaccine clinic in the Florence Heights community room. Both COVID 19 and flu vaccines were available, 10 residents were vaccinated.

Grow Food hosted holiday markets at our properties, they offered meal ingredients that included fresh produce and whole chickens. During the market they provided hot chocolate and sang Christmas Carols with residents.

We distributed 100 gifts from Toys for Tots to parents for their children at both Hampshire and Florence Heights. We provided wrapping supplies to any parent that wanted to wrap their child's gift at pick-up. Christmas Cards were created and distributed to all households from the Housing Authority wishing all residents a safe and happy holiday season.

The Northampton Arts Council offered free First Night buttons to any resident interested in attending the New Year's Eve activities in downtown Northampton. This gave them access to all first night events for free.

The Podiatrist Dr. Michael Coby held foot clinics at 4 of our Elderly/Disabled properties. 20 residents took advantage of this service.

Commissioner Tarbutton – I appreciate the acknowledgement of the Arts Council. I didn't see it in the draft minutes because they were pretty good and it was for residents who receive snap benefits so I thought that was pretty good. I just wondered if we sent them a thank you note. I know we thank them here but not everybody comes here or are a part of this, maybe when we video tape people can see how appreciated they are. I just wonder with the ongoing relationships with the community the community building, did we thank them.

Cara – Danielle sent the thank you card on Commissioner Tarbutton. Danielle, you are here, did you already send a thank you card out? I know you usually do.

Danielle McColgan – I have not sent a thank you card. I did send an email thank you and the card is due to go out.

Commissioner Carney – follow up from last month's report. I continue to be impressed with the outreach we are doing with the community especially I think I heard at the end of your report, the podiatrist who is doing work with residents? Is that something folks typically have covered in their insurance or is this something that is a deep pocket expense for people, do you know?

Cara – I asked Danielle to look into finding us a podiatrist and a beautician because oftentimes elderly and disabled people have things like diabetes. Not all of you know but before I did this I was in nursing and I saw a lot of people who didn't have access to a podiatrist. It is serious, they could lose a toe, foot or

leg. When you start getting to be an elder that is very important. It does go through the Insurance so they only have to pay their co-pay if they have insurance. If they don't have insurance the RSC's are very good and Danielle is very, very good at helping people get insurance so that they are able to participate. We have had a pretty good turnout. I would like to see more people have access to it and as the word spreads I see more participation and I am hoping further down the line we will get more and more.

Commissioner Tarbutton – as one who totally utilizes the podiatrist here as Danielle can tell you the minute the note goes up I say pick me, pick me. It is really good, it is usually some scissor cutting, it is sterilized and people are as you mentioned, they are coming to it and I think it is a wonderful idea. I have seen a resident with a toe amputated for diabetes and that is a real problem. I do think it is amazing how many people come in that really need it. I would go for a pedicure/manicure but I can't afford it so just having that little bitty thing here is really helpful. I do wish there were other beauty services, pedicures and manicures and hair, maybe something with the Vocational High School to get people's hair done, that would be a nice thing to do, just a little something for folks.

Cara – we are already working on that, we were actually working on that before COVID started getting someone at low cost to come in and I did find someone I just didn't feel that their prices were something that our residents could afford, but our search continues. Yes, those are things we are looking to provide just even getting a haircut can make somebody feel tremendously better. Even getting your nails painted or filed can make people feel better too. We are trying to find somebody who will be willing to come in and do it and have it be cost effective for our residents.

Chairperson Richards – a lot of good stuff going on, thank you and thank you for getting back to us on some of the issues that were discussed at the last meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 2022 MINUTES

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbutton.

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the December minutes.

Commissioner Tarbutton – last meeting when we got the Ward 3 Neighborhood Watch people to come and help with the balcony clean off, I guess there was a memo from Housing saying you have to get this done by this date if not it is going to be like \$50.00 an hour so the residents got in a bit of a panic. We have a Representative from Housing that is also with Ward 3 and then they came in and that is how Kathy Service got involved and then they contacted Danielle. I just want that to be mentioned. It is really great that everybody is working together but in that sense I think it came out because there were some concerns with the fact that it had to be done at a certain time in November and people really need a whole lot of time sometimes, it is unfortunate. You have to send a memo of the memo of the memo to remind them of the memo for some people to get on board. Also, a note that everybody is computer savvy if you say I will show you the link they don't even know what that is. Some people don't even know how to check their messages so that can be problematic.

