



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

JANUARY MINUTES
JANUARY 26, 2026
APPROVED on MARCH 16, 2026

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, January 26, 2026 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.

NEW COMMISSIONERS – Hank Abrashkin & Jim Nash.

Commissioner Nash joined the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

ALSO PRESENT: Sharon Kimble; Attorney Tom O’Connor; Michael Kane; Doug Kierdorf; Lisa Morales; Amy Davis, Evelyn Rodriguez & John Wyda.

Chairperson Healey – Commissioner Brooks has resigned. On behalf of the Board, we appreciate his many, many years of wonderful service as both a resident Commissioner and as Treasurer and he also spent a great deal of time giving me a lot of history about the NHA, so thank you, Jim.

Hank Abrashkin – I was appointed by the Mayor about a month ago. Prior to that I worked for the Springfield Housing Authority as an Executive Director, not a Board member though, and before that I served as a judge in the housing court in Western Mass. for 22 years and I am very glad to be participating in the Northampton Housing Authority. What I know about the NHA is pretty much what I have read in the papers except I got a little bit of briefing from Patty, so I have a lot to learn and I am eager to do that. Thank you.


Chairperson Healey – thank you and welcome.

Jim Nash – I am a former City Councilor and member of the Ward 3 Association and I am really thrilled to be here as part of the Northampton Housing Authority Commissioners. I just want to do a shout out to the memory of Jerry Budgar who very much inspired me to be working with our folks in public housing and I am excited to be here.

Chairperson Healey – that is wonderful, thank you and welcome.

I have two comments – One, is that I am fully aware that people want more information about the separation agreement between our former Executive Director, Cara Leiper and the Housing Authority. Cara resigned as of December 19, 2025 and the agreement went into effect on 12/20/2025. On the 21st which was a Monday, Sharon Kimble our acting ED met with the staff in person to explain that there has been a transition. She also put out, I believe, it was the following day an email to the residents explaining. However, I know residents want more information and I am actually waiting for a little more information from the Attorneys who worked with us, but what I wanted to tell you is that neither party admitted any violation of the law, that was part of the agreement that we made and the last payments that were owed to Cara were on December 31st. I will be able to give you much more detailed financial information about that agreement in our February meeting, I hope to prepare a full report for you. I did not do it for this meeting, it may be flawed logic to some of you but we have very urgent business. We need to start the

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process of getting a new ED and I made the decision to proceed with this very large agenda and then give you the report in the next meeting, so I hope you can all live with that.

LTO REPORT

Doug Kierdorf – Forsander – welcome aboard Hank Abrashkin, nice to meet you at the Martin Luther King Day. The Forsander Tenants Association Board had one meeting with Sharon Kimble. We are glad to be starting a new year and a new leaf and hope the era of deceit and corruption is behind us. We sent an email today to Destiny Martinez asking to arrange a meeting with Executive Director Kimble in the next week or two. Welcome all.

Amy Davis – Cahill LTO – I am speaking for Jack Malley who is actually in recovery from a heart attack, he is actually doing very well. We met last week with acting ED Kimble and the Attorney and I am happy to say that we were able to make a lot of headway regarding our recognition and the grievance that we had. I am happy to say we were able to get through a lot of items that we had concerns about. I am very excited to work with NHA acting director Kimble, I am not sure how long she will be here but I have to say it was so much more than we hoped for and we have a follow up meeting this Friday with Director Kimble. We are really excited that we have a lot going on that we did not have before we went into the meeting and we are working towards a lot of goals that we did not have before.

Evelyn Rodriguez – Salvo LTO – on Monday I got a lot of letters from tenants complaining about what happened – they are not happy tenants and they are angry.

Chairperson Healey – I don't think we have the time to go through the letters but you should definitely bring them to Sharon so that she and the Board members can see them. Would you explain to the Board what you are referring to that happened on Monday – the Martin Luther King Party that she had?

Evelyn – they got dog food, that is what the tenant said, they got leftover dog food and they felt like dogs.

Chairperson Healey – thank you, I think Sharon and I will follow up with you on that.

