



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

MARCH MINUTES

MARCH 16, 2026

Approved on April 27th, 2026

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, March 16, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:41 P.M.
Upon Roll Call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT: Chairperson Healey; Commissioner Abrashkin; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Wood; Commissioner Nash & Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield.

ALSO PRESENT: Sharon Kimble & Attorney Tom O'Connor.

LTO COMMENT

Doug Kierdorf - Forsander – at our general meeting on 3/1/2026 a resident proposed the following resolution - “The interim Executive Director of the Northampton Housing Authority has suspended all transfers of residents within the NHA properties. This has resulted in unnecessary hardship for some residents of Forsander Apartments, therefore, the residents of Forsander urged the Interim Executive Director to explain the reason for suspending all transfers and furthermore to allow resident transfers between NHA properties that have already been agreed upon. If the Interim Executive Director refuses to agree to this necessary, reasonable and humane measure, the Forsander Tenant’s Association shall file a grievance on behalf of it’s residents that are affected by the current policy.” This was voted on and passed.

The fact is, since this has passed we have been in contact with Sharon Kimble and she said this is completely wrong and she never suspended all transfers and this matter seems to be resolved, but since this was passed as a resolution at our meeting with the intention that it be made public at the Housing Authority Board meeting, I am doing that. We are looking forward to the fact that residents will be able to transfer to other properties or within the NHA properties as they planned.

Sharon Kimble – when I found out from Doug through an email I was shocked, because it was the first I heard of it. I went to the CHAMP person that was doing transfers that no longer is, and all I had said to that employee was we are no longer going to just make transfers without ED approval. Moving forward, transfers need to come through me so I can approve them and do a reasonable accommodation. I just wanted to clarify in my own words, thank you.

Adeline – Salvo LTO Vice President - I was talking to Sharon on Friday and I have some wonderful news. We had two potlucks – one in February and one yesterday and it went wonderfully well. Our attendance in February was 47 and yesterday we had 50. So we are very pleased and will continue to do more, they really like it. I wanted to let everybody know everything is going wonderfully.

Lisa Morales – Cahill LTO Secretary – not yet recognized. Shelley Neumann is here as a board advisor alternate. We have another change in leadership since the initial election and we are hoping that per our bylaws that there will be an actual election within the next 60 days to put in an elected membership for the first time in several months. I am pleased that the issue I raised about eschar rodenticides being used on NHA properties will be addressed. I have attended the Mass Audubon trainings on that and have quite a bit of material, but this is something that we can get ahead of, we don’t have to wait for the State, we don’t have to wait for the home rule petition that I am working on with some City Councilors. We

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can get on this right now. Today I saw a rat bait station floating in about 7" of water on the property, this is just one of the reasons we need to get on this right away. Another thing we need to get on right away is the condition of the buildings and grounds. It is filthy and we apparently have no porters on staff right now, so there is trash, garbage, filth on the floors in the laundry room and community room and we all pay rent and we would really like to see this addressed sooner rather than later. I know there have been positions posted but we need to pay people enough to want to come here and treat them well while they are here. We will keep you updated on any elections that might take place.

PUBLIC COMMENT

NONE

Chairperson Healey went over the rules for public comment.

Attorney O'Connor – I am not sure if you want to limit public comment to only agenda items which is what the regulation does, but it is your authority to do that or otherwise, if you so choose.

Chairperson Healey – I did fail to say that, it wasn't in my notes, yes, the regulations say that residents should limit all of the comments to items on the agenda at this time. So given that, we are going forward.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 2026 REGULAR MINUTES

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the January 2026 minutes.

