



# NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

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## JUNE MINUTES

JUNE 16, 2025

Approved on AUGUST 18, 2025

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, June 16, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

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

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

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Carney; Commissioner Brooks; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Healey; Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield & Commissioner Wood.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Matt Mainville; Sharon Kimble & Doug Kierdorf.

### LTO COMMENT

**Doug Kierdorf – Forsander** – things are, as far as I know, there are 3 property managers looking after all of the properties and people are away on vacation now. We are wondering is there any news about when our ventilation is going to be repaired, when are we going to get buzzers and intercoms put in and when are our mini splits going to arrive because it is difficult for us to get any information at all since Annie is doing the best she can as she is up to her ear holes.

**Chairperson Carney** – Mr. Mainville would you call Mr. Kierdorf tomorrow and help answer his questions?

**Matt** – yes, actually if you want we could, like we did last time, I would be happy to come out and sit down in the community room if you would like.

**Chairperson Carney** – great, I am sure they would appreciate seeing you and maybe checking in on what is going on.

**Doug Kierdorf** – I know that your time is very precious and you yourself are up to your ear holes in work, so it would be very much appreciated if you came out, but I would understand if you didn't.

**Matt** – I will call you tomorrow and we will arrange something.

### PUBLIC COMMENT – SUSPENDED

### APPROVAL OF THE MAY 2025 REGULAR MINUTES

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

**VOTING YAY:** Chairperson Carney; Commissioner Brooks; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield; Commissioner Healey & Commissioner Wood.

**VOTING NAY:** NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the May 2025 minutes.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

**Matt** – bad debt write-off is \$3,029.00 – that is a great number, congratulations to staff, that is a commendable amount - it is a very limited amount of tenant account write-off.

One or more of the commissioners had asked that we talk a little bit about the development that Holyoke is undertaking. (Matt put up a screen shot of some of the developments). Holyoke Housing Authority had a long history of development work. We were lucky enough to receive a Hope 6 grant back when my

first job was as Assistant Hope 6 coordinator. We received a 15 million dollar grant from HUD, with that money we leveraged it into about 47 million dollars through different funding sources and did 100 rental units and 60 home ownership units. We have had a long term relationship with Habitat for Humanity which I know you guys have as well, I think we have done 10 or 11 houses with Habitat for Humanity. Most recently we did Lyman Terrace which was a property constructed in 1939 right after the act, it was old, undersized, the building infrastructure was past date, so we applied for and received a whole bunch of funding sources. We moved it from Federal public housing and we used RAD and project base so we could get some financing and we ended up with a project that cost around 74 million dollars. It was a big project, we improved all the underground utilities, we increased the square footage of the property, you can see the little bump outs there, they were modular in construction, then we married it to the existing building so we could improve the bathrooms, put in washers and dryers and just expand the square footage of the space. We did Churchill and Lyman Terrace with partners. Back in 2018 the Holyoke Housing Authority became its own developer. The City of Holyoke designated the Carlos Vega Park through their housing plan in need of construction, they went out for solicitation, we responded and were selected as the development partner for the City. So we are acting independent of the City but in partnership. We undertook a master planning process, the city and the residents in that neighborhood has seen a whole significant number of master planning processes, so I appreciated their efforts, we went to everything we could, dominoes, tournaments, school plays, everything and so we undertook a pretty thorough master planning process and in 2020 we applied for and received the largest mass works infrastructure grant in the Commonwealth on our first try. That allowed us to put in all new water mains, separate the sewer, sidewalk, streets, lightscape, turned the area from what was a very industrial area to a much more residential area, so it anecdotally allowed for development of other properties around us. The folks next to us in an existing building wanted to rehab their building. We put in all the water mains and now they are rehabbing the building. In 2021 we received funding for 12 units of housing through community scale which is a product the State provides, we used some Housing Authority funds, we applied for and received funds from the city home funds, so we were able to construct those and they are fully occupied at this point. For those 12 units we had over 1,000 applications so it tells you the demand for housing in the commonwealth and in western mass. We have applied for and received funding for our second phase which will be 20 home ownership units, you saw the ad on TV, which I think drove the inquiry. We have designed and let the contract to Western Builders for 20 duplex style home ownership units, we went modular, you have vacant lots but for the foundations, but within a few days we had 3 houses up, so it is a pretty cool form of construction and it saved us some dollars as well. By the time it is all said and done we will have 72 homes – 52 will be rental and 20 will be home ownerships. I am proud to say around the Carlos Vega Park those four parcels have been vacant since the 1980's, this is the first time we will have housing on all 4 corners of the park. I have an amazing development team and squad that has really pulled things together. We are accepting applications, if anybody wants to apply for a home ownership unit, we have a web page. This was done through a program called Community Scale Housing. We applied for CDAC for some pre-development funding and the city gave us some ARPA funds. These will be income restricted first time home buyer's programs. We are lucky enough here in the City of Holyoke that we administer the buyer's assistance program for the city which allows people to get up to \$4,999.00 towards closing costs and we also run a HUD and state certified home ownership training program, so we can kind of be a one stop shopping. We have actively completed and done many Section 8 home ownerships, so we are in the process of actively marketing those homes, 3 & 4 bedrooms, 10 duplexes, fee simple construction, no home ownership association or condo association, we wanted to minimize costs and they are designed to be stand alone. Then we have submitted an application for tax credit for phase 3 which is 40 units of low income housing, tax credit housing. We are hopeful that our timeline will be more accelerated then what we first contemplated.

