Approved –AUGUST 24, 2026
AUGUST MINUTES

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via "Zoom" on Monday, August 24, 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; Vice Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield; Commissioner Abrashkin; Commissioner Wood & Commissioner Nash.
ALSO PRESENT: Sharon Kimble, Attorney Thomas O'Connor & Doug Kierdorf.

LTO COMMENT
Doug Kierdorf – Forsander -On Sunday the 16th we had a meeting with the tenants and passed a resolution – "The Forsander tenants association resolves the following – the Northampton Housing Authority must comply with Governor Maura Healey's directive of January 27, 2025. This written policy, issued in a press release of that date, says the following – "this policy formalizes the Healey-Driscoll administrations pre-established approach to employee settlement agreements, including prohibiting non-disclosure agreements, requiring approval for settlements and ensuring that settlement agreements are public records." Accordingly, the Forsander tenants' association demands that the report of the nine month long investigation into the misdeeds of former Executive Director Cara Leiper which was conducted at a cost to the taxpayer of $120,000.00, should be made public. The non-disclosure agreement concluded between the Northampton Housing Authority and Cara Leiper is a violation of the Governor's directive and the principle of transparency and it is a self-serving charade to keep from the public evidence of malfeasance by both Leiper and the NHA. Let justice be done, though the heavens fall."
Doug – I look forward to Tom O'Connor explaining why Maura Healey's directive doesn't apply to the Northampton Housing Authority. Thanks.

PUBLIC COMMENT
KC – MCDONALD – I had a meeting with the acting Executive Director and I had asked if she could sponsor myself and another tenant to attend the Mass. Union conference. She said she is all about RAB – which is the Resident Advisory Board, which is basically the same thing. I think it would benefit everyone to have a little unity among residents, this is beyond birthday cakes, you all know that. Thank you for that statement, Doug, she said if she sponsored me she would have to sponsor everyone, so are a lot of people asking, or what? I mean how many people are interested in doing more work? I just want to make it clear that this is what I am asking for. Beyond that, I actually turned in after the fact, something saying that my plot is my plot and because of the lack of transparency here, my garden plot was set up for destruction because she didn't understand it was an assigned plot. I am just voting for more transparency for all. I work with several groups around town that have done a lot for NHA and it would be great if we could get on the same page. Thanks to Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield, I did attend plenty of the Mel King Institute trainings.
Migdalia – McDonald – thank you members of the Board for your service. I have concerns about a number of things that two minutes will not allow to detail. It is now six months before we approve the 2027 annual 5-year plan. It is very important that the resident input required by the regulations are recorded accurately. At the May meeting I provided public comment related to the public hearing held

for the Federal Annual Plan. I was confused during the hearing portion of the meeting, so gave my comment during the regular public comment part of the regular meeting. I asked if that comment can be attached to the annual plan and it was assured that it would be. There was additional public input held at a resident meeting prior to the date of the hearing. I am concerned that my comment from the meeting in May was not submitted with the Annual Plan, because that meeting was not recorded. I know there is a transcript for the zoom meeting that has my comment and I would request that those comments, verbatim, be sent to HUD for the record. I am also concerned that the summary of the resident input session was incorrect. What was submitted to HUD gave the impression that residents were excited about new floors for the building and office and hardly mentioned the numerous concerns people raised about the windows. Because that meeting was not recorded, we have to rely on notes taken and the written summary. I am also concerned that the resident input session was really a session at which residents were informed about what the Annual Plan would include, already a done deal.

APPROVAL OF JULY REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Abrashkin put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Nash.
VOTING YAY: Chairperson Healey; Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield; Commissioner Nash; Commissioner Abrashkin & Commissioner Wood.
VOTING NAY: NONE
Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the minutes.