RESIDENT/BOARD COMMISSIONER COMMENT UPDATES ON EVENTS (RBCC)

JoElla Tarbutton-Springfield – Highland Valley Elder services located at Salvo, they continue to provide an important nutrition program. Free meals are offered Monday-Friday from 11:00 a.m. to noon and anyone may pick up a meal or eat in the cafeteria which can hold 45 people, but you can come in and get your food and leave and not just strictly for Salvo residents but tenants across NHA properties and community members who may need them. Highland Valley also coordinates the meals on wheels program where volunteers load up meals each weekday for delivery throughout Northampton and the hill towns. Together, these nutritious programs serve about 1,000 people each day helping ensure reliable access to nutritious food for older adults and others in need. Also, we are going to be starting the Heart Farm Neighborhood Distribution hub. We were chosen last year and NHA you did this, and I and another resident at Salvo were Hub helpers. This program, in addition to Grow Food Northampton & Northampton Survival Center, will bring vegetables directly to the community. Residents from any NHA property, not just residents but staff and community can sign up to participate. The program accepts SNAP and HIP benefits, pick up at Salvo. It is usually done on Fridays between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. during the growing season. They have indicated that they are open to expanding to additional NHA properties. I think they tried to work with McDonald House but I don't know what happened. If anyone else is interested in having a Neighborhood Hub so they don't have to come to Salvo, I think there is still time before we can work that out. Every week you have whatever the veggie of the week is. Grow Foods Fresh Bank program is still going, that will start in the spring, I don't have an exact date. There is one more Winter Farmers Market on 3/28 at the Northampton Senior Center. The clean-up Salvo group will be organizing a spring cleanup depending on the weather. The initiative, Sew What Salvo continues to meet twice a month on the first and third Thursday from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. where a professional tailor comes and helps residents with clothing repairs and alterations. We have also coordinated with Northampton

Neighbors to bring additional community members to participate and support their efforts, it is a really good thing and it would be nice for folks to continue to come. I encourage residents to report to the City's website road issues, potholes and street concerns. There is a wheelchair icon and if you hit that it makes things a little larger. I have already done Fruit St. and I am going to do Service Street. Finally, I want to encourage residents, especially those living at Salvo, Cahill and all NHA properties to visit the Ward 3 Neighborhood Association website – www.ward3thelevel.com where recordings of their monthly meetings are posted online. These meetings often feature guest speakers and discussions on community issues, including two recent presentations related to ICE and other neighborhood topics. It is a helpful way to stay informed and connected with what is going on in the neighborhood and as I have said, a very good standing invitation to our Chair to come and let people know what is going on in NHA.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Sharon Kimble – I met with the Salvo LTO regarding their MOU, which is currently under review with NHA Attorney Tom O'Connor. The Salvo LTO expressed their appreciation for the new furniture purchased for their community room, noting how impressed they were with the improvements. Several interviews have been conducted with Douglas Kierdorf representing the Forsander LTO. Most notably, during our search for a Director of Maintenance, we interviewed multiple candidates and are pleased to announce that an offer has been extended and accepted. Tony Patterson will begin in the role next week. Additional interviews for other open positions have taken place, though with limited viable prospects so far. Despite this, we remain optimistic that the right candidates will emerge as we continue our recruitment efforts.

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION

TO ACCEPT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) FOR EIGHT WEEK PEER TO PEER TEMPORARY SUPPORT WITH THE GREENFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY.

Commissioner Wood – can you explain a little bit more what peer-to peer support actually means in practice?

Sharon – it means other Housing Authorities come in and they help with the Housing Authority because they are familiar with the work. Worcester and Quincy have been doing it for years. Actually, the State of Mass. ELOX supports them in a financial way to where Housing Authorities can get exemptions, etc. to get vacancies done in a very quick manner. So, it entails having another Housing Authority that is capable of being able to come in peer to peer because they know the Housing Authorities, to come in and help with assessment – more manpower and right now we don't have that.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – thank you for talking about Worcester because I see a lot of these people talking about these things when we go to the Mass. NAHRO conference and Worcester is top notch, I am impressed you reached out. We all know Jack Redman, he is really great. I wish we did this the day before Mainville left, maybe we could have worked on some of the issues being short staffed.