Commissioner Carney – Question – if Commissioner Tarbutton has a - I have no objection at all to keeping my yes vote with the corrections as offered but I think Commissioner Tarbutton would have to give us the correction so it could be added to the minutes. The Secretary, Cara, were you able to ascertain from Commissioner Tarbutton's comments now a succinct way of adding that as an addition to the meeting minutes and then I am happy to keep my vote be a yes for that.

Cara – I emailed asking for the corrections and Commissioner Tarbutton had indicated that she would email me what she needed and what she wanted changed and I never heard back from her.

Commissioner Tarbutton – read from the minutes about the Salvo power washing. I just needed something to be added to it because the power washing came on in December. I think it was less than a month notice. I don't have a copy of the letter, I did.

Commissioner Carney – Commissioner Tarbutton when we approve minutes we approve the minutes of the meeting, if what you are saying is that if something was left out of the Director's report I don't think it allows us to amend the minutes. We can correct what was miss reported. If Director Leiper had reported such and such but she forgot to report what you are saying now which is that there is also a letter that had been sent, that is not something that is a correction to the minutes. What it is, is you are saying that it is something you brought up to correct the ED when she made her report. If we didn't last meeting address this issue in the ED's report then changing the minutes now would make it seem as though the Director had made that information.

Commissioner Tarbutton – just like now I didn't see the notice with the Arts Council and this time it was in there so that I appreciate. It was not so much of a correction but an addition that was because of an email and all the stuff that went on and they went to Ward 3. Ward 3 didn't know what was going on here until there was concerns from the clients and the way that everybody worked together was superb.

Chairperson Richards – that is a good example of an addition. If the Arts Council helped out and they weren't mentioned then that would be a good example of an addition. Commissioner Tarbutton you voted no, do you want to change your vote?

Commissioner Tarbutton – no, I will change it from a no to abstain.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion – Basements at Hampshire and Florence Heights.

Cara – Waterfield Design – Jacob Murray who is the Senior Civil Engineer has been out to the property several times. It is moving along faster than it has ever moved along in the past. The draft of the existing conditions and topographic survey plans were done. The parking lots and walkways won't be done this year. We are hoping for the water mitigation part to be completed this year.

Commissioner Tarbutton – when is the estimated time that it should be finished, luckily it is snowing not raining out. Do you have any idea?

Cara – no, the State is moving faster than it has moved to date but the project is moving along. They had to do the topographic survey with the existing conditions and they have looked at a few basements. I certainly would hope that the water mitigation part of this project will be done this year and then I am hoping by summer of next year for the parking lots and the sidewalks to be done. It is part of a giant project.

Commissioner Tarbutton – did you ever have a meeting over there and say anybody else that is having problems maybe it is not as bad as some people reported. Just to get an idea from the residents.

Cara – it is a problem in almost all of the basements over there and has been a problem for many years that is why we asked DHCD to fund it, it is over a million dollars. When we start the project we will have them address the buildings that are the most crucial first. Some of them have had water pouring in from the side foundation and hence why it is part of the lease. They are not to store anything or put anything down in the basements because it is a known water issue and has been known for many years and why it is so costly.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION – AUTHORIZE MOVEMENT OF VALLEY BIKES TO PROPERTY SIDE OF WALKWAY AND ED TO SIGN ALL PAPERWORK.

Commissioner Tarbutton put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Vice Chairperson Brooks. VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards; Vice-Chairperson Brooks; Commissioner Carney; Commissioner Cancel; Commissioner Jones & Commissioner Tarbutton.

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

Cara – previously the Board approved that Valley Bike Share install and tap into our electric at Hampshire Heights. They placed it on the tree belt side of the sidewalk which happens to be the closest part to the road. Recently a vehicle damaged the entire structure. They want to put it back but they don't want to put it back in a place where it could potentially be destroyed again because it is very costly. They have asked permission to move it to the opposite side of the sidewalk which puts it on our property. It would mean pouring a concrete pad, moving the electric and they would pay for all of that. I certainly don't have a problem with it. It is something our residents use quite a lot. They did submit easement paperwork which I had our Attorney look at and would make sure it is fine before I signed off. I just need Board approval for them to move it onto our property.

Commissioner Tarbutton – I strongly support this and I will tell you why. We at Salvo have Valley Bikes and it has made transportation tremendous for folks. I have seen more people using it. Residents were able to get a year membership for \$10.00 if they had snap benefits and it is a game changer in a positive way. It is on Salvo property, right? One person got onto the bike and used the bike path to go to the YMCA. I strongly support this, I would encourage people to vote for it, it is a really good thing I think.

