

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

February 14, 2022

(This is a condensed version of taped minutes of Regularly Scheduled Monthly Meeting  
of Newton Housing Authority  
Commencing at 5:12 P.M.)

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Vice-Chairman Richard Bitondo  
Commissioner Mary Ann Carlson  
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas  
Commissioner Karen Crossley

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

Excused: Chairperson Maria Fiedorczyk  
Commissioner Rick Turdo

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the filing of an Annual Meeting Notice with Municipal Clerk, posting on the official bulletin board and delivery of same to the New Jersey Herald and Star Ledger on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings 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.

Members of the public are welcomed and encouraged by the Newton Housing Authority to comment during the "Public Comments" portions of the meeting. There will be two (2) "Public Comments" sections of the meeting. Residents can address the Board of Commissioners on agenda items during the "Public Comment-Agenda items" portion of the meeting and general subjects of interest during the "Public Comments-General Items" portion of the meeting (for items not on the agenda segment of the meeting). All

questions and comments from the public will be directed to the Chairperson. When addressing the Board of Commissioners, please give your name and address.

## **FLAG SALUTE**

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS**

ED Snyder updated this evening's Agenda and handed out copies to public. Several items added: increasing capitalization rate – a rate that NHA inventories certain items on NHA books – a truck would be considered a fixed asset; this changes rate from \$1,000 to \$5,000 as a result of NHA auditor recommending that. Also: an agreement having to do with a settlement with Division of Civil Rights and 1 elevator – Car #2 – is down and Resolution to award an emergency contract to get it repaired.

KATHLEEN – 2L – how long will elevator be down before it's fixed? ED Snyder: It will take a minimum of 4-5 weeks just to get parts; down for at least 6 weeks, if Resolution is passed tonight. Two proposals received/both the same. Parts are impossible to get because of supply chain. ED Snyder gave extensive explanation about both elevators and plans to upgrade them.

Vice-Chairman Bitondo: What is contingency plan if both elevators go down?  
ED Snyder: At that point NHA would have to relocate people, put them up somewhere. Most are able to get up/down stairs; even hiring people to bring them up and down.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 3, 2022**

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)                      Excused: Fiedorczyk/Turdo

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – REPORT & DISCUSSIONS**

Budget to actual through 12/31/2021 – NHA doing well. Additional money due to Federal Government giving COVID money. Surplus of almost \$400,000 with COVID money. With elevator repairs/modernization NHA has money to do entire elevator. Auditor here – HUD is giving extensions on audits; NHA just finishing 2020 audit. April/May auditor will start on 2021. At next meeting audit report will be ready and be approved - 2020 audit. NHA is about \$30,000 less than what Phillipsburg charged for year before, which helped with surplus. There was about \$115, 00 in 2020; 2021 about \$400,000.

No Smoking Policy: Everything changed on web site per No Smoking Group that met with NHA. Joan has list of smokers in building; ED Snyder will meet with them soon to discuss 25' from building – coming up with an amicable solution. WI-FI survey was complete and sent to Rob at Planet Network – Rob will look at it and tell ED Snyder

what is next step on terms; great response from tenants; at least half of residents have WI-FI.

Tonight is approval of insurance proposals. ED Snyder went to Public Housing Authority Joint Insurance Fund – which ED Snyder helped form – a consortium of all housing authorities in New Jersey – of the 86 JIF has about 70 members. Quote from them received for this building with 80 units – their quote was in area of \$40,000 more. ED Snyder compared it to other buildings he's involved with – NHA insurance quote for property liability, because of loss ratio for previous years is excellent. NHA pays about \$50,000 – having no losses. There was a leak on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of building about a week ago, supply line to toilet bowl broke – water came down on tenant below/destroyed a lot. We are working on replacing carpeting, etc. Water came down directly on her bed; destroyed the bed. Karen in our office – her son got bed and had it delivered immediately. ED Snyder recommending paying for bed and also submitting notice to all residents and preparing at Recertification that says, NHA recommending residents purchase apartment insurance - about \$125/year. It's always assumed if something happens in a building, owner is responsible. Technically, NHA is not. We are doing it for this woman as a courtesy and recommending it because in looking at files, it didn't happen before. At time of Recertification at end of month, ED Snyder will have information on that and notices so everyone has it.