Sharon – in his defense and mine, it is just stuff that keeps growing, JoElla, but we are here now and it is a process. When you have every day work that is due and deadlines every day that are due, I don't have a minute on something that is due.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I did not know we could do that but I have heard people talk about it, particularly Worcester and I wish we had done this sooner, maybe it would have been

helpful and this is not a criticism on anyone. Sharon I meet with you weekly and I know what you go through.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

Commissioner Jones – the proposal as presented mentions 40 vacancies – is that accurate?

Sharon – it is, 10 are federal and 30 are State. I have been working hard with Carolina trying to make changes that need to be made that can't be done overnight.

Commissioner Jones – our overall percentage of vacancy right now is what?

Sharon – I believe we are over 10% of where they want us to be.

Commissioner Jones – because this organization, we have been pretty full most of the time.

Sharon – we started having these vacancies a good year and half, two years ago. We have been getting fees for them and it has just been getting worse. There is a process to do vacancies, mainly CHAMP. You have a staff person that has to vet the people. Once vetted, they pass the folder to the property manager and they move them in. This process is not happening in a timely manner, but it is being worked on.

Commissioner Jones – how about maintenance turning over vacants after someone moves out – is that a similar problem?

Sharon – well the problem is that they have to get vetted. I had a property manager meeting last week and I had to get pretty tough and say this is huge, this is a problem, which I have been doing for the last 5 and a half months now. I have got vacancies not filled because they are not being vetted.

Commissioner Jones – what I was asking, when someone moves out, are you also struggling with maintenance to turn that newly vacant apartment over so that somebody else can move in?

Sharon – yes.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I thought you were talking about staff vacancies because I see them inter-related, how staff vacancies result in vacancies in the building because of the turnover of people.

Sharon – as far as maintenance is concerned – we are short-handed on maintenance but you need to understand that I have 3 maintenance guys on leave but they are in my budget, I cannot hire anyone, my hands are tied. That is what I guess the Board doesn't understand, but that is what is happening. I cannot go over my budget but I also can't hire someone to replace a person on leave.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I am trying to understand because this is a vote, we want to know what is going on and how we can support, but I am confused with a lot of stuff going down and I think you were put in a position here.

Sharon – I inherited this position for sure.

Chairperson Healey- since Sharon came on board there were significant vacancies as a result of many problems over the past year, one primarily that we had a lack of leadership. I want to remind people that she is doing the job of two people. She is the Acting Executive Director doing the entire job of acting director and at the same time she is doing her own full-time job which is to do all of the accounting for the organization. She did not have her own assistant and she just brought an assistant on board. We have been meeting frequently about the problems with maintenance and vacancies and there have been many steps. We both have been in touch with the State about various ways to get this under control quickly.

Finally, I think this is a really reasonable proposal because it will be a rapid approach to assessing all those vacancies, getting maintenance in there, etc. This is what we have wanted all along, but there were so many roadblocks. It was really Sharon & Jack who came up with this after Worcester dropped the ball and it is a comprehensive approach to fixing a lot of problems that are going on during the next two

months while we are looking for a new Executive Director. In my opinion, after looking at all the problems with maintenance people on leave, HR issues going on right now, I think this is a reasonable approach to fixing some problems very quickly – we have to get these units up and running.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – are we at the 11th hour? I get nervous about that, I could have seen this a year ago when we were going through this stuff and I know you couldn't do anything but these are the things I think about in preparing for that.

Sharon – Matt Mainville did do things – he brought people from Holyoke to work with CHAMP.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I do know that I am just thinking we could have done this a little sooner because we are at that hour right now.

DISCUSSION

CHAIR REPORT ON THE FINAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN NHA AND CARA LEIPER

Chairperson Healey – I will provide a copy of the separation agreement that can be attached to these minutes.