Lisa Morales – Cahill LTO Secretary – we have some activities coming up in partnership with Northampton Neighbors. We have a computer giveaway that I have organized on the 29th and we have 8 residents who will be receiving laptops and tech support in that event. In February I have organized for Detective Bolduc from the Northampton Police to come and have a conversation about safety. We have had an absolutely horrific, really, an attempted murder in the building and we need to address safety concerns. In March we intend to have our At Large and Ward 3 City Council members come and talk to us.

Chairperson Healey – thank you very much, Lisa, when you have issues in the building please be sure to put it into writing and follow up with Sharon. I know some of these issues are ongoing but I just wanted to remind you and others to do so.

Lisa Morales – having some security cameras is definitely on top of our list of discussion items.

Chairperson Healey – regarding public comment – we ask that public comment be restricted to residents, there may be community members, you certainly can come on and comment but please allow residents to do comments first so that we can hear from all of them. The public comment period is not required and I did some research and a great majority of Housing Authority boards in Mass. Do not have public comment, not saying that we will never have public comment, but we will not always have public comment. We will have some discussion about how to do public comment for residents but not tonight. Tonight I ask you to restrict your comments to agenda items if you can. Give us your name and residence. Please do not name other residents, do not discuss personal details about residents, it is very counter-

productive. I want to remind you that maintenance issues are issues that should go directly to Sharon Kimble. You will be restricted to two minutes, we will use a timer, if the speaker goes over the time we will remind you to finish your sentence. We reserve the right to stop the audio if the speaker refuses to abide by the 2 minute rule.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lisa Morales - I am a neurodiverse person and I asked for a six minute accommodation.

Chairperson Healey – no, that will be denied, you would have to let us know at least 48 hours beforehand for a 6 minute accommodation.

Lisa Morales – I will keep that in mind. One of the projects I have been working on is a public interest project and that has to do with the raticide that has recently been put down at Cahill and is used at other NHA buildings. We do have alternatives to this very dangerous raticide. There over 40 communities in Mass. that have reduced or banned the use of this raticide. We have local partners including Wildlife Rehabilitators of Mass., Association of Mass Bird Club, MSPCA Angel, Rescue Franklin County Wildlife, Save the Raptors of Ct. River and Quabbin Valley, Rescue Ct. River Valley Wildlife, Rescue Raptors Easthampton. There is a bill in the Senate S2721 and the House H965 that deal with banning these raticides and the ED has completely denied us the opportunity to present to the Board and to have a discussion about alternatives and we would like to bring this to the attention of the Board. An agenda item that I want to bring to your attention is the hiring of the new Executive Director which requires the input of the LTO's and non-represented tenants under 760 CMR4.04 and General Law 121B. We want to make sure the tenants and LTO's are brought into the process right from the beginning.

KC – McDonald – I have been here 6 years. We don't have an LTO- we are trying to get an appointment with Sharon Kimble. I did have the wonderful training Jada turned us all on to, that has really helped a lot. I know this is a sanctuary City, I know a lot of our neighbors are concerned about ICE. I think it would behoove NHA to make a statement that people are safe, that would help. ICE is killing people with impunity, they are killing white people now, so people are starting to pay attention. I think we need to be aware and careful. We are a building of elderly and disabled folks. We got a call yesterday to clear our cars for this morning, it did not happen because the plows did not get their work done, which is a bit confusing to us because we know you love to punish us if we don't do it right – there are other ways. Gardening – willing to speak with us about it. The two front beds were a fiasco last year – we were told if we helped with the beds we would be paid, something off of our rent – we got soda pops. I just want to encourage people to participate in these things and to get things straight with tenants before people mess up and the rat poison is a mess.

