

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
NEWTON HOUSING AUTHORITY
32 Liberty Street
Newton, New Jersey 07960

April 12, 2021

(This is a condensed version of the ZOOM virtual and taped minutes of the Regularly Scheduled Monthly Meeting of the Newton Housing Authority Commencing at 5:00 P.M.)

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meeting of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Newton Housing Authority has caused notice of this meeting to be advertised by having the date, time, and place posted on the Newton Housing Authority Website.

In light of the Governor's issuance of Executive Order 107, we have been strongly encouraged to conduct all public meetings subject to the Open Public Meetings Act exclusively using communications equipment (e.g., telephonic conference call-in connections, internet streaming, etc.) for the foreseeable future without providing a physical meeting place. All members of the public may access the meeting (either video or telephone) or via "Zoom".

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairperson Maria Fiedorczyk
Vice-Chairman Richard Bitondo
Commissioner William Nannery
Commissioner Keith Keoppel
Commissioner Rick Turdo

Also Present:
Acting Executive Director William F. Snyder
Deborah Alvarez, Secretary/Transcriber

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING – MARCH 8, 2021

Commissioner Bitondo noted on Page 7 under “New Business” it reads “Commissioner Nannery (discussion regarding number of Commissioners). It should be **Commissioner Bitondo**. First paragraph should be Commissioner Bitondo **not** Commissioner Nannery.

On same Page 7, no dollar amount listed on Resolution #2021-4. ED Snyder will provide it to Ms. Alvarez. (**Amount supplied by ED Snyder is: \$51,310.34**)

Motion to approve minutes with corrections being made on Page 7 made by Commissioner Keoppel; 2nd by Chairperson Fiedorczyk.

ROLL CALL:	Chairperson Fiedorczyk	Yes
	Commissioner Bitondo	Yes
	Commissioner Nannery	Yes
	Commissioner Keoppel	Yes
	Commissioner Turdo	Abstain

APPROVAL OF BILLS FOR MARCH 2021

Chelbus Cleaning started first day vaccines were done. Commissioner Keoppel said residents are pleased with their work. Commissioner Nannery asked about Selective Insurance; is that paid off for the year? ED Snyder said yes for property liability.

Motion to accept bills for payment for March 2021 made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2nd by Commissioner Nannery.

ROLL CALL:	Chairperson Fiedorczyk	Yes
	Commissioner Bitondo	Yes
	Commissioner Nannery	Yes
	Commissioner Keoppel	Yes
	Commissioner Turdo	Abstain

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – Executive Director’s Report & Discussion

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT & DISCUSSION

Transfer Policy – ED Snyder prepared memo and discussed at March meeting. Transfer Policy has been reviewed; at some point NHA purchased a plan from MaCann Associates. Memo outlines basically what’s in there: emergency transfers; required transfers which are people who are under-housed or over-housed; resident requested transfer (transfers for convenience). Second part of Mr. Snyder’s memo gives Board items they should consider. Transfer policies sound great, but unless there is a real reason to transfer – NHA has studio and 1-bedroom apartments. In senior buildings, people move into a studio but would rather have a 1-bedroom. Many times lists move quicker if you get into a studio, not there long and want a 1-bedroom unit. In some ways, they’re jumping list because 1-bedroom list is longer than studios.

Commissioners should consider that and cost involved. If there are 2 vacancies and 2 people want to transfer, that means 4 apartments have to be turned over – who pays for that – NHA, does person transferring pay for it. Ordinarily, if it's a transfer instituted by NHA, we'd pay for it. For example, if doing capital work in an apartment and someone is forced to move, NHA would pay. But if someone just wants to move because they want to be higher for a better view or from studio to 1-bedroom, they would pay for it. Procedure for that is done in different ways at different places. Some would require another security deposit; when moving out an inspection is done and if in good condition, money is returned. Some just transfer deposit; do inspection ahead of time. It would be how NHA wants to handle that and also person has to be in good standing with Authority, meaning rent is paid up to date, not leaving property because you totally destroyed it and want another one.