Chairperson Healey – are there any objections to moving Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield to the front of the agenda? No objections were put forth.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield Statement

Thank you very much, prestigious group of people. I submitted this actually to Madam Chair Healey and the Mayor on August 15th because I was thinking that we were going to have the Board meeting on the 17th. It reads as follows – "As I announced at the July meeting of the Northampton Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, and as I now formally confirm in writing for this Monday's meeting, I am resigning from my position as Resident Commissioner of the Northampton Housing Authority, the last day is August 31, 2026. This is a bittersweet decision. An advanced health issue now requires my full attention, time and energy. Serving on the Board has been important and meaningful work but is also demanding work and I have reached a point where I must devote myself fully to my health. As I prepare to leave after approximately 7 years of service, I am especially grateful that I am departing at a time when I see greater communication, participation and collaboration among residents, commissioners, staff, city officials and the broader community. The Board I leave is very different from the Board I joined, and I am proud to have played some part in that evolution. I want to express particular gratitude to my fellow Commissioners. **Jim Nash** - thank you for your honesty, integrity, mentorship and friendship. You taught me a great deal about governance and about how a thoughtful board member can disagree, ask difficult questions and still treat people with dignity. I leave feeling enormously reassured knowing that you remain on this Board. **Patty Healey** - you have gone far above and beyond what ordinarily is associated in the duties of the Board Chair. I have watched you work directly with the residents, help people participate in the Executive Director search process and make yourself available when assistance was needed. On a personal level your compassion and your nursing background became essentially meaningful to me when I was struggling to explain what I was experiencing medically. Your visits and concern meant more than I can adequately express. We have not always agreed, particularly in the beginning, but through these differences we built a relationship grounded in respect. I believe you are the right person to chair the Board at this time. I appreciate you and all your efforts and as we say in my

neighborhood, I encourage you to keep on keeping on. **Ben Wood** - thank you for consistently asking that financial information, facts, figures and reports be presented in language that ordinary residents and board members without financial backgrounds can understand, as though we are reading a book rather than deciphering a financial document. That may sound like a small thing, but it is not. Accessibility is part of transparency, and your questions have helped me tremendously through what sometimes has been quite a learning curve. **Hank Abrashkin** – I believe your addition to the Board has been invaluable. I was particularly encouraged by your idea involving the UMass School of Management in strengthening the Board's work. As you know, when I heard that suggestion, I practically heard heavenly bells, it was exactly the kind of creative partnership I believe the Housing Authority should embrace. Your professional experience also brings an important perspective to this Board. I especially appreciated that when you first joined you reached out and asked to meet me, listen, introduce yourself and learn about the Authority from the perspective of a Resident Board Commissioner. No commissioner approached me that way before. To me, that demonstrated professionalism, curiosity and respect. I have not forgotten it and again, keep on keeping on. I want to give particular recognition to **Executive Director Sharon Kimble.** Over the past year Sharon and I worked together frequently, sometimes on a weekly basis and through those conversations I gained a much deeper understanding of how the Housing Authority operates. I appreciate having the opportunity to share ideas and to bring forward the perspective of someone with lived experience as a public housing resident. Sharon did not always agree with everything I proposed and I certainly did not always agree with her, but there was discussion. I was able to bring ideas to the table and I felt heard. That matters enormously to me because the Resident Board Commissioner brings something to the board that cannot be learned slowly through reports, regulations or professional experience, lived experience. The Executive Director search is now complete, Sharon is the duly selected Executive Director, no longer acting Executive Director and with that comes a responsibility for all of us to afford her the professional respect, support, accountability and opportunity necessary to lead the NHA successfully. One lesson I have learned over many years in public and community life is that your first trust is sometimes not necessarily the person who ultimately gets the job and sometimes that person may ultimately prove to be exactly what is needed. Once a fair decision has been made, there comes a time to move forward. Sharon is our Executive Director. If we give her the support she needs while continuing to hold her authority to high standards, I believe she can accomplish some wonderful things.

I also want to thank a member of the NHA staff, whom I will not identify publicly. During an extraordinarily difficult period in my medical treatment, this person shared the experience of a young family member who had endured something similar. That conversation changed something in me at a moment when I was overwhelmed by treatment and wondering how I was going to get through it. Hearing what the young person had endured gave me perspective, strength and gratitude. Sometimes we never fully know the effect that a few compassionate words can have on another human being. You may not know how much that conversation helped me, but I do and I remain deeply grateful.

To Mayor Gina Louise Sciarra – thank you for your efforts to strengthen communication and engagement with NHA residents. I particularly appreciate the City's support that helped improve residents' access to online community communication at Salvo House. That access has helped residents become better informed and better able to participate. I also appreciate your efforts over the years to encourage mediation, communication and a healthier relationship between the Housing Authority, it's residents and the City. Those efforts matter, even when results are not immediate.