Commissioner Cancel – I am a huge proponent of Valley Bike being near our properties, it is a game changer. In terms of this move it is not only going to help the bike kiosk potentially not getting hit but the people who service these bike stations, they will be a lot safer as well. I definitely support the moving of the bike station in closer to the property - that would be amazing.

Cara – I think the only way it will affect us as a property is we take care of the lawns so it will reduce the area we have to mow, we may have to weed whack around it. I certainly think it is something the Board should do, as residents have really benefitted from it. I went over there and stood by it and people really fly down that road. If myself or my granddaughter was trying to rent one of those standing with that high speed traffic going by the whoosh from it is frightening. I was very eager to tell Ms. LaValley that I would happily bring it to the Board for you to approve it.

DISCUSSION

ELECTION PROCESS

Chairperson Richards did an overview. According to bylaws we elect officers at an annual meeting. The annual meeting is separate from the regular meeting. It happens once a year. We will have minutes from the previous annual meeting to approve and then we will elect our officers.

OFFICERS – Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Council Secretary. Which is Cara, our secretary is a non-voting ex officio member of the Board. The Secretary keeps the minutes and all communication. The Chair went over the duties of each position. After the election the Board Chair will assign two committees – Community Preservation position currently held by Jeff Jones and the personnel sub-committee as needed held by Commissioner Jones and Vice-Chair Brooks and the grievance committee as needed for un-resolved resident and applicant grievances – currently held by Vice-Chair Brooks, formerly Emily Laufer and Dr. Jessica Bossy. That is who has those now.

Commissioner Carney – I just did the quick math and I think that is about 32 checks per week that the Treasurer signs.

Cara – we had 155 last week, at the beginning of the month we have to pay landlords so I think there is almost 500, so there is a lot. I think I do have a lot of them on electronic payments now so that is helpful.

Commissioner Carney – is it at our February meeting that we will hear nominations for these positions and then hold an election for these?

Chairperson Richards – yes, that is right. Nominations at the meeting. You can nominate yourself or someone else. Then that person will also have an opportunity to say why they would like to have the position and then we elect.

Commissioner Cancel – question – currently Commissioner Brooks signs that many checks on a regular basis.

Cara – yes.

Commissioner Cancel – first of all he should be commended - that is a lot of work. I was looking at our website recently and I noticed that Commissioner Brooks has been on our Board since 1996, is that correct?

Vice-Chairperson Brooks – yes.

Commissioner Cancel – First of all I want to commend you for that Commissioner Brooks I know that last year I made some comments that were perhaps misunderstood or maybe I didn't say it the right way, but I think that part of why I wanted to have this as a conversation today is because of my sort of same energy I have towards this as I did last year. I am hoping that we can make this have a little more equilibrium in terms of on how we spread the load, there are times when Commissioner Brooks has been the only resident Board member and for me that matters a lot. A resident has lived experience so that lived experience is very, very important when it comes to making decisions and on the Board and on behalf of the residents. Commissioner Brooks I just want to tell you that I am really grateful for all the work that you have done all these years and in no way I wanted to sort of think you are hogging the load. In fact you have been very helpful, you have served on a couple of other sub-committees and I think that is really commendable. In fact I think you have practically done all of these positions and I really would be excited to nominate you next month to be the President, if anything. I want folks to think about that because this is somebody who not only represents our Board but also residents as well. In an ideal world for me right now in terms of how I think and how I feel that residents should have a lot to say in the decisions we make as an organization it would be amazing for me to see residents at these top positions. So I want us all to think about that when we think about the residents that we have currently serving on our Board and perhaps some people will be open to stepping up to a position like that. I want to encourage folks to think about that and I will certainly be interested in running for these positions as well. I want to commend those of you who have put in many, many years into this work.

Chairperson Richards – Thank you Commissioner Cancel. One of the reasons why we had people double up on a lot of roles is we only had 5 members up until we had the new law so people were serving one or two roles all of us at the time. We have always been fortunate to have residents on our Board – if you remember, Commissioner Laufer, Brooks, Hebert, and Tarbutton. Since the new law we have had more and I think it has helped us, to think out things. I couldn't agree with you more and I want to share in your praise for Commissioner Brooks. Thank you for signing all those checks and your dedication to the Authority for the many number of years that you have and hopefully will continue to give.

