



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOVEMBER MINUTES

NOVEMBER 17, 2025

Approved on DECEMBER 15, 2025

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, November 17, 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 Healey; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Wood & Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

ABSENT: Commissioner Brooks.

ALSO PRESENT: Sharon Kimble; Attorney Tom O'Connor; Gary DePace; Doug Kierdorf & John Wyda.

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 2025 REGULAR MINUTES

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Brooks.

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the October 2025 minutes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVE ANNUAL AFFIRMATIVE ACTION GOAL FOR FY2026 FOR OUR 667 STATE PROPERTIES & OUR FAMILY STATE PROPERTIES 200 & 705'S.

Sharon read the motion.

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

ABSENT: Commissioner Brooks.

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

Commissioner Wood – how is the percentage set by the State?

Sharon – they have a fair housing census data and we click on the site, it shows all the Housing Authorities and we click on our Housing Authority and it brings up current data of where we need to be for our city. EOHLC standards for Northampton residents 55 and older is 7.8% and we are at 21%. For Family it is 17.60% and we are at 48.3%.

Commissioner Wood – since we adopted it in 2022 has Northampton Housing ever not met the goal?

Sharon – in 2022 we adopted the templates but the actual criteria, which is on the PMR #3, means to keep an eye on your rate. It has not really been kept up with so it has been on the PMR as that is has not

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been done, so even though this year we got nicked for it because it was not done and I don't think it was done last year either, I learned how to do it and I told Carolina. I am going to do it anyway, these are the numbers that we should have had, so I will be doing this again next year when we close out. A lot of Housing Authorities do it bi-annually because PMR's - they only check this criteria bi-annually. I prefer to do them annually so you don't forget plus it is a good goal to keep up on, just keep doing it annually.

Commissioner Wood – are we beholden to the State's goal or could we set a higher goal to the State?

Sharon – that is up to the Board. The State goal is what most people go for because that is where we look to see if we are over it and if so, we say we are good.

Commissioner Wood – but it is up to the Board, I am not saying I want to open that up, I just want to understand the process.

Sharon – because we compare it to the State versus what we have, whether or not we are going to do 1 in 5, then really we are going by the State's rate which means for the elderly we are going to try to stay higher than the 7.5% and for the family 17.6% but again we are already over on both but we can't go below it.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – thank you Commissioner Wood for asking questions. I remember I was at some workshop and they said people of color, I remember the Executive Director saying we have 11 different languages that are spoken in NHA. I am curious if you have the statistics, I don't know if they have it Federally or State, the different ethnicities that reside here at NHA. For example, there are like 1,000 black people in Northampton, I would like to know how many of those people are in public housing and the Latino & Asian communities because this says we are doing good with the State regulations and rate, and I think that is great but I would like it broken down. I don't mean to put more work on you but since we are going to be doing this and this is something you are incorporating, I would like to see those statistics because it is easier for me to understand such a breakdown.

Sharon – I can tell you what I pulled from HAB for our data. It gives us a statistical report that I print out and it counts families, not people. So I have a current count of 392 for instance and they break it out on families. I can get that data to you all.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I appreciate it if you could, thank you.

Chairperson Healey – thank you Commissioner, that would be interesting information, helpful to us.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – **read a statement** – “the materials in our packet show that the vote is about adopting the required annual goal calculation for the 667 elderly housing & the 200 & 705 family housing. I understand that this is a statutory requirement and the goal is based on demographic data, not on an evaluation of how this authority treated people. However, as a tenant, black person, woman, lived experience within, Northampton Housing not always reflected fairness, equity or respect but this is a vote for the upcoming year rather than reflecting on the past conduct. I am choosing, I am not going to vote no, instead I will abstain. I abstain because I hope this agency will work to actually practice the equity it states on paper and how it treats tenants and staff and commissioners including resident board members and I hope that the values expressed in the affirmative action goal will be upheld in action, not just in compliance documents.”

MOTION

APPROVE 1ST QUARTERLY FINANCIALS PRESENTED BY GARY DEPACE OUR FEE ACCOUNTANT.

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

ABSENT: Commissioner Brooks.

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

Gary – MRVP, 689 & 400 fiscal year ends 6/30/26 – this is the first quarter ending 9/30/25 which includes last year's budget numbers because we have yet to adopt our new budget. I would say our budget is about 80% complete but still has some missing pieces to the puzzle. Gary went over the financials with the Board.

Chairperson Healey – if we adjust the budget for travel, continuing education and legal costs what is the process to do that?

Gary – it is going to be in our budget and under the guidelines, Patty, and we have that flexibility and the key I can already tell is that we have been understaffed in administration, we are constantly saving funds in administrative salaries and when we get the budget numbers, these line items will be adjusted from the savings from those other accounts. That is why I said I don't see a problem with our overall budget, it is just going to be the line items that we need to adjust when we do that.

Chairperson Healey – so we are comfortably within those margins to make the adjustments.

Gary – yes.