Finally, to my fellow residents of NHA. I did my best. I was not always, as my grandmother would say, honey-tongued. I asked difficult questions. I spoke forcefully when I believed residents were not being heard. I challenged things when I thought they needed challenging and I undoubtedly made mistakes along the way, but I truly tried. I tried consistently and sincerely to help create a housing authority in

which residents are not merely talked about. Prior to actively participating, asking questions, receiving information and being heard I am proud of how much has changed during my approximately 7 years on this Board. When I first became commissioner, our meetings were not videotaped as they are today. Public participation was different and communication was different. Today, more residents are becoming involved. Our meetings are more accessible, and the work of the housing authority is receiving greater attention throughout Northampton. Most of all I am proud that whenever residents, commissioners and community leaders can sit at the same table and recognize that despite our different roles and perspectives, we share a responsibility for making public housing better; I hope that continues. Continue listening to one another, respecting one another, allow differences to be heard and remember that at the center of every policy, every financial report, regulation, building, every board decision, are people who call the Northampton Housing Authority home. I leave this board with gratitude, pride, some sadness and a great deal of hope. After approximately 7years it is bittersweet to say goodbye to this role, but I believe I am leaving at a time when there are good people in place who can continue moving the NHA. My resignation from the board does not mean I am disappearing. I am still a resident; I am still a part of the community. I still care deeply about NHA and the people who call it home and those who know me know that I am certainly not going to stop having something to say. Guys, everyone, sincerely, thank you for the privilege of serving. With great gratitude and respect, JoElla "Jada" Tarbutton-Springfield.
Chairperson Healey – thank you, JoEella.
Sharon Kimble – thank you, JoElla.

MOTION
APPROVAL OF JULY STATE ANNUAL PLAN MINUTES
Commissioner Nash put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Abrashkin.
VOTING YAY: Chairperson Healey; Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield; Commissioner Nash; Commissioner Abrashkin & Commissioner Wood.
VOTING NAY: NONE
Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the minutes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
Sharon – the Northampton Public Health department continues to conduct their regularly scheduled nurses hours and nurse Jen has incorporated public bingo with it. A fun way to socialize while learning health information and winning prizes. Residents who attended expressed having a good time and they look forward to doing it again with her. Coordinators from the senior health care plans visited the sites. They collaborated with the RSC team to host picnics, barbeques and coffee hours for our residents while having information available about their services and what they can offer our residents. During the heat wave we posted heat advisory information in both English and Spanish on our community boards about the importance of staying hydrated during the summer months and NHA provided bottled water to all the residents. We recently wrapped up the Summer Eats program, this program is in partnership with the Northampton School Department, and it lasts 7 weeks. We are happy to report that we had an increase in participants this season at Florence Heights and Hampshire Heights and we look forward to doing it next year. We had an ice cream social at Tobin, Forsander, Hamblin Court and Hillside Terrace. All sites were well attended and it was a nice way to end the summer. Lastly, we have a lot of backpacks and school supplies so please let us know if anyone needs them and they can pick them up. .
Commissioner Nash – Sharon, can you give us an update on where we are at with the Salvo elevator, I know we were expecting some work to be done soon.
Sharon – it was going to be signed out to be delivered on the 21st. I know that earlier today I had Jose reach out to find out if it has been delivered yet, because they are supposed to be putting us as a priority.