In senior buildings, a lot of times there is a medical condition. In all honesty, as ED Snyder is a senior also, it is a lot of nonsense. Many go to doctors and many doctors will write anything as a reason for a basis for transferring. NHA has a transfer policy and no one has instituted transfer policy in years. Generally, there is a separate transfer list, it is prioritized; if it's a NHA instituted transfer, they go to top of the list. If it's a medical transfer, that person goes to top. Just a transfer of convenience or wants a transfer, they're lower down. ED Snyder is not aware of any list at this time. General policy, NHA doesn't do transfers because they're inconvenient.

Chairperson Fiedorczyk said it has come up periodically over the years. Maybe once meetings are back in person meetings, it can be talked about. If it would work out to allow transfers as there are too many unknowns. Commissioner Keoppel asked if there would be a 5-year minimum. ED Snyder answered no minimum now, but yes, Board would have to revise current policy. In some places, it is required that you live in building X-number of years before you can request a transfer. Right now people are not transferring; you have a transfer policy NHA has been following. Commissioner Keoppel added there have been some requests, right? Maybe 1 or 2 already since he became a Board member. Resident was told they weren't here long enough and rejected. Could this be put in on a temporary basis – temporary ruling by Board, so NHA is covered.

Commissioner Bitondo said NHA obliged to follow this policy until, in fact, it is modified. It is first time he's seen it and not sure Commissioners were even aware of its existence. It is possible to have NHA policies posted on website? Mr. Snyder said yes. Chairperson Fiedorczyk asked if NHA should do something with Transfer Policy. ED Snyder answered it's in a much bigger policy – Admission and Continued Occupancy Policy – to find your waiting list, and has everything. In order to change that policy, ordinarily you'd have to notify all residents in writing and a 45-day comment period before Board can change it. ED Snyder agrees with Commissioner Bitondo, it's been an unwritten rule and not been followed – a big endeavor now to go out and start this list. It can be done, and Commissioner Keoppel may be right – we don't do transfers. ED Snyder did not see a time limit, but if you wanted to adopt it, you'd go through notification process. Commissioner Turdo asked if HUD had any regulations on that

that has to be followed. Mr. Snyder said yes, absolutely. Everything in the ACOP is HUD regulations and transfer policy part of ACOP. It's Chapter 12 of ACOP. He is trying to find NHA policies and finally has a computer that's working, but does not see a lot of policies. ACOP he found with help of Joan is in a big book, but very generic, but doesn't know where procurement policy is, is there a personnel policy, a whole host of policies that NHA is supposed to have that he cannot find. Commissioner Bitondo said NHA has a policy service that they use, correct – they provide generic policies, which NHA would then customize. ED Snyder answered yes, on ACOP, but doesn't know if that service is still in place. It doesn't look like it is, because updates would be coming on that service. He will look into that. There are other policies: grievance procedure in place. Grievance procedure is where Authority takes an adverse action against a tenant and there's a process where they can grieve it. He has not seen it. When ED Snyder is here, he's trying to catch up on so many things; he's trying to unload boxes in office so he doesn't suffocate in there. At some point, he will get to going into other rooms where documents may be, to look for these things.

Chairperson Fiedorczyk wondered about binder not being in office with all NHA policies. ED Snyder hasn't found one, doesn't mean it doesn't exist; he hasn't found By-Laws either. Chairperson Fiedorczyk mentioned Carol Lee Anardo (ph.), previous Resident Commissioner, had a binder, but she passed away and it isn't known if it was returned to office or thrown out by her family. ED Snyder will ask Joan on his next visit if there are rooms he can look in. It's great to have a paper policy, but has to go back through old minutes when it was adopted – a major undertaking. Commissioner Keoppel asked if you could make a single statement or time limit without changing the whole thing. ED Snyder answered you have to go through notification process – which is to tell tenants in writing that NHA is changing policy, allow them to comment on it; then weigh those comments and after 45 days, ED Snyder would bring a resolution to Board adopting it. It can be done.

