



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

APPROVED OCTOBER MINUTES OCTOBER 16, 2023

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, October 16, 2023 at 5:30 P.M.

Chairperson Carney called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

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

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Jones

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Leiper; Sharon Kimble; Jack Redman; Attorney Tom O'Connor; Keith Walsh; Amanda Huertas; Danielle McColgan; Deb Walker; Jose Cruz; Angel Sadlowski; Tamina Gonzales; David Edwards; Cheryl Cardinale; Mary Chapman; Ed Renkowic & Alfred Chagnon.

TENANT COMMENT

A Tobin resident stated that they appreciate what you have been doing, has lived here for 10 plus years, administration doing outstanding job. Thank you.

A Salvo resident has concerns in regard to the bed bug issue. There is a lack of laundry services – will that contribute to the problem?

Salvo resident – wants information on bed bugs and preventative measures.

Salvo resident – people are going around saying we have to pay \$5,000.00 to clean our apartments. What is going on? We aren't getting information and everyone is stressing. Wants NHA to give information.

Salvo resident – I have had bed bugs for 4 weeks and there has been no educational material.

McDonald resident – wants to know about the bed bug problem and was there a contingency plan in order before this happened.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A statement was read to the Board from a Salvo resident via a friend.

STAFF COMMENT

NONE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Cara read the report and gave updates.

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 2023 MINUTES

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: Commissioner Jones

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the August 2023 Minutes.

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 2023 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

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

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

VOTING NAY: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

ABSENT: Commissioner Jones

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the October 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield stated that the Executive Director stated a resident's first and last name in the meeting which was an open meeting law violation. Wants the minutes to reflect this.

Chairperson Carney said they would look further into this.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Amendments to Board By-Laws

MOTION

Amend the Board Bylaws to include Code of Conduct Language from 760CMR4.03;

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

Vice-Chairperson Cancel asked to change the wording of the motion. Discussion ensued and a new Motion was put forth.

MOTION

Amend the Board bylaws to add under article 3, section 3 and adding # 2 paragraph to reflect reference to the code of conduct language from 760CMR4.03.

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

VOTING NAY: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

ABSENT: Commissioner Jones.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Motion.

MOTION

Amend the Bylaws to reinstate Governance and Policy Committee.

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

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

VOTING NAY: Chairperson Carney & Commissioner Richards.

ABSENT: Commissioner Jones.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Motion.

Vice-Chairperson Cancel brought up reasons why this sub-committee should be reinstated.

Commissioner Richards gave a history on why it was eliminated.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield wants to see where there was an amendment getting rid of this committee.

Cara – I had asked our Attorney to reach out to the Attorney General in regards to the fact that we have to have a grievance hearing and whether that had to have minutes taken and whether it needed to have a posting in regards of an OML. In 2021 we removed all committees that weren't required by law.

Attorney O'Connor – as the Housing Authority Attorney my only concern here is Open Meeting Law violations and unfortunately we have seen recently despite best efforts, we have violated them twice and it certainly wasn't anything intentional and they were very deminimis violations but they were violations nonetheless and that lengthy response we got from the Attorney General's office made it clear as a bell that these sub-committees would definitely be subjected to the OML laws. That would be my biggest

concern, is the potential for OML violations particularly as we have recently seen how easily, unfortunately it is to violate those laws. That is my biggest concern.

MOTION

Amend the Bylaws to reinstate the Finance Committee.

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

VOTING YAY: Vice Chairperson Cancel & Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

VOTING NAY: Chairperson Carney; Commissioner Brooks and Commissioner Richards.

ABSENT: Commissioner Jones

Therefore, Chairperson Carney stated the motion did not carry.

MOTION

Correct Proposed Scrivener's Errors in the Board Bylaws.

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

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield asked for a motion to continue this until next month as she would like to have a hard copy that she can review before a vote.

MOTION

To continue this matter of Scrivener's error correction until Commissioner has a paper copy to review before a vote.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: Commissioner Jones

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Motion.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2023-09 – Adopt FY2024 Payment Standards effective 12/1/2023.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

ABSENT: Commissioner Jones.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Resolution.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

Cara – On 9/28/23 I sent out an email announcing the press release that NHA was being awarded over 3 million dollars. I received a reply all from Commissioner Richards that included everyone on the Board, therefore creating an open meeting law violation. Although she almost immediately sent a reply to just me saying that she inadvertently hit reply all on the press release, it was only intended to be to me and she wanted me to know. I was required to file an Open Meeting Law violation on 9/28/23. The same exact thing happened before and I did self-report. The Attorney General sent me back an email (which Cara read). We would release the email that was a reply all in addition to the complaint as part of the following month's minutes once it is approved by the Board. I would like to make a Motion to ask the

Commissioner to take the Open Meeting Law training again and allow to attach the complaint and emails in public format as part of the minutes.

Vice-Chairperson Cancel – can I make a friendly amendment to the motion to include all Board members and the Executive Director to attend the open meeting law training.

Commissioner Richards – I did the violation and I am attending a training on November 6, 2023.

Chairperson Carney asked the Secretary to send upcoming dates bcc to all Board Commissioners about training dates.

MOTION

Board Commissioners and Executive Director to take the Open Meeting Law Training and allow to attach the complaint and emails in public format as part of the minutes.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSENT: Commissioner Jones.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Motion.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield put forth the motion to adjourn the October meeting at 7:22 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Richards.