Elevator: No time to publicly bid repairs because of urgency. ED Snyder got 2 proposals, both about same price - \$70,000; and recommending existing maintenance company, \$400 above other one; but NHA has maintenance contract with them. Don't want legal fight to delay anything, asking them to reduce it to same price as other company. Same amount of time – 4-6 weeks – key is both want 50% deposit and will start ordering parts. Order will be placed ASAP after resolution is approved; check is made payable to contractor. Other elevator is same vintage/age and could break down same way. It is a single pit elevator jack, hole in ground, put metal cylinder in. In that cylinder is a jack/piston; motors push hydraulic fluid into bottom of elevator. To go up it pushes piston/jack up – coming down takes oil out. They are now outlawed – metal elevator cylinders rot in the earth. When bottom rots out, they leak; so hydraulic fluid leaks into ground. ED Snyder doing an inspection of elevator, rode it and it dropped about 2 inches and came back up; called elevator company immediately; come look at this – and this is result – failure of that cylinder. New cylinders are fiberglass on outside, double-walled so it can't happen. I am recommending we go ahead immediately. We should go out for architectural/engineering firm to have both elevators modernized, as we have money now – new controls, motors – replace cylinder, jack – get in works now.

Tonight is approval of contract for new exterminating company – went out to bid already. NHA now exterminates 1 floor a month. Recently there was issue with an infestation – every unit should be done every month. New contract brought price way down – they will do every floor every month. I will set up schedule with them, tenants will be notified to ensure there are no more infestations.

Today a Request for Proposals (RFP) was sent out for plumbing services – plumbing, heating, ventilating, air-conditioning. There have been at least 2 occasions since I've been here when on a weekend or night, I've called plumber because of problem – and on both occasions they said they can't get here, very busy, get there on Monday – 3 days later. Most recent event with a toilet was leaking, needed guts changed on toilet bowl. Resident without toilet for several days. In the bid it is stated in an emergency for heating, ventilating, air-conditioning or plumbing – it is **4 hours**. On routine call, it's **24 hours**.

VICE-CHAIRMAN BITONDO: Work being done on elevator that's down, that will be on Capital Projects – ED Snyder said only thing not replaced is motor, which isn't a big deal – motor is a big pump that pumps hydraulic fluid in/out. This motor is original. Technically, motor can't be replaced now as we're doing it as an emergency – only allowed to make repairs that are necessary to get it back in service. I will do an RFP to modernize both elevators – new controls, motors, etc. so they're good for a long period of time.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Vice-Chairman Bitondo said status of Commissioner Rick Turdo – tried to reach out many times, but not successful; recommending is NHA send a letter thanking him for his service and nicely ask him to resign his position so we can fill it; we won't be scrambling for a quorum. ED Snyder will do that.

Streamline Voluntary Conversion is on hold as NHA was anticipating social piece of Infrastructure Act to pass; it's not passing, so V/C Bitondo recommends is that we move on that aggressively. ED Snyder added background: before he started here NHA Board went out soliciting proposals – we were going to award it, but there was a conflict as person works for ED Snyder. His suggestion is: he has done most of the conversions in New Jersey – he's done 30, including Newark Housing Authority, which is 5,000 units.

V/C Bitondo spoke of rebidding for physical condition assessment; NHA went out in fall, but received only one; decided to wait and re-advertise; reached out to Town Manager Tom Russo, he has a recommendation – particular firm is not local, but in New Jersey. Another firm in Sparta – Houghton Cordea & Ward (ph.) that did work for Newton BOE, perhaps send them an RFP as well. ED Snyder will send RFP draft to Commissioners, and then send list to anyone they might know.

## **NEW BUSINESS – nothing at this time**

## **RESOLUTIONS #2022-3 THROUGH AND INCLUDING #2022-10**

1. RESOLUTION #2022-3 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR FEBRUARY 2022 MEETING – see attachment

Motion to approve payment of bill list in amount of \$53,725.70 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Vandermaas.