Commissioner Bitondo asked if there was first and second reading or what. Mr. Snyder said its notice to tenants and then change. Commissioner Keoppel noted NHA will have two 1-bedroom apartments plus 2 studios. ED Snyder said 1 studio has been taken; he's meeting with resident Wednesday. Commissioner Bitondo said when meeting goes into Executive Session; they can discuss how to help with some detective work in aiding ED Snyder into existing policies and documents. ED Snyder will eventually get everything together to let Commissioners know what they don't have or what he cannot find. ED Snyder does have policies in Microsoft Word that he can bring to NHA to review and take time to digest, see what may be different from what you've been doing and make those changes with revisions and adopt. Discussion about finding existing policies and most up-to-date set of policies. Is there a professional contractor to come in and find these, as is done for BOE? Mr. Snyder will report as to his findings by next meeting. Commissioner Bitondo asked that NHA status be checked with Nan McKay Service.

ED Snyder said NHA insurance renewed with Selective Insurance. He noted that he didn't see Public Officials Liability or Employee Practices Liability Insurance. Public

Officials Liability Insurance is for Board to protect you in event that you're sued personally, as he's seen happen. There is a quote from existing agent – Public Officials for \$1 Million in coverages -- \$1,458.25 and Employee Practices Liability for \$1 million is \$178.05. It makes sense for Commissioners to get those. Commissioner Bitondo asked isn't that part of NHA policy, as he remembers asking that question about a year or so ago and was told Commissioners did have it. ED Snyder said it came from NHA insurance agent. He said it was not and gave ED Snyder the quote. Commissioner Bitondo deferred to ED Snyder and agent and it needs to be put in place. Mr. Snyder will bind it so Commissioners have it, less than \$2,000 for \$1 million in coverage -- \$1 million in aggregate for everybody. Agent said that's maximum you can get. ED Snyder suggested Commissioners get a quote from Public Housing Authority Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) because it has been significantly less than private carriers. Existing agent can stay on and become Risk Manager, still gets paid a fee for doing that. In instances where an insurance company, and has given people hard times when there's been losses, that Board is made up of fellow housing authorities and ED Snyder has never seen an insurance do. For example, there was a flood from a fire and tenants were complaining they lost personal property. JIF went in and provided money to housing authorities to replace things for tenants. Private insurance companies don't do that; tell you you need insurance yourself to get that done. He is familiar with it, as he did accounting for them years ago. Coverage is a lot better and more comprehensive. Commissioner Bitondo asked if NHA would have to wait until next year. ED Snyder said yes, he was not aware until insurance came up since he's been at NHA – here's renewal quote and time limits. He requested JIF contact him around August/September and come do an analysis and provide Board with a quote. Agent can get his quote and Board can compare. Commissioner Bitondo asked if NHA is missing anything else in comprehensive coverage. Mr. Snyder answered no, but will look at property insurance, etc. to see what NHA has. It does look fine at this point. Mr. Snyder said agent seems very nice and he can come in as Risk Manager and if there was a problem, you would deal with him. JIF really does protect housing authorities and except for last 2 years because there was significant property losses, JIF was paying a dividend every single year.

Commissioner Keoppel asked if it couldn't be added at this time. ED Snyder answered Employee Practices and Public Official Liability to existing policy. Next year NHA will get another quote from JIF and compare it; sit down with NHA agent and can decide what's in best interest of NHA. Commissioner Bitondo asked if JIF do an audit of existing coverages as well. Mr. Snyder said yes; in the quote they'll compare it to what you have and what they're offering.

Allocation of Capital Fund

NHA got allocation of capital fund for the year - \$110,388 – he will commence with preparing annual statement, annual plan, etc. that have to be submitted online to system called EPIC, which he will do. Problem is Mr. Snyder still has no access to HUD online systems and is working on it. HUD people are in and out of office. Right now ED Snyder can call Phillipsburg and Tom McGuire can draw down money for NHA. He is

working on that, but a nuisance in trying to deal with HUD and getting yourself enrolled in these programs.

(Sound was distorted and garbled at this point. Subject matter not understood.)