The contract of employment between NHA and Ms. Leiper was a 5 year contract that was to end in 2028. When EOHLIC estimated payment guidelines that is where the salary amounts came from to pay Cara. For 2025 she was paid approximately \$210,000.00 which also covers the management contracts with Easthampton, Hilltowns and Hatfield. I want to remind you there was a multi-page complaint filed in early January 2025 by unnamed individuals whose identities are protected by the whistleblower laws. The complaint was delivered to the Attorney General in a redacted version to the Commissioners on January 22, 2025. The Board was advised to place the Executive Director on paid administrative leave and conduct an impartial investigation at which time the Board voted to employ our HR Attorney to negotiate with Greene & Hafer LLC, an investigation firm. We had him do that so our hands would be off the investigation. The State also recommended that two commissioners advised them to not participate in the oversight of the investigation. Ms. Leiper was placed on leave with pay from the end of March 2025 through December 19, 2025, approximately 9 months. The NHA Board of Commissioners forged a management contract with Matthew Mainville for 6 months and at the end of that period of time, after we paid a subsidy to Holyoke Housing Authority, we had Sharon Kimble, CAO become the Acting Executive Director in addition to her regular work with NHA and that is why she is doing two jobs and will continue to do so until we hire a new Executive Director. One thing we did learn was that there is no NHA policy or employee contract that has the description about the use of a vehicle for work or personal use and it appears the Executive Director, Cara Leiper had the use of the NHA owned vehicle throughout most of her employment with the NHA, but that vehicle was returned by Ms. Leiper and this is an area that the Board must address in the future. Greene & Hafer did conduct an extensive investigation, they did multiple interviews with staff, residents, 2 Commissioners and Ms. Leiper. No employees of the Housing Authority or the Board of Commissioners have the legal rights to the contents of the investigation, including the names of those interviewed, all those people are protected, we do not have the right to review any of the comments made in the interview. There was an executed summary that was shared with the Board of Commissioners in October 2025. We did have legal counsel throughout the meetings when we reviewed the summary. That summary is, on the advise of counsel, exempt from public disclosure. Based on the summary of investigation, the Board of Directors came to an agreement with Cara Leiper to accept her resignation. We then proceeded with hiring a new Executive Director. I checked with counsel who worked with us during the last year to confirm that those supporting documents and those interviews are protected from public view. By Attorney-Client privilege and also disciplinary it is also considered personnel information and that is also exempt from disclosure under the public records law. The Board also had extensive conversations with counsel and much of that is also protected by Attorney-Client privilege. The final payment paper included a one time payment of

\$35,000.00, she also received her accumulated vacation hours and her final compensation was the final week of the year. The estimated cost of the entire investigation with Greene & Hafer and the legal services of Brown & Joy over the last year came to approximately \$120,000.00.

DISCUSSION

DANIELLE MCCOLGAN ON THE ROLE RESIDENT SERVICE COORDINATORS AS A SUPPORT SERVICES

Danielle – I was asked by the Executive Director to give an overview of our supportive services within the RSC program. It is similar to some of the information we give residents on move-in and through various ways that we interact with them. Here Danielle read the overview. We have three RSC's including myself, we would love to talk to anyone at any time.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – who is the 3rd RSC?

Danielle – Kelly Bowler and they also have assigned properties so you would not necessarily have seen her, she is not stationed at Salvo or McDonald.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I think this is really great and I do enjoy working with you and I hope sometime we can do something when residents pass, we can't include their name but it would be nice to acknowledge them.

Commissioner Nash – Danielle, while I was Councilor we worked together on a few things and I really want to shout out how important this particular position is, putting a human element into all of the services that go on for residents and between NHA and it's residents, so thank you.

MOTION

ACCEPT 2ND QUARTER (DECEMBER) FINANCIALS AS PREPARED BY FEE ACCOUNTANT MICHAEL KANE.

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

Michael Kane – we submitted the budget about a month ago and it is still in process. The good news is we got a couple of questions answered today from the finance department at EOHLC to clarify a few things. We got an email back to them so knowing that it is in the finance department hopefully it is pretty close to getting approved. 400-1 State program estimated operating reserve of about 80% - budgeted was 74%, so that is just up a couple percentage points from budget. I am assuming if you are having a bunch of maintenance issues and some staffing issues, that 6% is probably from those line items. 689 is right on target. MRVP- small over budget of \$384.00 at end of December. 400-9 account - \$15,000.00 under budget as of December. 26 1& 2 – which is the NHA federal program, we are \$116,000.00 under budget. Section 8 is under budget by \$1,100.00. All programs at the close of December are not only in line with budgeted numbers but actually higher than anticipated currently.