I don't know if he heard back from them by the end of day, so we are waiting on that, but I do know that it was supposed to be shipped on the 21st. Also, I was going to do the MOU with Worcester Housing Authority regarding the vacant units and Patrick, which is handling the MOU, he originally gave me an MOU, but it did not include CHAMP which we want included, so he is going to get back to me. They are also giving us the cost as well. We did come up with 34 State units that they were going to do, just so you know. Because they weren't able to finish the MOU, meanwhile, we have 3 more that just came up in Salvo and one more at Cahill and they are willing to take those on as well and that shows you how quickly it went from 34 to 4 more being added. We will have to do a special board meeting for the MOU so we can get it done in time and not have to wait until the September regular board meeting. As soon as I hear back from Worcester, I will get an email out to the board to pick a date.
Chairperson Healey – I know you are looking at a smoking policy that will be looked at and re-written?
Sharon – I had a meeting with Doug, the Forsander LTO President and we had a really good discussion and I think I would like to do a survey with tenants to start the process and find out exactly everyone's feelings on the subject and then compile the information and see where it is at. I get complaints of people smoking in their apartments and then I get complaints on the other end saying – no, we are not. I want to get an idea on how tenants feel on the smoking. Most Housing Authorities are 100% non-smoking, not just inside, but on the grounds, so that is something we should think about, but I don't think it is anything we should rush into without first putting out a survey to all the tenants, to give them a voice. .
Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – is it my understanding, wasn't it about 2 ½ years ago that we got a directive that smoking was being prohibited on all NHA property, but it never really went into effect?
Sharon – it was for being 25 feet away from the buildings.
Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – if we could just get people to abide by that and adhere to it, that would be ideal.
Sharon – that is why I want to do the survey because we need to start as a whole NHA having the conversation because there are a lot of people that are very, very, unhappy with smoking in the building and it is happening, but yes, I agree, if we can meet at a middle ground & stick with the 25 feet that was originally given with the prior administration, that would be the best way to stay,.
Commissioner Wood – I want to reiterate an offer to have a conversation with staff at my organization Health Resources in Action. We run the smoke free housing programs for the Mass. Tobacco Cessation Program for the whole state and have access to experts in this particular field both from a policy perspective, but also to think about if you want to do some data collection, the types of questions you would want to ask, methodologies, etc. I can definitely support putting you in contact with those staff members and they would be happy to have some conversation.
Sharon – thank you, that would be great, Ben.
Chairperson Healey – I did look on the website and I did not realize that was the work you did, so it was impressive. Thanks for that, I am sure you will hear from us.
Commissioner Abrashkin – if there is a State policy in some form for smoke free, then even if it should happen that a portion of tenants would prefer to have some smoking allowed, wouldn't that violate the State policy?
Sharon – I would have to look at that. I don't think the State policy has that you can't smoke at all, otherwise, we wouldn't have the 25 feet from the building rule. I do know they prohibit it in the buildings, which we do too, but it doesn't stop tenants from doing it.
Commissioner Abrashkin – does anybody know what the current policy says?
Sharon – do you know, Tom, what the State policy is on smoking?
Attorney O'Connor – no, I don't. I know our policy is the 25 feet and smoking in the smoking huts that are outside.

Sharon – which is my guess, follows or is definitely within what the State and Federal allowed.
Attorney O'Connor – I think that is accurate, but I will look into that tomorrow. I am unaware of any statewide policy that pertains to housing authorities.
Chairperson Healey – when I worked in some healthcare facilities any building that had any State money had to have a policy to prohibit smoking on the grounds and in buildings, so I don't know what makes us different, but we will see when we take a deep dive into this.
Commissioner Wood- the folks I work with can provide up to date information. I think there is a difference between Federal and State properties, you definitely can't smoke on State property.

OLD BUSINESS
NONE

NEW BUSINESS
RESOLUTION 2026-06 – APPROVE THE CERTIFICATION OF FY2026 SECTION 8 SEMAP.
Commissioner Nash put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Abrashkin.
VOTING YAY: Chairperson Healey; Commissioner Wood; Commissioner Abrashkin & Commissioner Nash.
VOTING NAY: NONE
ABSTAIN: Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield.
Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Resolution.
Sharon – this is done yearly and comes up with the fair market value of what we will be charging for Section 8 HUD. Sharon then read the resolution.