Tracy Goldstein looked at proposal and it's not a conflict of interest, but it is the appearance of a conflict of interest and would not do it. ED Snyder brought it to all of you. ED Snyder suggests that NHA go back out; Bill will be working with somebody else or there may be other people interested in doing this. Second, it's going to be interesting to see what happens with Biden Administration because what now constitutes infrastructure – Congresswoman Maxine Waters (big staunch supporter of public housing) is proposing a \$70 billion capital fund infusion as infrastructure. Entire HUD budget isn't even \$70 billion, which amounts to 50-\$75,000 per unit for every public housing unit in U.S. ED Snyder has his finger on that. In the meantime, he suggests NHA re-advertise and try and bring more people in and maybe the price down on streamline conversion.

Commissioner Bitondo thought it was already approved with condition that NHA wanted attorney to weigh in. ED Snyder said yes. He understands what she's saying and has taught for many years and wrote curriculum for Ethics Course for Rutgers and always says from the appearance of a conflict of interest – can be a natural conflict of interest. If public's perception is that we're engaging in some type of a conflict, it is a conflict. ED Snyder suggested NHA re-advertise and keep up with Administration on capital fund program.

Hair Salon

ED Snyder got proposals and advertised for hair salon; 1 person expressed an interest; submitted her proposal; rent based upon \$200. She had all necessary insurances in place, not yet because she doesn't want to bind them until NHA signs a contract with her, but had commitments from companies for liability and all necessary insurance. Mr. Snyder discussed with Joan in the office; her price list was close to what last hairdresser was charging. She initially told him she'd pay more rent if she could bring customers in from outside. It is off the table and strictly for residents here that she will deal with; no one from outside coming in.

Commissioner Keoppel understood that prior hairdresser was bringing people in. He didn't know that if that was legal, but learned from some residents that indeed there were others coming in. ED Snyder said NHA would have to let insurance know we are doing this; if someone from outside sued the Authority, it would be a problem. Chairperson Fiedorczyk didn't know outsiders were coming in; and won't be happening with new operator. Resolution will be considered separately approving hair salon.

Custodial Services

ED Snyder called around. Chelbus, company doing cleaning in building, are doing a pretty good job. Woman comes in and spends quite a bit of time. Day of vaccine shots, she cleaned Community Room. He noticed an improvement in the floor, and tenants

were concerned about that. Building being cleaned now. Commissioner Keoppel added when you see woman working here, singing, it rubs off on the residents. Commissioner Turdo said Chelbus is a good company and stands behind their work. Mr. Snyder told Chelbus that at least twice a year the carpets should be shampooed.

Covid Shots

Mr. Snyder got County of Sussex to come in and do vaccines in the building; total was about 80 people, most were residents but some from outside. Residents were pleased it was Johnson & Johnson one-time shot. It went well. Some residents asked Mr. Snyder about loosening restrictions in terms of using Community Room now that they've been vaccinated. It is up to Commissioners, but they'd like to open it up a little bit. Chairperson Fiedorczyk asked if Mr. Snyder knows if everyone in building has been vaccinated. He doesn't know, but there were at least 50 from here. Numerous people on the list didn't take the vaccine because they'd previously been vaccinated. Chairperson Fiedorczyk is concerned as to how do you know who's been vaccinated. Commissioner Turdo said ones vaccinated should have a card, but Chairperson Fiedorczyk didn't think they'd like to show card every time they go down to Community Room. Commissioner Turdo said just keep a list of names of people vaccinated, but someone would have to monitor that – probably Joan. ED Snyder suggested pushing it off month by month, but is something to consider going forward. Governor Murphy will probably start loosening up more and more as months go on. Chairperson Fiedorczyk shared about her mom, who lives in Bentley and they lifted a lot of restrictions there on visitation. If you're vaccinated, you just show your card and go in and don't have to be Covid tested any more, visit is 45 minutes at a time, go every day if you want, whereas before you were not even allowed in at all. Perhaps Board of Health would have some recommendations that NHA could follow. Commissioner Keoppel said there is some gathering now, and has been going on for some time. I'd like to see a little more loosening; picnics and outdoor cooking that would help gather people and not confine them to the building. Commissioners Turdo and Bitondo also agreed with Commissioner Keoppel; take some preliminary steps and revisit at May's meeting. Commissioner Bitondo said loosen up for outside gatherings in terms of limited occupancy in Community Room as long as protocol still followed with masks and social distancing. NHA should certainly consider that. It seems like 75% of NHA residents are already vaccinated. Commissioner Keoppel thinks number is higher as some went elsewhere for vaccinations.