Here Michael went through the financials shown by his excel sheet on the screen.

Once the figures are updated and the budget approved, the operating reserve might be up around 84-85% because now we get to release that 5% and we know everything in there is approved and there are no changes from EOHLC on the original budget we submitted.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – thank you for the financial materials submitted and luckily I had time to review it. I remember and Commissioner Wood can attest to this, because I spent 4 days converting the stuff into an excel file so I can read it and if I remember right, you said we can get that to

you. If I had to vote on this before, I wouldn't because it is too tiny to read and too short a time but I also have to say, thanks to Sharon and our meetings, she is going over stuff too, but I beseech you of this.

Michael – I understand and thank you for the feedback. Sharon, can I send you the excel file?

Sharon – sure, I upload documents through email.

Commissioner Nash – Sharon, thank you for adding in the consolidated expenditure report, basically it is summarizing all of what I call the chart of accounts that Michael has been going through – am I interpreting that correctly?

Sharon – yes, you are, it is all consolidated.

Commissioner Nash – so it has the percentages of where the programs are standing at this point in the year and that I find far more digestible.

Sharon – it is my favorite sheet.

Commissioner Nash – I can see why and I really appreciate that. My question to Michael is – that these percentages where they reflected in those more in-depth reports that you have just been sharing – is there a percentage of where we are at for the year?

Michael – when you look at the monthly income/expense report there is a column called over/under. That is over/under budgeted pro-rata through the number of months, which would be 6 months for NHA. Here Michael went through the columns on the report.

Commissioner Nash – this is very helpful and I am starting to get it. I look forward to working with you both on this. Thank you for that explanation, it was really helpful. Would it be possible to add a column with percentages as of that date? Example at 12/31 we are at 49%?

Sharon – the consolidated report that I gave them has that column with the percentage, the quarterly reports don't.

Commissioner Nash – I would appreciate it, that would be great.

Commissioner Wood – Administrative other – can you explain it – is it sort of a catch-all bucket of sorts?

Michael – yes, it is EOHLC's one GL account that they basically say if it doesn't fit in all these other accounts you throw it here – phone, internet, conference dues, anything administrative related. Copier supplies, lease of copier, constable fees for tenant evictions.

Commissioner Wood – providing stipends for summer interns to work on projects for NHA – would that fall here?

Michael – yes, unless it has to do with the maintenance department - he explained where maintenance costs would go. Data entry or CHAMP would fall under administrative other.

Commissioner Wood – did you talk about snow when I was away – I know it is blowing up municipal and state budgets.

Michael – thankfully NHA has a large budget but some small housing authorities where their overtime budget is about \$5,000.00 - we are well beyond that.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – did you answer the question I posed about the excel sheet?

Michael – I can start sending the actual excel file to Sharon which she can include in the email package.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – regarding insurance – what kind, I would like it broken down.

Michael - for EOHLC the insurance line includes all insurance for the Housing Authority.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I heard about whistleblower insurance – that includes that as well?

Michael – if NHA has that policy it would be under that line item.

Sharon – NHA does not have that insurance.

Commissioner Abrashkin – thank you very much for making this clear and understandable.

Michael – I will continue to work together to make it clearer and please ask questions.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – do you know anywhere where vocational students come in and help because of workers comp. because that is what the vocational school here says they need to do that, but how do people deal with that, how do you incorporate community service, what would that fall under?

Michael – to my knowledge no other Housing Authority pays for any of those services. I know a few have part time sub-contractors to help with snow removal and shoveling from time to time but for volunteer work, that would probably go through to the ED for scheduling those projects.

MOTION

ACCEPT ELECTRICAL PANEL REPLACEMENT CHANGE ORDER REQUEST

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

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – do we have a completion date?