Commissioner Tarbutton – I actually think that was a wonderful thing from one Commissioner talking to another Commissioner because I have to say I kind of felt a little weird about that last year. There was a lot of emotions going on. I actually thought it was me who came out and made it seem like Commissioner Brooks was under-appreciated or something was going on. I do realize the first year I got in that is when the new law changed but we went still to what I feel doubling up and it is interesting because I am hearing people saying the positions and stuff that is kind of not how I felt it, it seemed very rushed. I get very nervous when I am to do something – maybe it is because my years of working with car salesman. I just want to savor it and think about it. I remember when I came on I didn't know anything about people, if it wasn't for Commissioner Carney talking about being on the City Council, I wouldn't know anything about it. We don't afford where people can talk and say I would be good at this position because I want to learn about this, I have background on this. That is what when you are electing positions that is what you do not like I am not saying it hasn't been this way, but historically it's been this way blah, blah, blah. Not so much here but in other Boards I am with, if it wasn't someone saying try this out because I didn't have any experience on most of this stuff, I have experience, but not on that. If it wasn't for someone giving me the “opportunity” I would not have been able to do it. I think this is what

people are saying a lot when they are joining they want to have an opportunity. I don't like when they say it has always been this way or it has to be this way. I would like for it to be open, I would like to know more about people. The only other person I have ever talked to was Chairperson Richards, we had tea and you talked about the position. Before that we don't have that opportunity unless you know each other in some other way. I would like the Board to represent the people they represent. Having Commissioner Brooks as a Chair, he is a resident and he has been here forever and it is through his clarity on things we talked about that I had a better understanding. I want the freedom to choose, I don't want anyone telling me who to choose and who not to choose, that is all I ask.

Chairperson Richards – I want to bring out a point you made. Our bylaws say state if they are nominated and accept the nomination, to state why they want it maybe a little bit of why they are qualified for it. I agree with you I think that is very important.

Commissioner Carney – I agree in a perfect world it would be great if we could share all this information but we are restricted by open meeting law, we can't have these conversations that aren't in a public meeting. One on one we can like the example Commissioner Tarbutton made of meeting one of the other commissioners for lunch. We are not restricted from doing that but we can't have 3 of us at a table. Right now with the fact we don't have Commissioner Laufer it changes the actual quorum, where if we were to try to get together we have to be very careful in that respect, which has made it really difficult for us in government bodies in terms of being able to talk and at the same time I understand why it is important for us to have these conversations about our qualifications in a very formal way in an open meeting. We will have that opportunity next month. It will be an interesting and democratic process.

Commissioner Cancel – think about the message we send to our community if we put residents at these top positions. Think about that because that is a big statement we are making in our community.

Commissioner Carney – I do hope that some residents will put their names in for President and Vice President. Presently we have a resident that is in a top position as Vice Chair. Secretary is already by the bylaws taken by the Executive Director. What are we calling top positions?

Chairperson Richards – Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer.

Commissioner Carney – Three positions. If we can all 3 of those be filled by residents that would be fantastic. We will see what happens next month.

Chairperson Richards – Also, there are the other appointments that the new Chair will make which is the Community Preservation which Commissioner Jones has been so well to represent us on that and we need the personnel committee with things that we can't resolve, that is very important even though it is an appointed position vs. an elected, I don't want to demean it's importance.

Commissioner Carney – can you clarify that there are 2 or 3 resident Board members right now.

Chairperson Richards – ask Tom, I don't think we need any more.

Cara – currently we have two, the law both old and new require we have a minimum of two but we do have an open position that was formerly occupied by a resident. It is the Mayor's decision whether it is a resident or not going forward. Tom, did I sum that up appropriately?

Attorney O'Connor – Yes, you did.

Cara – I just want to point out one thing because we have some new people here as well but Jeff Jones has been on the Board for almost 20 years and Maureen Carney's second go round with us and Jim has been instrumental but Jeff and Maureen as well. I think all of you, this is not a paid position, really, you get a stipend but it says something that you are dedicating your time in helping the community so thank you very much for doing that all of you.

Chairperson Richards – I totally agree. I admire your dedication on the Board, the Mayor gets three appointees, and the Governor gets one, right?

Cara – old law 5 members, four were appointed by the Governor, one had to be a resident. With the new law it added two, one of which has to be a resident and 1 has to be the Housing partnership. The original 5 – one has to be a labor position. When the old and the new law melded it is a total of 7 – 2 of which have to be residents, 1 has to be appointed by the Governor, 5 are appointed by the Mayor regardless of what position they hold as far as union rep or whatever.