Chairperson Fiedorczyk added tenants have been cooperative and good and deserve reward or loosening of restrictions outside of building. ED Snyder will speak with Board of Health; take a look at CDC requirements and come up with a schedule perhaps as things keep going. As a look-forward to reward – he'd speak with Joan and maybe sponsor some type of picnic on a certain date. Commissioner Keoppel and Joan spoke about it today. A local church came in for last 2-3 years that did actual cooking. Chairperson Fiedorczyk said she and her husband did grilling at NHA and are thinking of doing something for 4th of July, whether church comes in and cooks and NHA provide everything else. She'll check into local rental place for a grill for the day.

Commissioner Keoppel asked if anyone had come in through side entrance or noticed all the flowers that were planted over the last week by the Ukrainian couple. They pay for them out of their own pockets. People are smiling and enjoying the flowers; Commissioner Keoppel will get more flowers also. ED Snyder said if that's the case, NHA should reimburse them for the cost, to tell them to see Mr. Snyder on a Wednesday and bring their receipts.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Keoppel spoke with Joan and many are asking when will residents see announcement on air-conditioning and is it time that heat is turned off. Commissioner Turdo asked if it was April 15th or before that. Discussion about temperature in building, 5th floor quite warm. Commissioner Bitondo looking at April temperatures and through April 26th temps will be 50s to low/mid-60s. Mr. Snyder will look at it on Wednesday; speak with Joan and see when it is traditionally turned off. Chairperson Fiedorczyk asked if air-conditioners go in May 1st. Commissioner Keoppel said notices go out within next week or 10 days. Not everyone puts them in at the same time; they're given a choice of when they want it installed. Change in policy last year; discount was greater if you paid whole thing for 4-5 months.

ED Snyder discovered when doing research that NHA is charging extra \$10-15/month on people's rents, which is odd as it's not listed and information transmitted to HUD. He will go back, research and notify people you cannot charge people additional amounts of money for electricity or utilities. He doesn't know why it was ever done in the past, but it has to be stopped. Rent includes utilities – a HUD requirement. Where does it end? Charging for parking spaces? You're not allowed to it. Commissioner Turdo asked if you have 2 a/c's you only have to pay for one? Mr. Snyder said that's different, it's called an excess utility charge. You can charge people for air-conditioners; some family units have washers/dryers. It's for additional cost because you have additional appliances. It's Phillipsburg policy, so it's fine. Commissioner Turdo asked if NHA has staff to put a/c's in or do people do it themselves? Mr. Snyder will look at that also and yes, NHA has staff, but he has to figure out how it will get done. Tenants cannot be expected to put them in; he'll speak with Joan to see how it's been done in the past.

Commissioner Nannery told ED Snyder that he receives texts when alarm goes off or in trouble. Someone from Phillipsburg is still receiving text messages also; you should be on list to receive notification when there's a problem. Commissioner Nannery said phone number is above copier in office, next to box with all the controls for alarm system. It is the fire alarm.

Commissioner Bitondo asked if NHA still has a web master, and can it be brought up to date; there are a lot of references to Phillipsburg, reference to a December special meeting. Recent agendas are on, but minutes are missing from last year. Paul is still listed as Executive Director. Web site needs an overhaul/update ED Snyder said

company is Mastech and he will look at it. All commissioners' names are up-to-date, Commissioner Bitondo said.