They are all LED energy efficient buildings making sure we meet all the green standards of the commonwealth and what good construction practice should be. There will be a lottery for the home ownership units, they are very nice homes that will do great things for this neighborhood, so we are excited about what we do here in Holyoke, particularly since we recognize this particular neighborhood has about the lowest home ownership percentage in the commonwealth. It is somewhere around a 92% rental, so to be able to provide some home ownership is very exciting. The other thing we have just started doing too is working with UMASS Amherst to do some small homes, targeted, intelligent, well planned out parcels. We are expecting delivery of our first one this fall. That is kind of what we do, it is an exciting thing to be able to provide a different aspect of housing folks.

**Chairperson Carney** – thank you it was very interesting. I know this request came from one of the commissioners, as you may know as in other housing authorities, we have a representative on the Community Preservation Committee. We also have a representative from our board on the Northampton Housing Partnership.

**Commissioner Jones** – I saw the article about a month and a half ago in the Daily Hampshire Gazette and I got all excited because for decades many housing authorities have been playing defense, and not going on the offense. I also sit on the Community Preservation Committee and in my time I don't believe we have ever had the NHA come forward with a housing proposal. We have had a couple of playgrounds and things like that which are all good but to actually go on the offense the way you have laid it out here, I commend you for what you folks are doing in Holyoke and I would hope that down the road Northampton could learn some lessons about how we might get involved along this line going forward. One thing I am excited about with Laurel Street, there are 20 units of affordable housing. So many of these projects are all market base with some affordable thrown in. In this case this particular plan is 20 units completely affordable and it looks like it is almost done for that to take shape and we need so much more of that in Northampton. I appreciate the presentation and I would urge the board, when we get back to so-called normal footing, to really take another look at this and push it because we have a lot of work to do in Northampton and we have just been playing defense for too long and this looks like this is something we can do. CPC funds are usually used to leverage other forms of funding and we should be taking advantage of it and I will leave it there, so thank you.

**Commissioner Healey** – I worked in Holyoke in the Lyman Street neighborhood 40 years ago and saw the living conditions in those apartments which was appalling. I am so impressed and I have since been to the new apartments a few years ago and it is such an incredible increase in quality of life for people to have that sort of really impressive building of units. I am really impressed with everything you have done and like Commissioner Jones, I feel very enthusiastic about looking at funding sources in the future and I hope we can get over the hump of the year so we can really do some positive, constructive change in this community. It was very stimulating to see how well that went in Holyoke, so thanks for that.

**Matt** – you guys are poised to be able to do good things because you have CPA, you have the, well I am guessing from your elected officials, those are the critical things to get over the hump with Mass Housing and EOHLC funding.

**Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield** – I am just telling you how wonderful it is. I have lived in Holyoke and they easily look like \$300,000.00 condo's in that area. I am just amazed that monies that you get is utilized, that is all I would like to see, money that you get either from grants, government, subsidies, are utilized and you see the difference, not that we are just being told what is going on. The people and their attitude, they have pride in where they live and these were mainly people of color. I think you gave a specific of 92% and I am so glad to have you here to show us because I have been hearing about this for a while and trying to say – why aren't we doing something like that? I think a commissioner said it, not on the defense, let's be on the offense. People in Section 8 getting housing,

people in public housing getting housing ownership. I don't know why this is a difficult thing and why Northampton as progressive as we are, that is not a norm. So thank you for sharing it.

**Commissioner Wood** – it is really exciting but one thing you did say is that you think Northampton is poised to do something similar and it has been my experience that Northampton often sits in this sort of problematic space of being a community that has high need but also not being competitive for a lot of State and Federal grants because of its relative economic status. Do you see a significant difference between Northampton & Holyoke and the ability to be competitive for the types of leveraged grants that enable the type of projects that you've just presented on?