Sharon – it hasn't been going on that long, just to be clear and secondly, they have to go from top to bottom for the electrical. As I explained to you when we met, imagine they are going from the bottom of the floor to the top of the floor through the walls in each apartment. To update everyone the federal building at McDonald has Federal Pacific electrical which is not even insurable normally. For years we have been trying to get this rectified because the federal insurance is basically saying you need to get this out of your building and we finally have enough capital funding to where we have been able to now go out and bid, which we did. We got it approved by the Board and approved by capital funds and now we started the project a few months back to actually go into the apartments as that is the first phase, because every apartment has this Federal Pacific electrical that needs to be removed and updated, it could be a fire hazard. To answer your question I hate to tie myself down to a month, two months because it is going in different phases. It is an old building, that is why we are doing a change order. They got into the wall and saw something and they have to come up with a different idea of what they are doing. At this point I can't really say, but I can ask Pete Doppman who is the procurement officer on how he thinks how long it will be. It is 60 units and it is many stages and the last one will be removing it from the basement.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – Sharon & I talked about this and she told me to go ask Pete. I actually thought it was going to be a panel but it did look pretty substantial. I didn't get a chance to ask him but I just thought in this sense, I would like it to be on record, given some kind of date of completion.

MOTION

TO PURSUE UMASS EISENBERG SCHOOL ASSISTANCE ON RESEARCHING ORGANIZED DATA FOR FUTURE GRANT WRITING, ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS, ETC.

Commissioner Abrashkin brought this motion to the agenda.

Commissioner Abrashkin – so far there is not a great deal of information but we are working up toward it, but it is important to get a really good snapshot of what the needs of our residents are, how many people need this particular service or that one, and how we might connect them with services in the community, not just the Housing Authority alone. We are going to be working with the Director of the School of Management and also one of his graduate students, PHD student, just to try to get it lined up so we will know what kind of services people are looking for, what they need and then we can proceed to try to line them up and make sure they get provided.

Chairperson Healey – are you able to share what you have done in another Housing Authority where you did gather information about resident needs that were outside of what the Housing Authority did and how do you use that information to provide a new service?

Commissioner Abrashkin – yes, there are several examples of that but one good one would be by getting a good assessment of what the needs that people had for psychological counseling, for working with children who were struggling, etc. We did an MOU with the Mental Health Assoc. of Springfield and they brought counselors right into the developments, we gave them office space, set up meetings, instead of people having to go out and struggle to find access to the services. Once we had the information on who needed what, the services were brought right into the developments and it worked very well.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I can barely contain my glee, this is what I know from living here in public housing. Are you talking about the Eisenberg School of Business?

Commissioner Abrashkin – yes, that is correct.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I want to express my sincere appreciation for this motion, I think it is really great. I love the fact that we are strengthening partnerships with this great local academic institution that I graduated from and I think it is going to open the doors for research support, data analysis, and innovative projects that can benefit the Housing Authority and our residents. I am very grateful to this kind of forward-thinking collaboration being considered and I urge everybody to say yes.

Commissioner Abrashkin – thank you very much, it is going to be a long-term project. First, you find out the information and then you adjust the program to the information you have gathered.

Commissioner Nash – this is a great idea, Hank. The information that is shared, it will be confidential, that what we are gathering is just information on who the residents are and what their needs are – we are not tracking anything about individuals, correct?

Commissioner Abrashkin – absolutely correct, yes.

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.

MOTION

TO ESTABLISH A HOC COMMITTEE TO RESEARCH CONCERNS ABOUT USE OF SGAR RODENT BAIT TRAPS & POSSIBILITY OF REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE

Commissioner Abrashkin – the only information I can convey now is I contacted Mass. Audubon with their office in Lincoln and they are going to be coming to a dedicated meeting next month, I believe, in April to talk about alternatives to using the nasty pesticides. I think there is some community education that is going to be needed because many of our residents, I am certainly not going to say a majority by any means, are really quite challenged, for example, with maintaining sanitary conditions and what is called integrated pest management, puts real emphasis on that. So how do you make that work, it is going to have to be figured out.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – my question – what does MCC stand for?