Alex – Cahill – I am concerned about the rodenticide as Salvo is a place where hawks and eagles and other wildlife have come around and one tenant experience less amount of wildlife around Salvo house lives near Acadia Sanctuary so I do want us to address what we can do collectively in the Housing Authority about discouraging any form of rodenticide as that has been found in a lot of predators, birds of prey, owls, hawks, eagles.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – for those who felt overlooked because they were not invited to the awards portion of the event, I want to offer a moment of perspective. Community recognition is not random. It reflects service, participation and sustained commitment. I ask respectfully, have you participated in a Clean Up Salvo event? We have had almost 4. Have you ever helped secure supplies for volunteers? Have you spent hours picking up cigarette butts left behind in shared spaces? Have you quietly cleaned up after others who discarded used diapers improperly? Work that several volunteers took on without complaint or recognition? Many of the individuals honored on Monday, Martin Luther King Day, are the same people who show up week after week supporting the food pantry, Grow Food

Northampton, resident groups, mutual aid efforts, that quite literally help put food on tables and in people's mouths. This work often unseen and uncelebrated, is how we carry forward the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's dream. Dr. King did not speak only of justice in words, but of justice in action, service, sacrifice, dignity and care for one another. What I witnessed at this event filled me with pride. Pride to NHA and my fellow tenants who were recognized and the Mayor and City Council members who attended and especially the quiet, unsung angels who give their time and energy to strengthen the community that day reminded me of why I am proud to live in Northampton. The dream lives on when people show up, do the work and serve, not for the applause, but because it is right.

APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 2025 REGULAR MINUTES

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Nash and Commissioner Abrashkin.

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the December 2025 minutes.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – questions on the grievance procedure discussed last meeting and I asked to get policies and notices in all the common areas as required. From my understanding, I was under the impression that this is happening.

Chairperson Healey – we can address that again - Sharon, we will address grievance forms after this meeting.

ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Sharon – this was addressed already regarding the mice baits that are on the outside of Cahill and in the basements where tenants have no access to. I want to clarify that I never said to Lisa Morales that she could not be heard by the Board. We did not have public comment and we do now. For grievance – the grievance would first come to me and would go up the chain of command to the Board if need be. I did respond to her and told her I contacted Minuteman Pest. As a person I love animals too, I am not out to hurt any animals or be harmful to them. In doing research, I found that NHA has been using these mice baits forever and we go through Minuteman which is a local pest control and we need to do that in Housing to keep control of pests, mainly mice, because they can get really bad with food being kept out, etc. If the Board would like to find other ways to treat, as long as we don't end up getting mice I have no problem with that but everything I have done research on and talking to other Housing Authorities and even the City of Northampton, they use these little black baits and it is supposed to be a tiny hole that rats and mice can get into them, but dogs and cats cannot. The food put in there is like an L shape that goes in and over into a lock, they are fairly safe. Sharon spoke about smoking on NHA properties as well as the bingo hosted by the public health nurse at Salvo, McDonald and Tobin. Regarding the Cahill LTO Amy Davis concluded that they are going to gather the items we officially need because we don't have them all. They will get recognized in February. We are meeting with them to help them gather that information. We have talked about the budget and other things. We are very excited that we are going to be able to recognize them in February.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – at the meeting with Mass Union today, they have not been officially recognized and to also extend gratitude for you allowing them to speak even though they haven't been recognized. The Board has not voted on that, so I am glad to see that coming along.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS – DISCUSS CAHILL LTO

Sharon - they are going to gather the items we officially need because we don't have them all. They will get recognized in February. We are meeting with them to help them gather that information. We have talked about the budget and other things. We are very excited that we are going to be able to recognize them in February.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – at the meeting with Mass. Union today, they have not been officially recognized and to also extend gratitude for you allowing them to speak even though they haven't been recognized. The Board has not voted on that, so I am glad to see that coming along.

MOTION

TO AUTHORIZE THE ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SIGN ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THE SALE OF 60-62 WEST STREET, WARE, MA. AND 13 PROSPECT STREET, WARE, MA. TO THE WARE HOUSING AUTHORITY PER EOHLC DIRECTIVE.

Commissioner Jones put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner ?

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

VOTING NAY: None

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

Attorney Tom O'Connor – a few years ago we absorbed the Hampshire County Regional Housing Authority and as part of that process we took over all of their assets, real estate and other assets as well. The real estate consists predominately of properties in Cummington and Huntington. Those are public housing projects that we now own, manage and oversee. But they also own two parcels in Ware – (1) vacant and (1) with an unoccupied building on it in Ware. The legislation was supposed to direct those properties to the Ware Housing Authority and it did not. Now we are trying to clean up that mistake and deed those parcels to the Ware Housing Authority. EOHLC actually has those properties as Ware Housing Authority properties and they are not, they are owned by us because we absorbed them pursuant to that legislation from a couple of years ago. This is authorizing Sharon to sign the two deeds and deliver those two properties to the Ware Housing Authority.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – had a question as to where was Ware during the time we absorbed the properties?