**Matt** – I think that there are kind of counter weighted benefits and detractions from doing the work in Northampton right? We are a gateway community, the City of Holyoke, and that does give us an advantage as it relates to getting those grants but on the flip side, Northampton is significantly higher than what we have in Holyoke and so as a result when you are going to get an actual mortgage and bank lending, you are able to support more debt than we would, so I don't know if it is necessarily a wash but the other thing Commissioner Jones was talking about, the Community Preservation Act funds. We have it in Holyoke but as you can imagine our CPA doesn't match what you have in Northampton, so if there was the willpower to be able to bring, and I am sure you get home funds and those kinds of dollars, every development activity in every community has ups and downs, strengths & weaknesses. It is just a matter of putting together and cobbling together the best deal you can. There is also a large push to put housing in neighborhoods of opportunity. I think Northampton has that advantage. There are certain grants we are ineligible for and neighborhoods of opportunity than Northampton would so what it does take is a strong commitment from the board and the city because these things don't happen overnight but it takes fortitude to make sure when you take that first leap that you stick with it and persevere. They happen across the commonwealth, it is just a matter of figuring out what is the best plan.

**Chairperson Carney** – thank you, Mr. Mainville, I might add too, that of the recent projects we have seen and even proposals that we have seen in Northampton we have seen some for example, the former nursing home on Bridge Road, that has some CPA money designated to that. This may be unique to Northampton vs. Holyoke in that we have a number of agencies very interested in housing. We have the Valley CDC, they are actually the ones developing that former nursing home and as Commissioner Jones referenced, we have had Habitat for Humanity develop places, those places on Laurel St. and we definitely have a lot of people other than agencies who are really concerned. So I think if there is a way to harness that, of course, stuff like this I imagine is also a lot of the topic of discussion where we have a commissioner seated on the Northampton Housing Partnership. If anything I am hoping this is kind of a kick start to getting conversations going. Perhaps, this is a great presentation and if at some time there were a similar sort of effort from one of our local developers, whether it is the CDC or Habitat for Humanity, someone could also talk to us. I also found very interesting your detailing the means by which the Holyoke Housing Authority really became a developer in the City of Holyoke. We have heard things like this when we have gone to various conferences. I know Attorney Jeff Driscoll who is the Director of Medford Housing Authority, talked of a huge change where they transferred what had been their properties with an enormous amount of investment similarly with grants and were able to actually change from being a landlord to letting the Federal Government be the Section 8 landlords and yet managed by the Medford Housing Authority.

**Commissioner Healey** – does EOHLIC offer services to housing authorities to move in this direction – to do housing development?

**Matt** – the way we went about this, we kind of learned at the knee of the developer and brought them in through solicitation and did it that way originally. But we also recognize that housing authorities are uniquely positioned. If you go out and get a private developer that is going to build 100 units or whatever the case may be, typically speaking, they are making significant developer fees, close to a million dollars,

maybe over a million dollars and rightfully so. But the reality is, if you are a housing authority, what we are lucky enough to do is we get developer fees, but what is different is that our developer fees go into our next project, we got some level of developer fees from our first phase, it did not offset the entirety of our investment out of the Holyoke Housing Authority pocket, but what transpires is when they get to take those dollars that are developer fees and put it into the next deal in Holyoke because we are a community oriented organization with our efforts to try and improve Holyoke as opposed to some non-profit for profit housing developer. The bottom line is there are resources out there that help through this process. You can even get a CDAC grant for pre-development efforts where you can hire a consultant to come out. There are ways that you can take baby steps even if you wanted that CDAC to give you a pre-development loan so you can then figure out how you would structure even getting a solicitation to bring in a consultant or developer.

**Chairperson Carney** – looking at some of the differences between Northampton and Holyoke we don't really have the vacant lots in terms of what is available, I think it would take some creative research to find any square inch, never mind square yards or feet to be able to put together that sort of stuff. We had some properties that were owned by NHA at one point but those were reverted back to the City and are no longer available to us in terms of being a developer to initiate development. However, I am hoping that there will be some interest sparked with the housing partnership and from other folks as to creative ideas. There is a focus on accelerated dwelling units, we wouldn't necessarily be involved in developing such for private property owners but if we were to know when those were happening and if those were actually rental units that could be available for Section 8 or anything that might increase the stock we just have enough, period.

**Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield** – what is very apparent to me from the outside looking in and from communicating with people who are there, it seems like you are tenant centered, you care about the residents and it shows. People here in Northampton are seeing that because here it is pretty expensive to live in Northampton and I was curious about how much it costs overall with the housing there and the housing market. I think it is tenant centered and if you take care of them, they will take care of themselves and then take care of you as well, so I appreciate that. Just as they say, keep on keeping on, you are outshining many of the surrounding areas with the great things you are doing because if anybody can tell you what it looked like and what it is like now and I think you, Mr. Mainville were a part of that. I wish the board on their own could go there, some people have gone there and sat in the area. You bring a sense of pride to Holyoke. I want to thank you for that. Northampton let's catch up.

**Commissioner Wood** – I am the person Maureen keeps talking about as the representative to the Northampton Partnership and I do think the partnership is eager to collaborate more and get out of the sort of assessment conversation into more action. I think there would be a lot of interest to collaborate. One thing you said, Maureen about the availability of land – a single family home that had been on Landy Ave. forever was bought by a developer and because of Northampton's newer zoning rules that developer turned it into 3 separate nice sized family homes. I think that is the type of opportunity that does exist. There are a lot of single family homes that sit on a lot of land in Northampton, as that housing stock gets older, there might be more opportunity to be a bit more creative and more dispersed with the public housing options that exist in the city, so there is not these huge developments, but there is I think, what you are demonstrating, the opportunity to create just smaller pockets of public housing available in the city.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

## NEW BUSINESS

**RESOLUTION # 2025-07 – AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR ROOF REPLACEMENT AT 256 STATE STREET TO THE LOWEST RESPONSIBLE RESPONSIVE BIDDER JJ UNIVERSAL CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$45,215.00.**

The resolution was read by the Interim Executive Director.

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

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Carney; Commissioner Brooks; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Healey & Commissioner Wood.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbuton-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Resolution.

Commissioner Tarbuton-Springfield – are you familiar with JJ Universal Construction?

Matt – I am not but the architect and EOHLC have both done jobs with them and are comfortable with their qualifications and the jobs they just recently completed with them.

Commissioner Tarbuton-Springfield – can you give me a timeline, when will this be done, have they started working on it?

Matt – the reason I put in the immediately is because we want to affect this as quickly as we can and hit this construction – work has not started. We will provide this information to EOHLC and set up a pre-construction meeting, make sure we have all our documents signed, make sure we have our bid and performance bonds in place before we started anything, but we would make this happen as quickly as we can.

Commissioner Tarbuton-Springfield – which building is 256 State Street?

Chairperson Carney – down State Street past Finn Street at the end of the Street by the bike path.

Commissioner Tarbuton-Springfield – I couldn't find it on google search, I am always amazed at all the properties NHA has.

Matt – you guys do good things.

Chairperson Carney - when the RFP went out the ultimate decision was made by EOHLC because they do their own vetting and have folks that have already gone through that process with them and that they recommend.

**RESOLUTION 2025-08 – APPROVE THE FEDERAL FY26 BUDGET PLACE HOLDER**

The resolution was read by the Interim Executive Director.

Commissioner Healey put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Wood.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Carney; Commissioner Brooks; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Healey & Commissioner Wood.

VOTING NAY: Commissioner Tarbuton-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Resolution.

**RESOLUTION 2025-09 – APPROVE THE FIRST 45 DAY EXTENSION OF THE HOLYOKE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH THE NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY PER EOHLC DIRECTIVE.**

The resolution was read by the Interim Executive Director.

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

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Carney; Commissioner Brooks; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Healey; Commissioner Wood & Commissioner Tarbuton-Springfield.

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Resolution.

**Matt** – this extension will take effect on 6/26/25 and there are (2) 45 day extensions for a total of 90 days.

**Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield** – per the directive of EOHLC correct?

**Matt** – yes, EOHLC reached out.

**Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield** – did they reach out to you by email, did they give any reasons why or did they just write what you just wrote here?

**Matt** – that was primarily what they said. They were concerned about the upcoming conclusion of the contract and for safety sake I think they wanted to, I might be putting words in their mouth, but for safety sake, I think they wanted to see if there was any will to extend it by the 45 days.

**Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield** – this takes effect June 26<sup>th</sup>, does this mean it is going into the next fiscal year, isn't the end of the year June 30<sup>th</sup>?

**Matt** – I defer to Sharon but this is correct.

**Sharon Kimble** – yes, that would take us into our fiscal year 2026.

**Chairperson Carney** – unless our extension ends up in the next four days then we will still have ended it in this fiscal year before July 1<sup>st</sup>, but we don't know because that is information that is confidential.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield** put forth the motion to adjourn the June 16, 2025 meeting at 6:23 p.m. seconded by Commissioner Healey. All were in favor.