RESOLUTION #2021-6 – APPROVAL OF LEASE FOR HAIR SALON

WHEREAS, the Newton housing Authority (NHA) has space to provide a hair salon on the first floor of Liberty Towers, which they would like to lease for the benefit of the building residents; and

WHEREAS, the NHA has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to lease said space, which were due to the NHA on 3/29/21; and

WHEREAS, the NHA received one proposal in response to its duly published RFP, which has been reviewed by the Executive Director and found to be in conformance with the RFP; NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Newton Housing Authority that a lease for renting the Newton Housing Authority nail salon be hereby awarded to Kimberly Pomasan & Darlene Enman in the amount of \$200.00 per month; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Resolution shall take effect immediately and the Executive Director is authorized to execute all necessary documents to effectuate this transaction.

Motion to approve Resolution #2021-6 made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2nd by Commissioner Turdo.

(There were no comments from the Commissioners regarding this Resolution, except that Chairperson Fiedorczyk said it would be pending ED Snyder gets copies of their insurance certificates.)

ROLL CALL:	Chairperson Fiedorczyk	Yes
	Commissioner Bitondo	Yes
	Commissioner Nannery	Yes
	Commissioner Keoppel	Yes
	Commissioner Turdo	Yes

MISCELLANEOUS

Discussion about going into Executive Session regarding one outstanding item. ED Snyder said offer was made and denied; not necessary to go into Executive Session. ED Snyder and Chairperson Fiedorczyk discussed it, said if person changed their mind, they would go back and reoffer.

NEW BUSINESS – Part 2

Commissioner Bitondo asked if position for part-time office clerical assistant could be created; someone to aid in office; a presence other than stipend person there now; ED Snyder creates job description including jobs and tasks that can be assigned to look through files, checking old minutes. Chairperson Fiedorczyk added there is many boxes to go through, filing, purging. ED Snyder: Joan and Jenny work in morning; he'd put something together for afternoon, perhaps 1-4. Discussion about ED Snyder's need for clerical help. Have someone in office in afternoon; hopefully, 1-4 four or five days a week. ED Snyder getting paid a nice amount to do clerical work. Tenants do come into office in afternoon. Assistant could take messages, if unable to answer their question, pass it to ED Snyder when he's at NHA Chairperson Fiedorczyk knows a few people that might be interested; 12-4 – 20 hours a week to start. Minimum wage is \$15, but depends on NHA budget and what is affordable. Would it be Monday-Thursday, no Friday or change it a bit and person go in on Friday mornings or a full day for them. With interruptions, it isn't steady 4 hours of work.

ED Snyder should do job description. ED Snyder said he'd check with NHA accountant to see how NHA is doing financially. Question was does Executech have a payroll. Mr. Snyder said yes, payment would be depending on how NHA wanted to handle it. With just one employee, there is still Workmen's Comp, insurance, etc. Chairperson Fiedorczyk added NHA tied into Division of Pensions; then they'd have to be enrolled into DCRP and becomes a lot of work. If hired by NHA, then do a 1099, but were hired through Executech, she'd put them on payroll. On a permanent basis every week, it has to be on payroll.

Commissioner Bitondo asked if they'd be on Executech payroll, Mr. Snyder said yes. ED Snyder will put something together for May's meeting. Mr. Snyder will use Administrative Assistant title.

Commissioner Turdo asked if NHA meeting is second Monday of every month; will telephone number and zoom number be the same every month. Chairperson Fiedorczyk said no, it changes every meeting. Commissioner Bitondo thanked Commissioner Turdo for staying as a Commissioner. Commissioner Turdo asked how many more Commissioners are still needed. Someone from Phillipsburg just resigned and would be interested; her husband is a Judge and lives 3 blocks from Commissioner Turdo. If she got on NHA Board they could come together when there are in-person meetings. Commissioner Bitondo said if she's interested there is an application on Newton Town Web Site for volunteers, have her file an application. Only other requirement would be an interview by Town Council. Would her training carry over from one agency to another? ED Snyder answered yes. Commissioner Turdo said woman's name is Ann Batista.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Commissioner Turdo; 2nd by Commissioner Keoppel.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Respectfully submitted, Deborah L. Alvarez – Secretary/Transcriber