

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

November 21, 2022

Condensed minutes of Special Monthly Meeting  
Newton Housing Authority – Commencing @ 5:05 P.M.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Chairman Maria Fiedorczyk  
Vice-Chairman Richard Bitondo  
Commissioner Mary Ann Carlson  
Commissioner Karen Crossley  
Commissioner Joseph Ricciardo  
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas\* - 5:12 PM

Also Present:

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

**FLAG SALUTE**

**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 New Jersey Herald & Star Ledger on December 14, 2021. The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have an advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest 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 welcome and encouraged by the Newton Housing Authority to comment during the public comment portions of the meeting. There will be two public comment sections of the meeting. Residents can address the Board of Commissioners on Agenda items during the Public Comments 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 provide your name and address.

**PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS – nothing at this time**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 17, 2022 – Regular & Executive Session**

Motion to accept minutes of Regular Meeting made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Bitondo.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)                      Excused: Vandermaas\*

Motion to accept minutes of Executive Session made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Ricciardo.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)                      Excused: Vandermaas\*

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – Executive Director Snyder**

REACT Inspection has been worked on for several months; 2019 was last inspection – NHA failed physical inspection. NHA passed most recent REACT Inspection with score of 68/60 is passing.

There is a TORT law suit that's been turned over to NHA insurance company; they will handle in due course.

There are issues with smoking; next week ED Snyder will start issuing letters again to people smoking in their apartments. We know that as when inspections were done or making repairs – in one instance person was caught smoking; they were told verbally. There is a whole process to be followed and eventually a fine, then eviction. Management is on top of this issue.

Equipment on roof – cell phone antenna – cell lease ended in October; company has not removed all equipment from roof – wires, holes patched. They are working on obtaining bids from someone to do the work; told NHA verbally they will continue to pay until job completed.

NHA office has arranged for a fire drill with Fire Chief Jason Miller, occurring December 13<sup>th</sup> – 4 PM. Everyone will be notified and mandatory for everyone to participate.

There are 3 vacancies at this time – last one of October 20<sup>th</sup> is now ready; 2 other ones became vacant – 2 are already painted, new floors put in.

Memo of November 2<sup>nd</sup> went to all residents about cautions re: COVID 19 and flu prevention – (**Commissioner Vandermaas joined the meeting.**)

Jenny is retiring December 31<sup>st</sup> from her office duties. Applause and thank you were extended to Jenny.

Karen, Secretary here, has passed test to become Notary Public, which will help immensely. ED Snyder will no longer have to call on Chairman Fiedorczyk.

USPS has notified NHA of this: in past if resident lost a key, USPS would replace tumbler and charge a small fee - \$25 – now if you lose a key, tenant will have to get a locksmith. Notice sent out to tenants regarding DON'T LOSE YOUR KEY. It will cost over \$100 to get a locksmith here. Some tenants lose them regularly.

New water softening equipment by Culligan has been installed; up and running. Balance of payment to them is on bill list this evening.

Many complaints about heat starting back in September. Unfortunately, because of NHA central system, bleeding radiators is necessary. We think it's balanced now, so not as many complaints. Today we had 1 complaint from a person we've heard from before; went there with heat gun, hit wall with heat gun; it was over 80 degrees. We are looking at prices to get bleeder valves on end of baseboards that would automatically bleed these, so calls would be less, etc. early in heating season. Relieves pressure – let's air out.

Leak on porch, which was difficult to find. Now we believe maintenance man has found it; repairs will be made. It was leaking from behind the wall. We haven't seen a leak in 10 days.

Leak in laundry room caused by rotted pipe, which has been repaired. We are having problems with laundry equipment, as residents know. Several machines aren't working; those machines almost 12 years old. Generally with commercial machine, you get about 10 years out of it. We are getting price from current vendor and 2 other names for Karen to check with. In the meantime, they've not been repaired as parts are on order, taking forever. Parts might not even be available because of age of machine. ED Snyder suggests NHA start replacing them; it will be expensive, but its 10 years and they do get a lot of use. They will be publicly bid.



Electric fire place in lobby where residents like to sit, doesn't work and new one purchased, coming soon. Maintenance man will paint lobby and perhaps down hallway. We hope to get some better furniture, a bit brighter for residents.

Still working on apartment door numbering and fire door numbering. Numbers are missing and coming up with new system. Signage is coming in including signs regarding smoking; sign will have designated smoking area, if Board approves that resolution where that area shall be.

New gazebo is installed. Maintenance man ED built ADA approved ramp for anyone, if needed.

Quote received for automatic doors – one being for Community Room, but if Board wants to proceed with that we need 2 more quotes, as Door Jockey gave price of \$7,300. They now repair our doors.