Commissioner Carney – we still have the requirement for the union representative and that is Jeff Jones right now.

Commissioner Jones – in the union rep. process, historically Maureen was on the Board and asked me to take over because the City Council passed a new rule saying you could not be on the Council and one of these Boards at the same time, so that is how I originally came into all this. When the day comes and I am no longer here I will be telling the local labor council that the spot is opening up and that you need to consider someone else and then the Mayor will get that person's name and go from there. That is down the road a little but I have a term to finish out.

Chairperson Richards – I just wanted to make it clear that we must have representation for labor and that the labor council and Mayor work together to make that happen and they have worked together for years to appoint Jeff and Maureen.

Cara – the way the law is written is that there are 3 different unions, all 3 are notified and they must give no less than two, but no more than 5 names to the Mayor to choose from.

Commissioner Tarbutton – not every ED is the secretary as a matter of fact a lot of people did and they said that is a lot of work. I was only here a little bit when Jon Hite was here but I don't think he took the notes, I think he had someone from the office that they gave time to come in and do the notes. I would like to have a separation from Church and State. When I think of the person being the Chair I would like them to be independent, fair, represent everyone not that it hasn't happened. Talk about the position. It is not always on the calendar like ok, get ready for the February nominees. I think if it had been there it would have been something we thought about, some people say it is every February or whatever the case may be. I meant one on one because you are right we can't have individual. According to the by law there are some standing committees but I have to tell you other than what Jeff does I didn't know he did that part of the committee so thanks for enlightening me on that. If we are going to adhere to the bylaws let's do all the bylaws.

Chairperson Richards – I encourage you to read the updated bylaws, the secretary position is in our bylaws, if we change that we would have to change our bylaws.

Attorney O'Connor – It is not only in the bylaws it is in Chapter 121B, it is the statute that requires the ED to be the Secretary. The bylaws are just parroting what the statute says. There is absolutely zero wiggle room there at all. She, Cara, in this case, is the secretary by statute.

Chairperson Richards – there are lots of things in our bylaws that are law so what Tom is saying is that we can't even change our bylaws.

Cara – Commissioner Tarbutton I know I am the secretary but just so you know I am not the one that transcribes these minutes. The minutes are recorded and I have a staff member who then listens to the recording and then types out the minutes. Although I am the secretary she does the minutes, she gives them to me, I review them and make any changes that I see and then I send them out to you all for any potential changes you may see too. I don't want you to think that I am the one listening to the minutes and typing them out, I just wanted to clarify that.

Commissioner Tarbutton – Tom, during John Hite were the bylaws the same because bylaws can be changed and the laws too. I'm just asking for a point of clarification was this always the case or is it within the last 8 to 9 years?

Attorney O'Connor – that is a two part answer. The bylaws were amended pretty significantly with Commissioner Silver, who spent a lot of time rewriting the bylaws so they have changed but the second part what has not changed is who is the secretary because we would not be able to have the bylaws say

something different than the statute namely chapter 121B, section, sorry it escapes me off the top of my head, but that chapter in the section requires the Executive Director to be the secretary so that part did not change and Jon Hite was the Secretary when he was the ED.

Commissioner Tarbutton – I appreciate that because a lot of times when I am asking questions for clarification it is helpful to get an answer of instead of like did you not see it in the note? Did you not see the new bylaws? I do ask for clarification it doesn't mean I didn't see it, it just doesn't make sense to me and that is why I am asking for clarification. I appreciate when being talked to if we could remember that please.

Cara – so is it clear now that I just want to make sure everyone is clear and Commissioner Tarbutton that you understand that it is in the bylaws but it is also the law, so Chapter 121B of Mass General law is what dictates who can be the Secretary and the law is what requires that. I know that I have many levels that I utilize staff to do things to help out because it is a lot of work but I do that and it is part of my job.

Commissioner Tarbutton – the only thing that I am bringing this up is as I said I would like to see a little bit, I get it, a little bit of the separation of church and state here. I really would like the Board is the Board and the ED is the director. It seems like we are enmeshed and I don't know who's leading who but I really wish us to have some independence and autonomy following the rules of course but it makes me, I just think that we need to kind of practice what we are preaching.