Chairperson Healey – that is fine with me, then.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – you want us to vote on something that is not complete in the anticipation that we will get those numbers and somehow we will figure it all out together? Is that what you are asking?

Gary – no, what you are being presented tonight Commissioner, is the facts of what we have spent for three months, they are being presented in comparison to our last year's budget numbers, we have yet to adopt a fiscal 2026 budget. Number one, the guidelines come out late, the NHA right now doesn't have the time with what is going on to have completed and present you with a budget, that is all we are saying. A vote tonight primarily is that Sharon has to certify that we have presented the financial statements to you. There is nothing you can change on it. Those are the numbers, but I am trying to explain to you that when you look at the comparisons of budget to actual, there are a few line items that don't look good because we are spending a lot of legal and administrative other, that we have not done in the past and that is why when we do the budget which will be coming up for a vote in the future, Sharon & I will be moving monies into those line items to cover those costs.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – for the record I just want to note that the format for me is difficult to interpret. The volume of numbers and the way the information is presented, it is just challenging for this commissioner, all the other people must have quite the background in financial management to fully understand what we are going to be voting on. I just feel for transparency and accountability to the public, I believe it is essential that our financial reports be, to me, clearer and more accessible and presented in a way that supports objective decision making. My goal is not to criticize staff or our fee accountant because he has been really wonderful in training and helping. It is just to ensure that every commissioner, and I will speak for myself, that this commissioner can make an informed and independent fiduciary decision, rather than feeling pressured to simply rubber stamp some complex documents. You are in accounting so you may understand yourself, but I am curious and I need to ask, is some of the problems with administrative because we are paying the salary of someone who is on paid leave, including expenses and the car and all that – are those accounted into that? I would like to know.

Gary – what is being spent is all accounted for here by the line items but that is why I said Commissioner, I am not asking you to understand every dollar that is in there. We have audits, we have budgets. I am just saying that the comparable numbers that we have spent this year – three months, we are only comparing it to what we spent on our budget last year.

Sharon – this has happened in the past Joella Springfield, this is not the first time this has happened. We have brought the first quarter, sometimes even the second quarter of financials to you because we haven't received the guidelines from the State and we have said, here are the numbers, but we are on the old budget which is very common for Housing Authorities to do. We wait for the State to come out with guidelines, which they did and Gary and I are working on a budget. We all know, you know, it is kind of short staffed right now and we are doing the best we can, but this isn't the first time this has even happened, this should not be new news.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I remember when we got the audit with Markham we got penalized for not having adequate staff to fill in some of the information, so I am just thinking about that and you are right, I have seen it before, I understand it, I am just not comfortable.

Chairperson Healey – Commissioner Tarbutton, I understand what you are saying, I think we are hearing words like these numbers aren't good or is different than what it was and I agree with you, it is very complex, but I think what I am hearing from Gary is that the numbers are the numbers, so we accept the report but the re-adjustments come later only because the State has given our executive body very late guidelines. Yes, we have extraordinary costs this year, I think we have costs that we don't fully understand and won't be there next year, we are paying an Executive Director, we don't know about the car, those things are in there, but I don't think we have a plan yet and a plan will come after our executive group can make a real budget based on those guidelines. We don't have the luxury of having a State that gives us all of the rules when they should but every year this happens, the State gives the guidelines late and we are kind of stuck with filling in the holes until we have the guidelines, but I appreciate your worries about the complexity.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – what is the administrative line item?

Gary – the 400 program, 4130 – legal - \$70,000.00 is budgeted, we spent \$18,000.00 in three months but that was just through September. We paid a huge legal bill in October which will show up in the next month's report.

Gary also went through the consolidated report with the Board.

Commissioner Wood – what I understand is we are just voting on the reality tonight and the reality is these numbers, we are just certifying them, however, I do share the concern that we have to have some serious conversation about the consequences of the huge spend that has happened with legal costs and other administrative costs and I imagine there will have to be some trade-offs and some implications to that and to Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield's point, I am pretty adept with financial instruments and I could read that but I think it would be good to have a more distilled and consolidated, potentially a power point presentation of some sort that can pull out some key concepts for us to actually grapple with and have some conversation around when we get to the point of talking about the approval of the actual budget for the year so we can feel like we are all looking at the same information and grappling with the same questions. But for now, I understand we are voting on the reality and just certifying it.

Commissioner Jones – I just want to reinforce, this is pretty much par for the course as far as the State getting back to us with budget criteria. I think there was one time where we went into the second quarter and we might have turned around and sent a letter to the State basically saying in bureaucratic fashion, you know what you are doing? We can't function, we can't complete a budget because we don't have the criteria, so unfortunately and I think in this financial climate both on the Federal and State level, this is going to get really tight. The projections I have seen for the State budget next year overall are not good. We have no idea what the Federal government is going to do because they make it up as they go, in my opinion, so how that rolls off into affordable housing remains to be seen, but this is pretty much par for the course for me and I will leave it there.

MOTION

APPROVE SECTION 8 PAYMENT STANDARDS AND UTILITY ALLOWANCE SCHEDULE FOR SECTION 8 & FEDERAL PH.