Attorney O'Connor – first of all, it is not temporary, it is permanent. The HCRHA does not exist anymore and we basically assumed their properties, two in Ware, it is odd that they had two properties in Ware but they did and also one in South Hadley that legislatively went to the South Hadley Housing Authority and just because of an error in the legislation, they did not include the two Ware properties and direct that they go pursuant to that legislation to the Ware Housing Authority, so that is what this motion addresses.

Commissioner Wood – when HCRHA dissolved, there had been a Ware Housing Authority and it was not dissolved, they historically are a separate entity?

Attorney O'Connor – correct, there was a Ware Housing Authority.

Commissioner Jones – we don't need another piece of State legislation – we can essentially do this in-house?

Attorney O'Connor – So long as EOHLC, they directed us to do it and they will have to authorize it.

This is very much like, Commissioner Jones, that piece of property we had on Corticelli Street in Florence, where it is not a minimal project to get the property deeded to a third party. EOHLIC ultimately has to authorize it, because we are supposed to replace any property we deed out with like-kind property and we have to get EOHLIC to approve this and they will.

MOTION

ACCEPT MASS STATE PROPERTY INSURANCE PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

Sharon explained the agreement.

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – we do this tonight, there is no interruption in service or insurance coverage, right? Please tell me that.

Sharon – they would never do an interruption in service at all. It just needs to be brought in front of the Board, is read and understood. The summary is that all public housing authorities agree on the participation in the Mass. State aided property insurance program. They do all of it, it is all through EOHLIC.

MOTION

AUTHORIZE CHAIRPERSON PATTY HEALEY TO SIGN CHECKS UNTIL BOARD ELECTS A TREASURER.

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

VOTING YAY: Commissioner Wood; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield, Commissioner Nash & Commissioner Abrashkin.

VOTING NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Chairperson Healey

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

Chairperson Healey – I might say we had a Treasurer for many years who always processed the checks with the ED and reviewed the expenses twice a week. This is a temporary measure because we could not pay the bills last week and we have to pay them tomorrow, so until our elections which should be in the next February meeting, this is temporary so I can be authorized to sign checks, to pay our bills.

Commissioner Nash – thank you, Patty, for taking on that responsibility.

Commissioner Wood – on that point, it does require a fair amount of weekly availability, correct?

Sharon – you will weekly get a summary from Accounts Payable, Lisa Donoghue, and yes, you review the expenses and sign checks, etc.

Commissioner Wood – once a week signing checks?

Sharon – it is currently twice a week – Wednesday and Friday.

Commissioner Wood – ok.

Chairperson Healey – obviously, you are authorized to sign the checks and then the Treasurer – is there a third person in the past?

Sharon – No, it has always been two.

RESOLUTION 2026-1 – APPROVE FY26 BUDGET AND FY26 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SALARY CALCULATION PRESENTED BY MICHAEL KANE FROM OUR FEE ACCOUNTANTS OFFICE GARY DEPACE.

Budget Presented by Michael Kane

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield and Commissioner Nash.

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the resolution.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – why are these documents so small? I am a Board member and would like to know what is going on, I like to lay it out. If you are saying this is standard, then do you not want my vote on this? Because I did it and I am not a financial wizard on any level. I signed up for a class with Mel King and I missed the other one so we can go over these figures. I get very anxious when it is presented. So think about putting it on an excel worksheet like I did so it is easier for us to read.

Michael Kane – we obviously have excel work papers so if your request is to have a copy of our excel work papers, the actual excel document so that you can click on each tab and zoom in excel, that is obviously very easy to do. Obviously, for this presentation to print it out and put it on a piece of paper to a PDF file to send out to the Board, it has to unfortunately appear like this, does that help?