ROLL CALL:	Commissioner Carlson	Yes
	Commissioner Vandermaas	Yes
	Commissioner Crossley	Yes
	Vice-Chairman Bitondo	Yes
	Fiedorczyk/Turdo	Excused

2. RESOLUTION #2022-4 – APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR MASONRY REPAIR –

See attachment

Motion to approve contract in amount of \$10,530 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson.

This is to fix wall, apron, rebar plus curbing at front of NHA.

ROLL CALL:	Commissioner Carlson	Yes
	Commissioner Vandermaas	Yes
	Commissioner Crossley	Yes
	Vice-Chairman Bitondo	Yes
	Fiedorczyk/Turdo	Excused

3. RESOLUTION #2022-5 – APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR EXTERMINATING – see attachment

Motion to approve exterminating contract @ \$480/monthly in apartments and common areas made by Commissioner Vandermaas; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Crossley.

ROLL CALL:	Commissioner Carlson	Yes
	Commissioner Vandermaas	Yes
	Commissioner Crossley	Yes
	Vice-Chairman Bitondo	Yes
	Fiedorczyk/Turdo	Excused

4. RESOLUTION #2022-6 – RENEWAL OF INSURANCE – see attachment

Motion to approve insurance policies including Workmen’s Compensation for \$1,193 and insurance package @ \$41,676 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Vandermaas.

ROLL CALL:	Commissioner Carlson	Yes
	Commissioner Vandermaas	Yes
	Commissioner Crossley	Yes

Vice-Chairman Bitondo Yes  
Fiedorczyk/Turdo Excused

5. RESOLUTION #2022-7 – APPROVAL OF OPERATING FUND CALCULATION – see attachment

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson.

ED Snyder: NHA submitted budget to State of NJ 60 days before start of fiscal year, done in late 2021. Federal funding on a fiscal year – 9/30 – however, for purposes of subsidy it's 12/31; just recently came out with numbers that have to go into calculation telling NHA how much subsidy NHA will get next year, which is uploaded to a web site. Polcari & Company has uploaded that. NHA subsidy in area of \$175,000 from HUD.

ROLL CALL: Commissioner Carlson Yes  
Commissioner Vandermaas Yes  
Commissioner Crossley Yes  
Vice-Chairman Bitondo Yes  
Fiedorczyk/Turdo Excused

6. RESOLUTION #2022-8 – APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR EMERGENCY ELEVATOR REPAIR – see attachment

Two bids received, ED Snyder recommending Excel Elevator in amount of \$70,405 to complete emergency elevator repair on Car #2. ED Snyder will put together a contingency plan in case Car #1 should go down.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Vandermaas; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Crossley.

ROLL CALL: Commissioner Carlson Yes  
Commissioner Vandermaas Yes  
Commissioner Crossley Yes  
Vice-Chairman Bitondo Yes  
Fiedorczyk/Turdo Excused

7. RESOLUTION #2022-9 – CAPITALIZATION RATE INCREASE – see attachment

Capitalization rate increased from \$1,000 to \$5,000 as recommended by NHA audit.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4) Excused: Fiedorczyk/Turdo

8. RESOLUTION #2022-10 – APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT WITH STATE OF NEW JERSEY – Tabled/going into Executive Session

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS – General Comments**

ELSIE BERGE – 2T – Problem has not ever been resolved; repairman in her apartment at 2:00 AM, because tub leaked into Community Room. Tub gurgles, overflows. Man sponged everything out about a month ago, still gurgling; water backs up into tub including suds. Every morning she scours tub. Joan knocked on Elsie's door to tell her tub was overflowing into Community Room. All over floor in studio. On her first day in studio, 7 years ago it backed up with dirty water, cigarette butts, etc. ED Snyder: Because of age of building, all waste lines from cooking oil, etc. are starting to close up. 2T on lower level – water finds place of least resistance. It is ongoing problem since ED Snyder came here and not only apartment. Lots of money spent on RotoRooter – he will suggest RFP go out, advertise, get drain cleaning services; go to roof, use water jet and jet out all waste lines all the way out to street to attempt to clean out all this coagulation that's restricted what's going out. After plumbing, it's next on ED Snyder's list of things to do.