Commissioner Carney – I would say the only way we can separate church and state which I believe to be somehow a disconnect, the ED from the Board, when state law requires it, is to engage our State Senator and State Representative and talk to them about changing the law. So I think Commissioner Tarbutton if you are interested in doing that I think those would be the people to reach out to and it would be a many, many year- long process and it would require the other State representatives across the state, 330 cities and towns. Those people would also have to be brought on board. It would happen that we would actually be in a position to separate the Executive Director off of the board.

Commissioner Tarbutton – yeah, I am not saying that's exactly what I want. I would just like to see that I would like for you to get the feeling like that in some ways as I said enmeshment, I feel that you know.

Commissioner Carney – no, I don't understand what you are saying.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – Let me try to say this, when I get a call from the ED saying to vote for the chair choice why would somebody who's not on the board, the ED be calling a commissioner, a resident Board member asking about my vote for the Board.

Chairperson Richards – ok, I just want to stop this back and forth conversation. I just want to say that the separation occurs I think when we read the minutes after they are prepared and then approve them at the meeting, so we do have a chance and Commissioner Tarbutton you have the opportunity today to make some additions to our minutes or talk about them so that is the separation by law that we have right now. So please read your minutes and make corrections if you see them.

Commissioner Tarbutton – actually I would like to have a copy of the minutes after each meeting the electric way so I can go through it. I think the major point the elephant in the room is that when I say someone shouldn't be telling a Board member how to vote or whatever who is not on the Board that is cause for concern and I guess I am the only Board member who finds that concern.

Cara – Commissioner Tarbutton you state that we should be separated but really in fact DHCD and HUD and all the regulations say that the Board and the ED are a team and we are supposed to be a team that works together to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing for our residents which I think we are doing a great job in doing but that confusion is I think for me, you know what is hanging some people up here is that it shouldn't be a division, we are supposed to be working together.

Commissioner Tarbutton – I think I am being misunderstood I am not saying that I think that we aren't supposed to be a team we are supposed to be working together but I am saying when I get a call for the Chair which is a very important position from you as the ED and then moments later from the Chair.

Chairperson Richards – I don't want to discuss that any further because we have already discussed it.

Commissioner Tarbutton – well that is what I meant not about the working relationship I just don't want anyone calling me asking me who to vote for because I think there is unethical issues going on there.

Chairperson Richards – I would say that in some ways how elections work, is that when you run for an office and I think Maureen Carney will agree with me, if you decide to run you sort of go out there and see what it is all about and what kind of support you might get or not and then you make a decision whether you are going to run or not. I would like to see any other Board members that have anything to say otherwise I think we can put this to rest and we will deal with it at our annual meeting.

Commissioner Tarbutton – I have a question about the annual meeting.

Chairperson Richards – go ahead.

Commissioner Tarbutton – on the annual meeting, so that is also with a tenant involvement is that right?

Chairperson Richards – no.

Commissioner Tarbutton – I am wondering when that happens when we are talking about the annual meeting if tenants have been schooled on that if there has been any workshops to help them understand what is going on and their involvement.

Chairperson Richards – that is a very good question so the annual meeting is really for the Board to elect the officers that is what it is about like in City Council the day after the inauguration they all get together and they nominate the Chair of the City Council or the President.

Cara – Madam Chair I think Commissioner Tarbutton is mixing up the annual meeting and the annual plan. The annual plan is where residents get involved for Capital stuff, this is completely different.

Commissioner Carney – I just had a question so for the next month will the annual meeting precede to our regular monthly meeting?

Chairperson Richards – yes.

Commissioner Carney – and is it at the same time at 5:30 and then our regular meeting happens just after that. Let's say our annual meeting goes on for an hour so then the monthly regular meeting won't start until we are done no matter when that is.

Chairperson Richards – yes.

Commissioner Carney – ok that is what I was wondering when the Chair will take over at that point.

Chairperson Richards – that is correct, then whoever is elected Chair will take over at that point.

Commissioner Carney – But the present chair meaning you Marilyn, and the ED will work setting the agenda for the next monthly meeting. For the February meeting you are still setting the agenda.

Chairperson Richards – yes correct. The meeting will actually be conducted by the secretary, the annual meeting will be conducted by the chair for the election of the officers.

Commissioner Carney – then the new Chair will run the monthly meeting that follows right after.

Chairperson Richards – that is right. So, actually this has been very helpful and everybody gets to brush up on their, you know, on how we do things and it has been educational so thank you for bringing it up. I hope it has been informative. If there is no other business I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Cancel put forth the motion to adjourn the January meeting at 6:59 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Carney.