Chairperson Healey – Commissioner, maybe we should talk before our next budget presentation and figure out a way to resolve this for you because you have brought it up before, so you and I should talk.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – convince me, make this look like where I can see it and understand it. I would appreciate if we could work on that.

Commissioner Wood – I think when we talked about this last time, I made the suggestion and I hope we could do something a little bit different in the future too, I agree with Joella, maybe a solution is to create a Power Point presentation where we are getting Board members, Commissioners, some more distilled information with the important points summarized, highlighted and emphasized, that we can then go back to the detailed spreadsheet if we have more specific questions. I would find it helpful to have a presentation where we are getting some of the real key points a little bit more digestible, that would be my suggestion moving forward.

Chairperson Healey – question - what does this mean, legal fees exempted and budgeted by EOHLC?

Sharon – there was an exemption of \$10,000.00.

Chairperson Healey – is that typical?

Sharon – the State offered the first \$10,000.00 of the expenses.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – question – I would like concrete numbers on how much did we pay the Executive Director during the 9-10 months that they were on paid leave? How much, if anything that was tickets, auto expense, gas – how much did we pay just on that alone?

Sharon – this is a budget that is why it doesn't say it here.

Michael – it is my understanding Cara received her full salary while she was out.

Sharon – yes, full salary.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield - until the contract ended or full salary for the year?

Chairperson Healey – Commissioner, I hope to have those figures for February, those that I can get so that you will have a total amount. I don't know if I can get every little detail but I do hope to do that because it is public information.

Chairperson Healey – have you seen a substantial increase in the GIC cost?

Michael – what do you consider substantial?

Chairperson Healey – going rate now is 12-14%.

Michael – it is probably around 8 or 10%.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – how much money is designated for professional development? I was told it was \$12,500.00 for conferences, etc. Also, Laundry fund – tenants and residents to have events so it is not on the individual to do this. How do I look at that?

Michael – we will go over that in a couple of pages.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I have never seen it, wear and tear of fixing apartments. I have been here 10 years and I have never been repaired. Most people have to repair it themselves and there are a lot of people who need a lot of stuff, I am talking one building – where is that?

Michael – under contract costs.

Sharon – throughout the whole year we are constantly doing work orders to fix things.

Commissioner Nash – operating reserve is cash that we have on hand should we need it for a particular project?

Michael – so think of the operating reserve as if EOHLA all of a sudden gets into an issue and cannot give Northampton Housing Authority subsidy for 8 months, let's say – do they have enough operating reserve balance to pay their bills for like 6 months without subsidy.

Commissioner Nash – so it is savings on hand should we need it for some sort of financial event.

Michael – you got it and EOHLA says what is 50% of total expenditures in this budget? And that is 2.3 million and that is where we base our calculation off of. They basically say the maximum you should have on hand is 50% of your total expenses budgeted, for this budget – 75%.

Michael – ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES SCHEDULE OTHER THAN SALARIES –

I believe we upped some of the training for this year?

Sharon – yes, because I think all the staff needs training.

Michael – Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield we have anticipated about \$25,000.00 for training; \$18,000.00 for travel – Mass. NAHRO spring conference, any other commissioner training, other travel in regards to NHA.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – that is impressive, do you also put that in there for the tenants and LTO's?

Sharon – no, they have a budget annually.

Chairperson Healey – I see we don't have a contract with any security but I know we did some security.

Sharon – we have security that comes twice a week at Salvo.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – we also have police detail too, how much do we pay for that?

Sharon – line item 4190 which is not broken out like contract costs.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – is there anything in here for Maintenance fees? Is there allotted raises for them? It is a little opaque again.

Sharon – maintenance has a union contract.

Chairperson Healey – it is just one of our contracts, Commissioner, and the workers in their union negotiate with the Housing Authority and come up with wages and then it is in a specific contract.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I have seen with the lack of workers here people working to the point where they are looking, in my opinion, unhealthy because they are just non-stop.

Sharon – we have been short-handed, there needs to be some better training and I have been working on that, Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield, making some changes so hopefully that will help.

Michael – laundry fund – Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield, in July the beginning balance was \$40,894.00 we anticipate laundry revenue for the year to be about \$16,000.00.