Commissioner Nash – that is a different organization, that is MCCC.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I wonder if they did anything with pest control or whatever the case is, how they handled that or if they had any suggestions or if they could be aware of what is going on here and see if they can have some input.

Commissioner Wood – I am in full favor of this process and exploration and I wanted to ensure that we are reducing toxics for human health and for environmental health and for the health of the ecosystem. I hope we make sure that we do include the health inspector and the environmental health inspector from the City of Cambridge in the conversation. I want everybody to understand that the NHA is beholden to

the State Sanitary Code and in the ways in which they apply pesticides and the way in which they respond to complaints related to pests. They are in need of constantly holding multiple different concerns and multiple different requirements as one entity that is subject to the State Sanitary Code. As we go into this process I hope people are engaging in it in a way that can sort of push us toward a goal of reducing toxics at the same time not inflaming and having conversation and practice processes that do not reflect the actual sort of lived experience and needs of the folks who are managing NHA and all the different things that they are subject to, I wanted to say.

Commissioner Abrashkin – very apropos and very important, agreed.

DISCUSSION

ATTORNEY TOM O'CONNOR ON CAHILL & SALVO MOU

Attorney O'Connor – The Tenants Association for Forsander & Salvo have submitted memorandums of understanding, MOU's, for us to consider and enter into essentially a contract that governs our relationship with them, what input they will have, what obligations we have with respect to them. These were submitted to Matt Mainville last summer and Matt was hesitant to enter into them. His thinking was he didn't want to bind an Executive Director that is not him going forward. The terms of the agreement are 5 years, so he essentially shelved them. Sharon has been on board for several months now and the ED, Sharon, and you yourself, Patty, are both of the opinion – look, these things have been sitting around for months, the tenant's associations have been very patient and it is time for us to deal with them. So that is where I entered the scene. 760cmr6.093 governs these, it requires us to enter into one of these agreements. It is essentially a contract between us and the LTO's. At the same time, that regulation was dramatically expanded about two years ago, it became effective in early June of 2024. What I am trying to do is wading through the MOU's with a couple of goals. One is to produce one uniform State MOU and one uniform Federal MOU. The three that I have are 25-30 pages long, they have slight differences, they are all from the State LTO's. I see absolutely no reason for uniformity purposes to have anything but one with the only changes being the relevant LTO name – that is goal 1. Goal 2 – is to pair it to the regulations so we are obligated to do what the regulation requires us to do and in spirit, go beyond it as much as we reasonably can with the goal of cooperation and input with the LTO's. On the other hand, to be cautious and not obligate the NHA beyond what the regulation requires. I have gone through them pretty extensively. I have draft, edited versions that I have given to Mr. Wyda, the president of the Salvo LTO. I believe Mr. Kierdorf, the president of Forsander LTO picked up his version of it Friday afternoon. I am hopeful to meet with them, have a dialogue, find some common ground and produce a completely edited version that we can all agree upon and then come back to the Board next month with a version that is ready to be approved by the Board.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – Tom, thank you for addressing this. I appreciate the Chair for putting it on the agenda for discussion. At one point people were like why is this being ignored? I think the frank way in which you explained this makes all the sense in the world. When I was VP of the LTO I remember day and night working on this getting every word from what Mass. Union got us in coordination with EOHLC. When we went to the Mass convention people were so impressed with what we did at Salvo they were giving it to other residents because we explained everything. One thing that had not been addressed is anti-fraternization, a policy wasn't approved or even talked about. I like the fact that we are all working together trying to get this done. We got the model for them, a template basically with the stuff. It would be nice if all the LTO's could be able to work on this, it was very popular at the convention.

Commissioner Jones – I would hope due to the length of the document that we would get that before Friday for a Monday meeting, going forward, so that we can study it.

Attorney O'Connor – Commissioner Jones, I will get you the redacted version with the editions from me and then a finished version of the two of those together. So, you will get more information than you want.
Commissioner Jones – thank you, I will take it.

