

MINUTES: HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF NEWTON, NJ

March 12, 2018

“In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this public meeting was given to the newspaper of record and posted on the official bulletin Board on December 28, 2017.”

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Commissioners for the Newton Housing Authority was held on Monday, March 12, 2018 in the Community Room at Liberty Towers. The meeting was called to order by Secretary Iozzi at 5:35pm and roll call was taken. Chairman Nannery (excused), Commissioner Capinjola, Cmsr. Leonardo, Cmsr. Fiedorczyk, Cmsr. Jack Durkin, Cmsr. Vrahnos and Cmsr. Bitondo. Also present was Executive Director, Kimberly Iozzi, PhD.

Minutes of the December 11, 2017 regular monthly meeting were reviewed. Motion made by Cmsr. Capinjola to approve the minutes as corrected; seconded by Cmsr. Leonardo. Cmsr. Bitondo abstained. Motion approved. Minutes for the February 12, 2018 meeting were not be voted on because there were not enough qualified votes.

Bills for the period 2/3/18-2/28/18; \$43,296.29 for normal operating. Motion made by Cmsr. Leonardo; seconded by Cmsr. Vrahnos to approve payment of bills. Motion approved.

Communications:

Treasurer’s Report: Account balances as of 2/28/18: general ledger balance \$13,013.14; tenant security/escrow \$55,469.39; and \$64,506.21 NJ Cash Management Fund; NHA Post Employee Benefit Cost, \$47,590.52 Motion made by Cmsr. Bitondo; seconded by Cmsr. Vrahnos to accept the Treasurer’s report. Motion approved.

Secretary’s Report/ Old Business:

RESIDENTS: Residents are having a luncheon to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day on March 17th. A meeting was held with T-Mobile representatives to evaluate the feasibility of enrollment in a special program for housing authorities. The program would provide a reduced cost for 2GB high speed with no overages with either free tablets or a hotspot included. Participation is recommended for two years. However, the housing authority would be responsible for the billing and any bad debt that occurred. While we are exploring the possibility and interest, it is clear that it would add even more onto Janet’s workload, with no return to the agency.

BUILDING/GROUNDS: As a result of the snow and ice melting and refreezing each day, the areas in front of the dumpsters needed to be treated daily, sometimes a few times a day. To address this, the dumpsters were moved up slightly, allowing the drainage to occur under and behind the units, eliminating ice. A vote was taken at the resident association meeting to keep the senior shuttle pick-up at the front of the building. Since the shuttle only allows two bags per rider, anyone that is doing bulk shopping would likely enter the building from the parking lot or side entrance, so the carts have been left there to accommodate them. As always, requests to borrow the flat cart can be made as well.

The Authority retained the services of a contractor to complete the numerous repairs cited during the annual inspection. We’ve cut the cleaning service to two days a week and may possibly cut it back even further. A contractor has negotiated the sale of the generator. This is the second attempt to sell it. However, while negotiating the terms, the contractor indicated that he would accept responsibility for the cost of the crane to remove the unit, but has not yet agreed to restore the building back to its original condition. By that, I am referring to the holes that would be left in the walls and interior electrical units that unless repaired properly, would be a violation on our next inspection and an additional cost we cannot absorb at this time.

ADMINISTRATION: Chairperson Fiedorczyk and Vice-Chairman Durkin met with the Executive Director, Mayor Levante and Deputy Mayor Elvidge to discuss the 2019 proposed budget cuts. That meeting was followed by one that included the Town Manager and a third that included a conference call with representatives from HUD, Senator Oroho’s office, Assemblyman Space’s office, Congressman Gottheimer’s

office and the Director of Social Services for Sussex County. HUD has already commended us on what we have done so far and recommended that we revisit the possibility of utilizing the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program as a possible long-term solution, as well as the possibility of being absorbed by another agency. When asked if the Town could assist us in any way, the Manager said “no”, citing the limited retables and nonprofits located in Town. This was disappointing, as both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor thought it was a possibility, since we are entitled to a portion of the Small Cities/ Community Development Block Grant program funds. These funds provide for economic development, housing rehabilitation, community revitalization and public facilities designated to benefit people of low and moderate-income or prevent or eliminate slums and blight or to address recent local needs for which no other source of funding is available. We also discussed the possibility of transferring the control of the HCV program for the Town of Newton from the NJ Department of Community Affairs to the Housing Authority as a secondary source of income, a way to return control to the municipality, prevent fraud, and enhance the program’s standing in the community. This would, among other things, require action from the Governor. The Town Manager doesn’t believe that the building is a worthwhile investment, as it is aging, the infrastructure is failing, and the income generated is not enough to support the building, with or without staff. Instead, he suggested that a private/public partnership with a developer, such as RPM, who is the developer for Newton Centre is the long-term answer. We still do not have a shared services agreement with the Town, despite having asked in person and in writing several times

FINANCE: A request for proposals was advertised for annual audit services. Two proposals were received.

PERSONNEL: N/A

COMMISSIONER ITEMS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS: N/A

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC “At this point in the meeting, the Board of Commissioners welcomes comments from any member of the public on any topic. To help facilitate an orderly meeting and to permit the opportunity for anyone who wishes to be heard, speakers are asked to limit their comments to 5 minutes. If reading from a prepared statement, please provide a copy and email a copy to the Main Office of the Newton Housing Authority after making your comments so it may be properly reflected in the minutes. No comments

CLOSED SESSION: Cmsr. Leonardo made a motion at 6:10 pm to enter closed session to discuss a potential conflict of interest. Motion was seconded by Cmsr. Vrahnos. Motion approved. At 6:30pm, Cmsr. Leonardo made a motion to end closed session; seconded by Cmsr. Durkin. Motion approved.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Motion was made by Cmsr. Capinjola; seconded by Cmsr. Bitondo. Motion approved, meeting adjourned at 6:31pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Iozzi, PhD, Secretary to the Board