RESOLUTION 2026-7 APPROVAL OF THE QUARTERLY & YEAR END FINANCIALS FY2026 PRESENTED BY MICHAEL KANE, CERTIFICATION OF THE TOP 5 COMPENSATION FORM, YEAR END FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND TENANTS ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLES DATA. CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR FEDERAL AND STATE LEAD PAINT LAWS AND WAGE MATCH.
Commissioner Nash put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Abrashkin.
VOTING YAY: Chairperson Healey; Commissioner Wood; Commissioner Abrashkin & Commissioner Nash.
VOTING NAY: NONE
ABSTAIN: Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield.
Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Resolution.
Michael Kane presented. Went through the top 5 compensation form. Year end financial statements for FY2026 - **4001-1 State program** – budgeted 75% of operating reserve and we landed at 86% leaving a 12% increase from budget to actual. On the 400-1 program – police detail, we only had that in there for about 2 ½ months, that will be a big factor when we do our new budget for FY2027, but where we landed on this program is really good**. 689 – disability program for tenants & Servicenet**. We projected a $18,563.00 loss on the approved budget and we came in at $9,076.00. This program, just like every other program that we discuss after this does not have a minimum or maximum operating reserve like the State. The State is at 35%. **MRVP- State Section 8 voucher program** – we anticipated a small loss of $691 and we had a small surplus of $539 at year end. Our operating reserve at budget was $2431.00, we landed at $3661, so the overall increase was $1230.00 in surplus**. 400-9 Management agreement program for Hatfield & Easthampton**. On this program we anticipated a small loss of $18,745, we came in higher **at** $26,692. We still have a positive operating reserve of $4,115.00. The main reason is the Easthampton Housing Authority contract ended in April. For two months we did not collect

about$25,000.00 in management fees. **MA026- McDonald & Florence Heights** – operating reserve of 1.493 million. We anticipated a loss of $924,635 but note that out of that $600,000.00 was budgeted for extraordinary items of the flooring stuff. At year end we came in at a loss of $201,618, so we actually increased our budget by $723, 017.00. This reserve is close to 1.3 million, which is a big number.
Chairperson Healey – would you explain what the losses are?
Michael – one thing is that we want to make sure that HUD doesn't recapture any of our reserves, so we must make sure that Northampton has a plan in place if something comes up and we want to make sure those operating reserves are not getting too high. Also, another caveat for the Board, which is kind of unique, NHA has under 250 units on the Federal side, so the capital fund program, anything you do receive from this plan, it can also be received in offset against operating expenditures. There are plenty of funds set aside on this program, with 2024 & 2025 there is about $520,000.00 of capital funds still sitting there to be drawn down and that is without FY2026 even being obligated which will be about another $300,000.00, which is a good healthy number.
Section 8 – anticipated a small surplus of $2683.00 and we had a surplus of $8,040.00 leaving a change of $5,357.00; the total operating reserves in this program is $1,518,341.00.
Across all of the NHA programs for operating reserves we budgeted $4,872,028.00 and we ended up at $4,922,991.00 so we increased our surplus overall from the budget.
Michael went over the State program subsidies. Northampton earned $2,326 million in subsidy, but EOHLC only sent us $881,091.96, so we are owed $1,445 million in subsidy from the State when we close the books. When we finalize year end they will usually send us the remaining subsidy in the following month or month and a half. Commissioners questioned Michael on subsidies.
Michael went over the non-routine expenses for the 400 account. Also, I am hearing through the grapevine the State is going to give us 0% for ANUEL (Allowable Non-Utility Expense Level) increase for the State budget this year.
Commissioner Wood – can you explain that just a little bit more?
Michael – when we look at the subsidy count EOHLC derives this non-utility ANUEL number they give us and tell us here is your expenditure outside of utilities that you are going to budget within and usually they give us an increase every year, so that we can budget for different things. What this means is the number budgeted - $3,105,536.00 is going to stay the same for fiscal 2027, so with all the L & I (Labor & Industries) increases that the housing authorities got from the DNLI rates, it will make it that much harder to balance the budget.
Commissioner Nash – would that be a directive coming from the Governor or from the Director of EOHLC?
Michael – this comes directly from the budget guidelines which come out around Labor Day effective July 1st. This tells you how much administrative raises you can do, maintenance, and obviously the increase to the ANUEL expenditures.
Commissioner Nash – do those change after they are announced?
Michael – no, once they are set, they are set.
Commissioner Nash – so this is EOHLC budget guidelines to us for the year.
Sharon - that we have to live by.
Commissioner Nash – is there anybody we can talk to?
Sharon – I don't know who that would be.
Commissioner Nash is – it might be time to reach out to our State Representatives and just say what **is** going on.
Michael – from my perspective it is going to be a very untimely event because the L & I kind of revamped their rates. Maintenance rates went up by 9, 10 and 12% by position and then they aren't going to give us an ANUEL increase because we know this event took place.