Chairperson Healey – thank you, Tom for the work on this, I know that it has been very detailed and has taken a lot of time to research and meet with people and put it together. I do appreciate the work you have done.

DISCUSSION

TO FORMALLY RECOGNIZE THE PASSING OF DICK COURTNEY, A LONG-SERVING MEMBER OF THE UFCW LOCAL 1459 AND A FORMER MEMBER OF THE NHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Commissioner Jones – I just wanted it entered into the historical record, I am a historical sponge of sorts and Richard aka Dick Courtney was my mentor in UFCW local 1459. He is the person that engineered my becoming a shop steward on the floor at the time and the rest is history. He served as Chairperson of the NHA for ten years. According to the obituary that was recently published he passed away on March 1st on the Cape way before his time, just approaching 76. He was a fixture in Northampton politics for some time and his wife taught in Connecticut. He was with local 1459 for 21 years, he left in 2003. His service on the Authority was before my time. After he left in 2003 he finished out his career with the New Hampshire Education Association before retiring. I stayed in touch with him on and off through the years and always appreciated what he brought. I think his service here was probably when Mary Ford was the Mayor and worked with Clare Higgins too. I just wanted the minutes to reflect that and acknowledge his service to the Authority through the years. Thank you for putting me on the agenda.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – did we do something similar when board member Ron Hebert passed? I would like to do this for board, chair, past and present that they be recognized. I didn't know if we had a standing form that we did for them. I think it is important, it is part of the healing process as well.

Commissioner Jones – that is a good idea. I would say just because you brought up that individual there is an article in the Daily Hampshire Gazette where they are resurrecting the road race named after Commissioner Hebert in Florence. That is going to start up again, so yes, it is another historical item. John Stifler writes a running column in the Gazette that shows up every so often and I think his last column mentions that. It was actually the first road race I ever ran, I learned a lot and I am glad to see that race come back.

Commissioner Wood – if anyone finds the article and can send it out to the commissioners that would be great.

DISCUSSION

ED SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

Chairperson Healey – the search committee did meet and discussed the important parts of what we thought was important to place an ad for applications for an Executive Director. We worked with Mass. NAHRO on that. The ad was placed, I believe, a week ago today on 9 or 10 different outlets and will be in for 30 days. We could still place another item, we have enough money to do another one if someone has another idea, but at that point the committee will work with Mass. NAHRO who will collate the information and do a detailed spreadsheet that gives the search committee the information about those who meet the requirements of our job description. Hopefully, by mid-April we can start to arrange interview time with our committee and go forward from there.

Commissioner Nash – Chairperson Healey, have you decided on the makeup of the committee?

Chairperson Healey – the committee is made up of 3 commissioners – Abrashkin, Tarbutton-Springfield and myself. There are 2 recognized LTO's each of which have identified someone to participate as well, so we will have 3 residents and then a crossover with our commissioners. We have Brad Gordon who is an appointee on the Governor's Housing Advisory Council and he has also headed up a housing authority as well and he is going to be our advisor outside of our community. There were others who wanted to be considered as participants on our committee and as Chair I weighed all of the needs of the committee and the issues that we are facing with both the residents' rights and responsibilities and the ED and what kinds of skills and needs we would have on the executive side. I think we have a very strong committee, a committed committee and I think it is adequate with one additional community member at this point in time. I did ask the other committee members who volunteered to consider being available should we need to replace someone on the committee.

Commissioner Abrashkin – we did point out that we did not mean to suggest by any means that others could not potentially add to the process but we have to kind of limit it and draw some circles around it.

Chairperson Healey – also, this pressing need to get this done to move forward as quickly as we can, it seems like it is a glacial process. There is a point at which we will have to have the conversations about how to have our executive staff also be involved with who it is we are interviewing and then have other opportunities for residents to be able to know who we are interviewing. That is another piece we need to discuss as a committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield put forth the motion to adjourn the March 16th meeting at 7:35 p.m. seconded by Commissioner Abrashkin. All were in favor.

The next board meeting will be held on Monday, April 27, 2026