Sharon – we are using money for couches and updates at the Salvo Community Room.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – when does the contract end for Hatfield?

Sharon – it goes into 2028, I think unless one gives notice.

Commissioner Nash – Michael, I am new here and trying to figure out what is going on. We are 7 months into fiscal year 2026 and we are being asked to sign off and approve a budget – is that correct?

Michael – correct. One of the things that really sets this up and this is going to be almost the same cadence for NHA, because they are a June 30th year end. What that means is EOHLC does not usually get us – the fee accountants and the State – the budget guidelines until about September 1st that start on July 1st for NHA – so we are already 2 months into NHA’s fiscal year and we just received the budget guidelines. By the time we prepare everything and we try to be as diligent as possible, it is usually around this time, sometimes in December that we are going to the Board saying here is our budget for FY26 because of those reasons.

Commissioner Nash – it does say that we are working at a big disadvantage in terms of planning on finances, 7 months into the year and based on what you are sharing it is pretty much set in stone what it is we are going to be doing for our finances for the year. We are kind of over the barrel in terms of managing the finances here. I was surprised to being asked to approve the budget. What is the deadline for approval, Michael?

Michael – for June 30th they give us a quick turnaround time which I believe may be November 2nd. There is no exception or strike to submitting a budget late. EOHLC right now is switching their entire system to CAPHUB including budgets and the system has a lot of flaws.

Sharon – normally our guidelines don’t even come out until November/December, we got them early, then you still have to put our budget together.

Commissioner Jones – unfortunately, this is kind of the norm and November/December for getting guidelines unfortunately is all too often the reality. There was a year we sent the State a letter asking for the information so we can crank out our budget because we just could not do it. We may have done a placeholder budget which was a repeat of the year before.

Commissioner Abrashkin – that is exactly my experience too, you have to submit but we can’t give you the information you need to submit, and it is frustrating.

Sharon – once we submit we still have another 60 days to wait.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – had a question on RSC’s which Michael explained.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – thank you for this, I do appreciate you being very thorough.

Chairperson Healey – Michael, can we talk to you another time about Commissioner Woods’ suggestion about a sort of consolidated way of looking at the more striking parts of the budget?

Michael – maybe we can work together on some summary for the budget by program. Michael showed them an excel worksheet.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I want to thank everybody for taking the time out to understand the authority’s fiscal responsibility. The materials presented are highly technical, actuarial in nature and were provided without this commissioner sufficient time for a meaningful review. I don’t feel I can responsibly explain or fully understand the financial assumptions, reserve calculations and salary determinations being approved. I am not comfortable voting on this resolution today.

MOTION

TO APPROVE EOHLC PROJECT #214132 ADA BATHROOM CONVERSION BID

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the motion.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – which property is this?

Sharon – this has to do with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We get ADA money in our capital fund, this is for one of our apartments in Huntington, unit 1A. We cannot spend this money on anything else.

Commissioner Wood – how are these projects prioritized, I imagine there are many ADA related projects that need to happen across the properties.

Sharon – it has to do with the Capital Improvement Fund when we meet with the State which is usually around this time. We met with them last year and if we had any ADA that we can think of it has to fall into their guidelines on it and for a reasonable accommodation. The State likes to remove the bathtub and put in roll in showers and this particular tenant had put in for it when the CIP was approved last year. We will have more coming up this year, we haven't done the annual plan yet and it ends up in our Capital Fund with a Fish number.

Commissioner Wood – it sounds like it is a tenant driven process of identifying the need and they bring it to the attention of the Housing Authority and it gets hashed out in this annual process of how many dollars are available.

Sharon - ADA dollars are very limited. We go over this with Housing to do a CIP for approval.

MOTION

TO ACCEPT CERTIFICATE OF FINAL COMPLETION FOR FISH #214123 FOR BOILER AND WATER HEATER REPLACEMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$37,144.00 – CAHILL

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

RESOLUTION

APPROVE RESOLUTION #2026-2 –CONTRACT FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (CFS) 5010 FOR SALVO ROOF INSULATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$84,703.33.

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

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

VOTING NAY: None

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Resolution.