Commissioner Abrashkin – this is directed toward Sharon and I know it is a large question, but do we have a way of communicating the limitations that we are under to our residents? If there are things that residents would like the Housing Authority to do, but we just don't have the funding to do it, how is that communicated? Just turn out our pockets, what do you do?
Sharon – hopefully, we are still going to be able to do our work orders and we have capital improvement projects that have already been approved by the State. Those are not going to change and that is what tenants look forward to, the projects; all the other things, like work orders and contract costs, those are all overhead operatives. It is not money we spend over and above for projects for them, it is more of an annual expense of things that come up and we say, I need to fix this. We should be fine with doing that even with a zero percentage, but it is going to go into our reserves, but we have great reserves.
Commissioner Wood – it is probably more of an issue for FY28 if there is continuing zero percent increases where there is a structural deficit built in year after year.
Mike – Northampton's operating reserves is at 86%. To even reach the minimum 35%. Northampton would have to spend 1.26 million of operating reserves next year to reach the 35% threshold, that is on top of the ANUEL expenditures that are already allotted in the budget, so it is a very big number. For FY27 I feel really good about where Northampton is.
Sharon – this is not the first time at zero percent.

DISCUSSION- TREASURER'S REPORT – JIM NASH
I am working with Sharon on the Salvo elevator situation. I am watching what we are spending and inquiring when the parts are showing up, etc.

DISCUSSION – PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE – JIM NASH
Sharon has pulled together a self-assessment and based on the tool we received from the State we are ready to take the next step which is to share her self-assessment with commissioners along with the evaluation tool, which you will fill out and that will be confidential. Our discussion afterwards, when we come together to put our stamp on it, that will be in public session. The next piece is you will get Sharon's self-evaluation based on the tool, then you take the tool yourself and evaluate what she has shared, that is then shared back to Patty & I and we will summarize to bring that back at a future meeting. We hopefully will bring the summary to our September meeting. I have a question for Tom – the self-evaluation that Sharon has provided us, that too is confidential, correct?
Attorney O'Connor – yes, the evaluation from my research is not a public record and not attainable through a public records request. Your discussion related to it can't be in the executive session, that needs to be in the open session.
Commissioner Nash – whatever we write down will go in the file, but when we discuss it, it has to be in public session. I view this as a practice run for future evaluations. We are establishing a process which will help us down the road.
Chairperson Healey – one comment as Chair – I reviewed all the files from previous board discussions before all of our times when there were attempts to build a very comprehensive approach to evaluating the Executive Director. It happened with the old Executive Director, and it just occurred to me that one piece that was written about was the Executive Director relationship with other city officials and it is something that we had not considered. I wanted to note that Sharon has been meeting already with legislators, she has a meeting set up with the Mayor and she has proceeded to do all of these meetings on her own even though that has not happened in the past, but it might be a thing to think about when we are writing our evaluation.

Commissioner Nash – as you go through the evaluation, feel free to add comments at the end as this is something we need to improve on, here is something that would improve it in the future.

DISCUSSION – FILLNG BOARD SEAT AND INCLUDING INFORMATION ON THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES LED BY BEN WOOD.

Commissioner Wood – the question is – what are the sorts of needs that the Housing Authority has that we could think about folks coming in with specific skill sets, experiences, connections, that we think could fill some of those gaps. So, I guess the question is, what are the gaps that commissioners are seeing in terms of experiences, skill sets, connections, etc. that could be both related to, as JoElla would point out, crystal clear, lived experience and understanding what it actually looks like and feels like to live and be in public housing, to the sorts of things that we might need on the financial side, related to the conversation we just had. Maybe we want folks who are really good at grant writing, or thinking about business development, or the things that might provide some additional resources beyond those that are sort of baked into the NHA's budget. Or it could be related to community facing gaps that we might have on the commission. Are we connected enough to social service organizations? To cultural institutions and assets and things that could be bringing more life and opportunity to residents of NHA?

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I humbly suggest that perhaps the Board or someone should provide room and board for the resident board member because it is a big expense. I had to buy my own computer and printer. The LTO's get it from Mass. Union, they all get a new laptop. Sharon did get some, but those are factors we are not thinking about because if you are top heavy from people who own their own apartment and you don't live here, you don't think about that. Also, mentorship is helpful.

