

**MINUTES: HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF NEWTON, NJ**  
**September 11, 2017**

“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 29, 2016.”

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Commissioners for the Newton Housing Authority was held on Monday, September 11, 2017 in the Community Room at Liberty Towers. The meeting was called to order by Secretary Iozzi at 5:31pm and roll call was taken. Chairman Nannery, Commissioner Capinjola, Cmsr. Leonardo, Cmsr. Fiedorczyk, Cmsr. Jack Durkin and Cmsr. Vhranos.

**Minutes** of the August 9, 2017 regular monthly meeting were reviewed. Motion made by Cmsr. Leonardo to approve the minutes. Motion seconded by Cmsr. Durkin. Motion approved.

**Bills** for the period 7/31/17-8/31/17; \$94,169.04 for normal operating. Motion made by Cmsr. Nannery; seconded by Cmsr. Capinjola to approve payment of bills. Motion approved.

**Communications:** PHADA&NAHRO (8/29/17) re: 2012 operating reserve offset lawsuit. Upon a review of the correspondence, Cmsr. Leonardo made a motion to pursue inclusion into the suit if monies can be accessed from the post-employee benefits fund; and if not, monies from Verizon cell tower; the Town of Newton; solicit local business, Thor-Labs.

**Treasurer's Report:** Account balances as of 8/31/17: general ledger balance \$42,617.50; tenant security/escrow \$55,026.86; and \$64,020.58 NJ Cash Management Fund; NHA Post Employee Benefit Cost, \$47,580.67 Motion made by Cmsr. Leonardo; seconded by Cmsr. Nannery to accept the Treasurer's report. Motion approved.

**Secretary's Report/ Old Business:**

**RESIDENTS:** One apartment is vacant and will be occupied at the end of the month.

**BUILDING/GROUNDS:** As a result of tenants flushing at least one adult diaper and multiple baby wipes, we experienced a sewer backup on the first floor. It took most of the day and evening on Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup> to identify the source of the backup and clear the line. Mary Gubich was on site and worked tirelessly with the plumber to clean the mess. An environmental remediation contractor was hired to address the area the next morning. Residents were asked to stay away from the area for their own safety. E Coli is one of numerous bacteria that existed in the raw sewage. Most listened. Unfortunately, another back-up occurred when the connection at the road collapsed. Once cleared, the plumber scoped the line and determined that the line from our building is 6 inches and the connection under the newly paved street is a 4 inch line. This is unacceptable and will need to be addressed at some point in time. However, since the road has just been paved, the Town is not eager to take action. Environmental remediation occurred again.

Throughout the situation, I discovered that the DPW was unaware of any shared service agreement with our agency. I reached out to the Town to inquire if a new agreement had to be completed each year or if the agreement stayed in place indefinitely. I have not gotten an answer yet. I filed a claim against our insurance policy and despite having met with the provider annually to determine if our levels and types of coverage were adequate. However, was told that our coverage did not cover sewage backups and that we needed an additional policy. The provider followed up and provided a quote that would have provided minimal coverage for a homeowner, let alone a facility with nearly 100 residents. It is unfathomable to me that our carrier did not think to provide coverage for us. It is evident that they may not have a grasp on the needs of a property of this size and type. While we have not received all of the bills yet for the repair and remediation, we have not been able to access capital funds yet to afford renovation. We are soliciting quotes for the work now. As soon as funds are available, we'll reconstruct.

We had another power outage and the electronic key system failed for a second time. The IT contractor replaced the battery backup and it should not happen again.

We have received numerous complaints about the cleanliness of the building since TSS Facility Services has taken over the job. They have been issued complaints in writing and they have made every effort to correct the problem. Additional service providers are being considered.

At last month's meeting, I indicated that an inspection of the apartments and steam cleaning would take place. These items have been delayed.

**ADMINISTRATION:** The Board needs to consider whether or not it wants to retain its insurance broker in light of the recent events or solicit a new broker of record.

**FINANCE:** The Board needs to consider retaining a fee accountant before the end of the year in order to close out our books. Proposals have been secured.

**PERSONNEL:** N/A

**COMMISSIONER ITEMS:** 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. Pat Powers reported that there would be a bus trip to Sands on September 27<sup>th</sup>. Barbara Darrohn reported that coffee hour is back.

**NEW BUSINESS:** The Board discussed the need to have better working relations with the Town of Newton and asked to either attend a regularly –scheduled meeting or schedule a special meeting to discuss ways in which we can partner more. The Board discussed the need for a fee accountant. The board discussed the fact that the scope of work had been reduced from the original proposal. Director Iozzi informed the Board that as a result of the reduction in work, that the proposer offered to reduce the fee by 10%. The board was agreeable with that. Cmsr. Leonardo made a motion to have a 15 month contract with Polcari & Co. of 2035 Hamburg Tpke, Unit H, Wayne, NJ 07470 for fee accounting services for a rate of \$16,200 for the first 12 months and then on a month to month basis for the remainder of the term; seconded by Cmsr. Durkin. Motion approved

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Motion was made by Cmsr. Leonardo; seconded by Cmsr. Durkin. Motion approved, meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Iozzi, PhD, Secretary to the Board