Commissioner Abrashkin – what kind of insulation is used?

Sharon – I can find out and email the Board.

DISCUSSION ON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

Chairperson Healey – Mass. Nahro provides a service to prepare a recruitment and search service. The cost is \$5,500.00 for meeting with us and figuring out the right qualifications for a Housing Authority this size, composing the advertisements which we would pay for and recommending where they would be placed. We would have a spreadsheet for those who apply and they would recommend several applicants. I would recommend that we proceed to use Mass. Nahro to sort of do the legwork. One of the reasons why we need to hire someone to do this is that we will have internal candidates and those internal can't necessarily be handling resumes and all the other information. Search committee would be the size of our quorum – 3. We need to do it within 5 to 6 month's maximum.

Commissioner Abrashkin – 3 candidates will be selected before residents or others and they would only be reviewing those pre-selected if that is the right term?

Chairperson Healey – I think the work of the Mass. Nahro is to weed out those that don't meet the criteria that we are looking for. Question – would people want to see a small search committee to start the process with Mass. Nahro and then the Board can develop a way to open up the review of resumes with all parties?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I sent you a name of a consultant that has had rave reviews and doing it very comprehensive. I hope you hear me keep saying expanding the search to include people of color, people who have worked here, possibly even some tenants, but I am worried about Mass. Nahro – are we getting out of that box?

Commissioner Wood – I am all for a process that creates a little bit of nimbleness and efficiency. I think it is going to be incredibly difficult if we try to do everything as a Board and everything subject to open meeting law. Create ways of efficiency while maintaining transparency across the process. I would be in favor of some form of a steering committee that enabled folks to meet without hitting the quorum.

Commissioner Jones – I think Mass. Nahro is fine. Ten years ago, I am not sure who we used, it might have been Driscoll, but whatever it was we had a search committee of 3 people - (2) Commissioners, the Chair and former Mayor Clare Higgins and the third person was a Commissioner on the Board who was in the housing industry and we got 48 resumes. We whittled it down to 9 people we thought were credible. We worked a lot of Saturdays and we whittled it down to 3 or 4 people and at that point we set up meetings that were open to tenants to meet the candidates and they had prepared statements and did a question and answer and then we did the same thing for the staff. At that point it was open to the full Board, the committee did make a recommendation to the Board and the Board acted. I don't know what falling into the same categories means Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield, the two previous Executive Directors were both white men, in this particular case, it was the first female ED of the Authority that I am aware of and we went from there. I think the consultant is a valuable tool to have to guide the committee and I think it should be 3 people.

Doug Kierdorf – the misgiving I have is if we have things narrowed down by a consultant and possibly a couple members of the Board without any LTO input and we get it narrowed down to 3 we will really be presented with a fait accompli, we will have a choice of people who have already – we may not find anyone in those 3 that we like. We are very anxious to have some input into who the next ED is.

Lisa Morales – Public Housing notice 202103 says the LTO's must be included in who to interview and what the recommendations are and it is earlier in the process than what you are indicating, that is not a maybe, that is a must be, I would ask you to take that into consideration.

Commissioner Abrashkin – are we saying that the search committee can only consist of 3 people?

Chairperson Healey – as long as it is not a quorum of four.

Commissioner Abrashkin – that refers to Commissioners. If the committee includes 3 Commissioners and then several other people that the Commissioners choose.

Attorney O'Connor – as long as you don't have 4 Commissioners.

Commissioner Abrashkin – so there could be 3 Commissioners and X number of whatever we choose of residents and also people from outside the organization.

Chairperson Healey – yes.

Amy Davis – we are excited to have some input and that I think a smaller group is important as a large group and having the whole Board thing and all the rules that it applies is too much. Maybe one from each LTO.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – It has to be an LTO that is recognized to be a part of this. I will email you two names.

Commissioner Wood – maybe a suggestion or a motion that the search committee be comprised of 3 Board members, a representative from each LTO that will nominate their representative and a committee member that will be determined by the LTIO's and the 3 Commissioners and some other to be determined so we don't have to have a conversation about specific people right now.

Chairperson Healey – would you make that as a motion?