CELESTE – 4J – Why do painters come so early in morning? They arrive at 8:30 A.M. Vice-Chairman Bitondo: Most businesses or contractors begin work then; did you receive notice they were coming on that day? Celeste said Joan called to tell her when they were coming. Vice-Chairman Bitondo: That is the time they start.

KEVIN SHAW – 38 Liberty/Office @ 94 High Street – Speaking about tree cutting in October/November; email forwarded to ED Snyder and spoke also about issue; photographs supplied also. Issue is: concern isn't about pruning, but his 25' tree that has been topped. He's had professional people look at trees killed due to pruning; stating that it is in clear violation of ethics of way professional tree companies do their work; company supposed to have certified tree expert on site when doing this. According to Mr. Shaw, ED Snyder said he didn't know what property line was. Mr. Shaw said 1 tree is 5' beyond metal fence; other trees 3' beyond metal fence – all killed. 1 tree 24" in diameter; another 24" in diameter; another 16" in diameter. It is Mr. Shaw's 3<sup>rd</sup> time appearing here, 2 years ago exactly same thing happened. Prior to Hurricane Sandy, before pruning could be done, branch came down on a new car. Now always concern for trees by him, and 2 tree services were on his property addressing tree issues. Mr. Shaw has received no confirmation his emails were received by ED Snyder; and sent emails to resolve the issue. Mr. Shaw working out with tree service from NHA that he will take down remaining dead trees.

Vice-Chairman Bitondo: We will take your comments under advisement and send you a letter within next month telling what our final position is, and whether or not there's anything that we can or will do. We'll probably consult our attorney on this matter. Mr. Shaw requests advance notice, and doesn't feel trees were any vulnerability to any cars in NHA parking lot. Laws define that if a contractor has concern over the neighbor, they do not cut those trees until somebody has had conversation with that neighbor, which is a fair and reasonable request.

KATHLEEN – Trees were even with the fence or hung over fence. Tree came down on her car a few years ago; she went to courthouse wanting \$500 deductible paid for damage; fell on the way and was given mediator, not a judge. Mediator gave her \$250, because she never filed a police report. Mr. Shaw paid her \$200 and kept \$50 to send to Kathleen’s favorite charity. He is not a fair neighbor.

GEORGE – 2P – His windshield was broken and Mr. Shaw promised to give him \$500 deductible and has never received it.

MARILYN MILLER – 4L – Asked about masonry and painting; any chance of solar lighting? ED Snyder: As soon as weather permits, areas out front will be painted different colors and look at solar lighting also. 6 feet of yellow on both sides; white on other side where you go into back will help. Vice-Chairman Bitondo: Does contract include any security required for closure of street? We might want it placed in advance in event police are needed or detours. ED Snyder: If contractor has to do that, he will have to pay; he will have to do what he has to do. Commissioner Crossley: Is there reflective or neon paint, which might be helpful, as it’s dark.

ANN – 5N – Spoke about light on corner of driveway (inaudible) and a speed limit sign would be helpful. People going in/out speed. Vice-Chairman Bitondo: When driveway/parking lot paved – speed bumps installed every 10 yards or so.

PHYLLIS – 5M – Asked about **no parking signs** in driveway; today Culligan Man there and not much room to pass. He was in driveway not the circle. ED Snyder: Prior to that Home Depot was delivering refrigerators; NHA and no matter where you go, deliveries are received. It’s not permanent – maybe 10 minutes. If that happens, call office and we’ll ask them to move right away. Vice-Chairman Bitondo: We will incorporate signage into the project.

## **ADJOURNMENT OF PUBLIC MEETING – GOING INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion of adjournment of public meeting made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)                      Excused: Fiedorczyk/Turdo

Motion to move into Executive Session made by Vice-Chairman Bitondo; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Crossley re: pending litigation & contract negotiation.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)                      Excused: Fiedorczyk/Turdo

(Note: Commissioner Vandermaas distributed delicious chocolate candy bars to everyone in attendance in celebration of St. Valentine’s Day.)