Chairperson Healey – one of the things you touched on needing a computer and printer, so the needs of our tenant board members may be unique and different from those other volunteers. That is a great point, I think we can talk about that again.

Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I think also have evaluations of board members; I think that would have been helpful.

Chairperson Healey – two points to raise. Two of our seats are tied to another committee. Ben's seat, he came out of Housing Partnership and then joined our board, so our board will always have someone from the Housing Partnership. We also have a seat which is linked with the Community Preservation Committee and that committee is involved in assessing requests for money in the City around housing, historical restoration and a few other things and actually distributing that money. There is also a seat for our Housing Authority board members for the CPC committee, and they are starting their meetings in just a couple of weeks to begin distributing those grant monies. Sarah LaValle reached out and said can we pull somebody from our group to sit on this other committee. Jeff Jones was the last person on the committee and he left in June. The other point I think is important for a board member is to understand the legislation that is moving through the State legislature and be in touch with our legislators because the issue we have here is not having funding. We need to figure out ways in which we can play a role to lobby our legislators. It is not required by commissioners, it is not expected, but it would certainly be useful and for commissioners to understand the mechanisms out there, the political machine that decides on how money moves into the Housing Authorities, so I think that is an important characteristic I would like to see in a board member.

Commissioner Nash – somebody with some construction or project management type background, when we are dealing with something like the elevator, having somebody say, yes, this is the way it happens, the elevator industry is like this, you can expect this kind of delay, which I think would be really helpful. Somebody like Scott Keiter would be incredible, someone doing construction on bigger projects.

Commissioner Abrashkin – someone who has facility and maybe some experience in publicizing the work of the Housing Authority, not just the work, but publicizing the good points of what is going on in the NHA and how our residents are participating in the broader community. I also second the point Ben made about grant writing; we never have enough money without grants.
Chairperson Healey – Also, someone besides Ben who has a background in public health because our housing units are an essential part of a healthy living and I think understanding the way in which the commission should be proactive and developing a healthy environment and working closely with residents to do so. For example, the smoking policy which is really the work of the Executive Director and executive team, but the insights of someone whose work in public health would really inform us in a different way, I think, that is another part I value.
Commissioner Wood – how many vacant board seats are there?
Attorney O'Connor - three vacancies when JoElla leaves at the end of the month, which consists of two residents and a third person that doesn't have to be a resident, just a member of the community. We need 7 total commissioners.
Chairperson Healey – the process is to submit an application to the Mayor's office, the Mayor then interviews the potential applicant, then proceeds to send her appointment to the City Council and then they are sent to City Services who interviews the applicant, who then sends the applicant back to City Council where the Council will approve the appointment. The person then has to be signed in. It does take a lot of time and as I said, there is one in the pipeline now to fill JoeElla's seat and that will happen soon, I believe.
Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield – I think it would be a good idea to have City Services come to one of our meetings and to also invite some of the people you were talking about who we would all like to encourage, there is a whole process of courting people.
Commissioner Abrashkin – I would like to go back to where Doug Kierdorf raised a question – do we have a method of addressing that?
Chairperson Healey – a method of addressing the resolution the LTO passed?
Commissioner Abrashkin – yes, the certain information that has been kept confidential, if I understand correctly, is required under the law to become public.
Chairperson Healey – I referred the question to the Attorney who worked with the board during the investigation period and who informed us about what information was protected, because the person in question was an employee. Does that change later – I don't know, so I sent a query again asking for advice about how we proceed with answering this question.
Commissioner Abrashkin – thank you very much, under the announcement that the Governor made about what the requirements are now.
Chairperson Healey – I didn't think that this was actually an NDA, but that is an Attorney's job to inform us, that was not my understanding of that agreement, it wasn't an NDA from what I understand.
Commissioner Abrashkin – not sure, but Doug raised a question and I would like to get a professional read, a legal read, on whether we are in compliance with the latest requirements.
Chairperson Healey – I did refer that to Morgan & Brown in Boston as soon as I got that note from Doug.

MOTION TO ADJOURN
Commissioner Nash put forth the motion to adjourn at 6:58 p.m., seconded by Vice-Chairperson Tarbutton-Springfield. All in favor.

Therefore, Chairperson Healey approved the Motion.