Commissioner Wood – I move to constitute a search committee for a new Executive Director comprised of 3 Board Commissioners, representatives from each LTO and a committee member to be determined at such a time as the LTO's and the 3 Commissioners first meet.

Chairperson Healey – amendment to the motion - would you be authorizing the Chair to proceed to name a community member?

Commissioner Wood – yes.

Commissioner Abrashkin – I would recommend not necessarily restricting the committee members up front to one committee member – I would make an amendment to leave it up to the Board members on the committee to determine how many committee members they would want to include.

Commissioner Jones – point of information – how many people are we talking about because I was on two search committees last year and it was excruciating and one was a 4-3 vote, so we need an odd number of people on this committee. You are going to have things come up and you need a voting mechanism to resolve whatever those are. For the search committee - how many LTO's are recognized?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I count 7 including 2 LTO's.

Commissioner Wood – another amendment – to have the voting members of the search committee, be the LTO's and the Board of Commissioners – that is 5 and these 5 on the search committee can determine how many committee members, what kind of perspectives they want to participate in the search committee process, review resumes, make suggestions about who gets interviewed etc, but it is those 5 people who are ultimately voting on who it is that get recommended for interviews. The voting members are the deciding factor.

Commissioner Abrashkin – I accept Commissioner Wood's amendment.

MOTION

TO APPROVE THE FORMATION OF A SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

Commissioner Wood put forth the motion, seconded by **Commissioner Abrashkin**.

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

VOTING NAY: None

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

MOTION

TO APPROVE ENGAGEMENT WITH MASS NAHRO FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

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

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

VOTING NAY: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

Commissioner Nash – Jada is there another consultant that you would like us to consider or is this an additional search firm?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I was in a meeting and heard people talking about this consulting group NRG, I heard wonderful things and they particularly work with housing, hundreds of mission driven organizations to place candidates and openings nationwide. I would like to look into this as an option.

Chairperson Healey – do you know what the cost of that consultant is?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield –I think it was cheaper than Mass. Nahro, I would have to look it up.

Commissioner Abrashkin – how about we let the 5 members of the search committee make the decision about the selection of a consultant.

Commissioner Jones – on their website the low cost search is \$13,000.00; mid cost - \$28,000.00 and the high cost is \$45,000.00, so that is above \$5,500.00.

Chairperson Healey – we only budgeted \$20,000.00 for the entire search.

MOTION

REQUEST BY THE BOARD TO NHA ADMINISTRATION, COPIES OF ALL NON-UNION CONTRACTS.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, **Chairperson Healey** approved the Motion.

Commissioner Abrashkin – I did propose this motion, I want to clarify that this is not in any way meaning to suggest that there is anything inappropriate or anything like that. It is just a matter of learning for the Board members, particularly the new ones, about the Northampton Housing Authority.

DISCUSSION ON WEBSITE ENHANCEMENTS; BOARD PROFILES, BOARD PICTURES, ETC.

Sharon - we would like to upgrade the website, get more information for residents, ask for professional photos of all of you with a three sentence biography that we can place on the website. Also, the regulations say that we need to identify a way that residents can contact you. We do have the possibility of having an email address through NHA. I know Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield has already done this and has recommended it to us but I would think that would be a way in which you can keep communication in one place and not use your private email.

Commissioner Wood – is this something that is going to start happening immediately? There are really no budgetary considerations for revising the website?

Sharon – I hired an assistant who is really good on the computer and websites. She has already started updating it – the Board and approved minutes. The only cost now is what we pay monthly to have the website, she would be doing most of the changes.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I think this is my first agenda item, I am giddy. I go to other LHA's, I see they have a button so you can do a work order, we are kind of antiquated here, that it is so interactive and tenant friendly where it is like – here is the meeting right here, instead of searching for City Hall to get it, everything is there. One group who is pretty fantastic doing this is Mass. Nahro. I have met Destiny Martinez, she is amazing, she is pretty good but I am just saying make it more state of the art because some of the stuff is just.....keep it professional, not personal.

Chairperson Healey – please send your ideas to Sharon.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield put forth the motion to adjourn the January 26, 2026 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Nash at 8:05 p.m. All were in favor.