Sharon read the motion.

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Brooks.

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – a comment for the record – earlier today I attended the EOHLC Fair Housing listening session at UMASS in Springfield. The conversation raised my awareness about how payment standards, rent burdens and utility allowances directly impact the ability of low income families, seniors and people with disabilities to secure safe, stable housing and to stay housed. Speakers emphasized the need of high levels. I just really got an understanding of what is going on, I won't acknowledge that approving this standard is not just a symbolic vote, that these are numbers that have real consequences for people's access to housing and for their ability to choose where they live, for where they can afford heat, electricity and basic utilities. It is a wider lens I have from their fair housing meeting and why I cast my vote with an understanding that these decisions must align with the principles of fairness, opportunity and equity, that the commonwealth emphasized today. I hope moving forward NHA continues to evaluate not only compliance but the lived realities of tenants trying to survive in an increasingly unaffordable housing market.

Chairperson Healey – question for Attorney O'Connor – if we don't have a quorum after this point, I would like to have the LTO comment but can we have it without a quorum or do we have to exit the meeting and then have the comment?

Attorney O'Connor – no, you can proceed, Ben can leave and we can have the LTO comment.

At this time, Commissioner Wood left the Board meeting at 6:08 p.m.

LTO COMMENT

Doug Kierdorf – Forsander – I am gratified to hear that you look forward to working with us and we have been trying to arrange a meeting with Sharon Kimble, it is difficult to arrange a meeting time with everyone's appointments. Why public comment has been suspended for the last 10 months or so, I don't really understand the rationale for it and we all want to know why we know nothing into the investigation of the Executive Director, it seems like the NHA is a black hole, it is over the event horizon and no information ever escapes it and we are all anxious to know what is going on. We are all aware of the fact that things are running with a skeleton crew right now and loads of rumors going around. For instance – the now suspended Executive Director is negotiating a big fat payment in order to quit the scene and she has been collecting traffic tickets in NYC and Georgia and lots of places and we wonder why she is driving around a NHA vehicle and NHA is paying the insurance, maintenance and her, at the present moment. I think I can speak for the whole Forsander tenant association and residents in wishing Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield a Happy Birthday and many happy returns. Ms. Kimble, please, let's get in touch.

SALVO LTO –

John Wyda – I want to thank Sharon, we do have a quarterly meeting on November 21st. We just replaced our American flag on the outside of our building which was pretty torn up. We would like to thank Jose, our property manager for getting us the flag. In the past few weeks we had a potluck supper which went well. We plan on having another for New Year's, we are getting a lot of tenants who don't come out of their apartments, but they will come out for the potluck and social gatherings. New happenings - the Diamond Art program which we just started and our cleanup around the building, Bingo is going well every Wednesday and we are looking forward to the new year. Things are going better than expected and our security, we have a new system of signing up as the non-tenants come in, they are signing in and out which is going very well. When security is not here we left the papers on the table outside and people are signing them. What is the status with Cara – is the investigation complete or still going on?

Chairperson Healey asked Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield to share with the Board some of the projects she has started.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – a tenant on the second floor who used to go around cleaning up the building was frustrated and I said why don't you start that – so we have clean up Salvo and we have had 3 so far that were successful with people from the community coming here and helping and cleaning, in the very back there is a homeless encampment and all kinds of stuff. When you get a group of people doing it together time goes by and I want to thank Sharon at NHA for providing donuts and coffee, gloves and supplies and it has been kind of a special thing. We also have our "Sew what Salvo" which started with a candidate who is also a professional tailor. It started off once a month and residents wanted it twice a month – it is the first and third Thursday from 2 – 4. We got some donated sewing machines and it is a social thing too. It varies with people that come in and bring the things they had but now people are even calling me saying their zipper is broken, when are you having that class? I encourage Board members if you want to be a part of this, to attend. Northampton Open Media, they have classes at the Senior center and library and anyone can come and bring your laptop, phone, tablet, etc. People weren't going over there but the Mayor suggested I speak to Hannah Cox who has headed this part of Open Media and now they come to Salvo the first Wednesday of the month. They are in the process from a long ago grant to bring in some desk top computers, we just need to get it all together. Northampton Neighbors got cancelled at Forsander, they provide refurbished laptops but there was a bug issue and we have to re-schedule.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Sharon read the report to the Board and presented the unpublished off-year PMR report stating overall the report was good but we did have two operational guidance findings – one being the Board training and the second for Certifications and Reporting Submissions for vacancies. We also had write-off's of \$561.00.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – Sharon, I want to thank you for our Monday morning meetings, it has been very helpful, I think it has cut down the talking here.

Chairperson Healey – Manna Community Kitchen is holding its annual Thanksgiving meal at the Edwards Church at 297 Main Street in Northampton. They welcome volunteers and if you need a meal delivered call 413-282-8125. Sharon will post notices at all the sites on this.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield put forth the motion to adjourn the November 17, 2025 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Jones at 6:27 p.m. All were in favor.