There was an infrared study done on roof because of leaks. Some repairs made. As part of big rehab, it will need to be replaced, but current roofer gave NHA a few options. A 10-year with roof coating over that is \$160,000. Option B is a 20-year coating, which is \$310,000. To remove it and put down another is more than that, as it's a large roof: tear up rubber, put down insulation. We can decide that as part of Capital Needs Assessment. It's in good shape now for winter, as we've brought roofer in to make repairs as necessary. Chairman Fiedorczyk asked if roof is on hold until Verizon takes antenna off. ED Snyder did not think so.

NHA purchased an auger; our maintenance man is saving us money; drains are being unclogged.

We got quote of \$1,700 from tree company. Apparently, there's a dead tree on NHA property off of Thompson Street; we're looking at that in terms of taking it down. We want to notify all nearby homeowners, so we don't have another problem.

Emergency Response Plan: we finished and reached out to Ken Teets; he never got it or misplaced it. We sent it again; are waiting for response. If anyone knows him and could speak with him, it would be appreciated.

Tenants having a Christmas Party December 21<sup>st</sup>; I will be able to attend.

There are programs going on: A Matter of Balance will begin on 11/18 – 12/23 in morning. A Walk With Ease Class sponsored by Arthritis Foundation beginning on 11/15 – already started – to January 12<sup>th</sup>. Thriving & Surviving Cancer will be

scheduled. NHA met with Senior Services, came in and left directories for anyone needing it.

Elevator maintenance company is responding better since I've been on their back. It was down for a while, needed a clutch, which took a week to get. When he said he would install last Monday and didn't, I screamed at him. We were off because of Election Day, but they showed up and elevator is back in service.

Terms of Office for Commissioners are not exact, but Newton Government is great. Information sent to Terry Oswin and it will be worked out. Suggestion made to her; asked her to confer with Borough Attorney. I'll get back to Commissioners as there is an error in there. Commissioner Bitondo, if you've been reappointed by Mayor & Council, then you are no longer gubernatorial or DCA appointment, so that is now open.

One resolution has been added to Agenda. When audit was done last year, Auditor referenced the fact that NHA has money in **New Jersey Cash Management Fund**. Auditor wanted to see statements; when I went to get them online, it's Kim someone who is listed as person. They would not talk to me. They want a Resolution from the Board stating that William Snyder is now Executive Director and I should have access to this. My partner, a CPA, reminded me that HUD sent a notice out a few years ago saying New Jersey Cash Management Fund is not an eligible investment under HUD requirements. It is under State of New Jersey requirements, but not HUD requirements. Once I get access to get statements, I will suggest NHA take money out and put in Provident Bank, no longer Lakeland Bank.

Commissioner Bitondo suggested NHA cover fee of Karen getting Notary Public. ED Snyder will handle it.

Chairman Fiedorczyk asked about attorney for NHA. ED Snyder didn't feel prices that came in were warranted; but legal work regarding tenancies occurring. ED Snyder has worked with a particular firm on RAD conversions and is capable of doing that. This attorney has agreed to work at his hourly rate, basically what NHA had - \$175 – and someone working without a retainer is good. Unless we really need him, he has a conflict with our meeting dates. During RAD we may need to have a special meeting on another date and time. Attorney has housing authorities all over N.J. – his niche.

ED Snyder working on RAD program, really called Streamline Voluntary Conversion. Because NHA doesn't have a Section 8 program, and in order to do Streamline Voluntary Conversion, if you don't have a voucher program, you have to get a "contract administrator". Back in August I sent a letter, but no



response; send another letter today telling them and suggested several housing authorities – stating if these don't work, for them to give NHA one. Issue is that there have been some issues with previous HUD General Counsel that said to be contract administrator, you have to have jurisdiction over that housing authority. What this particular attorney, basically, said is that if contract administrator is from Morris County, they don't have jurisdiction in Sussex County. ED Snyder's response to them is: HUD had taken over Irvington Housing Authority recently; they let Irvington Housing Authority enter into an interlocal agreement for legal services with Hoboken Housing Authority – that is Essex County and Hudson County. Madison Housing Authority is contract administrator for Summit Housing Authority – Morris County and Middlesex County (could be Essex County and will be confirmed later). There is a new Director of Public Housing, Leonard Spicer, met him at conference last week. I'm hoping they come back and say go ahead.

We've had 2 meetings with tenants and need one more, inviting HUD here for that meeting. Difference between that program and regular RAD is cash flow is double; so NHA could do millions of dollars of work that we couldn't do with RAD program. Only difference being when we meet with residents, everyone gets a Tenant Protection Voucher; a voucher which means if they want to move out they can take where they want to go. If all residents took them out, we'd have no building any more – has to be called Project Based. In order to be Project Based, we must meet with residents; they have to sign a consent form saying subsidy stays with the unit. I'll explain all this to our residents when we meet. A 1-bedroom rent under RAD would be \$650; Section 8 Standard Payment in this area is probably \$1,300 – we'd be getting double the money. 80 units x \$700/month x 12 and that backs into how much you can borrow – millions of dollars; being able to do a lot of the work that we know we need here.

ED Snyder started application today – Inventory Removal – first step. Probably at next meeting there will be a Resolution of the Board acknowledging and agreeing to proceed to next step; with that will be a semi-application. That will go also to Mayor & Council with a letter of support from them, if needed I'll speak with them, having done before via Power Point presentation. As long as money is going back into the building, officials usually love it.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Chairman Fiedorczyk: Thompson Street runoff? ED Snyder: Town came in and said they would handle it, but haven't done anything, but will follow up on it. Building Department was not helpful with that.

(Commissioner Vandermaas joined the meeting.)

## NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Bitondo suggested altering start time of meetings to 5:15 P.M. instead of 5:00 P.M. ED Snyder will readvertise the time and in December annual meeting notice will be approved by Commissioners for 2023.

Commissioner Ricciardo asked if NHA could get a copy of all mail box keys, keep in office. ED Snyder will check into that; only Post Office has master key for all boxes. Maybe NHA needs to change all locks and have copies for them.

## RESOLUTIONS #2022-37 THROUGH AND INCLUDING #2022-41

1. RESOLUTION #2022-37 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR NOVEMBER 2022 MEETING – See Attachment

Motion to approve bill list in amount of \$69,452.17 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chairman Fiedorczyk.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

2. RESOLUTION #2022-38 – APPROVAL OF FYE 12/31/23 BUDGET – See Attachment

Motion to approve Fiscal Year Ending 12/31/23 Budget made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Crossley.

ED Snyder: This is template produced by State of N.J. – first bite is Introduction of Budget, supposed to be submitted 60 days before start of fiscal year – not done. It is allowed at approval stage – which is next stage: Adoption, and will be a separate resolution stating it's late. Not uncommon, but State wants resolution. (ED Snyder explained extensively from Page C-5, Introduction Resolution stating total revenues from year from all sources of \$660,000; appropriations or expenses - \$622,240 – giving NHA surplus of \$38,360. At back of budget, Page F-2, Revenue Schedule – telling of breakdown of revenue. NHA sources of income: tenant rents - \$455,000; excess utilities (use of a/c); subsidy NHA gets from HUD - \$164,000. NHA total revenues of \$644,000 not including \$200,000 for Capital Fund Program – a separate program/separate source. If you go to F-4, Appropriation – saying how NHA budgets. Your contract is really with Executech. Bottom is Total Appropriations - \$622,240. If you look at F-4 Detail, our contract increased because we have full-time maintenance man.

Focal Fiscal Control Act stipulates once NHA introduces budget, State of N.J. has 45 days to review & approve it. If they don't, it's automatically approved. I hope adoption will be on December agenda. I'll send it tomorrow. There is



new system – Fast System – new portal with State where budgets get submitted. Our accountant will do it tomorrow.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

3. RESOLUTION #2022-39 – APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR LEGAL SERVICES – See Attachment

Motion to approve Resolution #2022-39 made by Commissioner Ricciardo; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Crossley.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

4. RESOLUTION #2022-40 – ADOPTION OF DESIGNATED SMOKING AREA – See Attachment

NHA wants to memorialize smoking area: gazebo outside of Community Room and 10' perimeter around gazebo, and in no area less than 25' from building perimeter.

Motion to approve Resolution #2022-40, Adoption of Designated Smoking Area made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson.

Commissioner Bitondo: I understand Resolution and practicality of decision, but cannot support it in good conscience. I can't see short-changing majority of residents for unhealthy life choice that a small minority of residents have made. So in good conscience, I'm voting NO. I've given it a lot of thought, I just don't think it's fair. From a practical perspective that's what has to be done, but from a philosophical perspective, I think it's wrong.

Commissioner Carlson: Spoke with Bill, Karen and Maria that we have table and chairs that could be put under the tree for non-smokers and possibly put pavers there so not on top of grass. Non-smokers can have an area away from them and still be outside and enjoy the outside. Commissioner Bitondo: I just don't think it's fair that majority has to suffer for a minority of 10-15% of residents. I'm not going to support it.

Commissioner Crossley: I do see both sides; I see people who are out there. I agree it does not represent the majority, but majority of the people are not the ones outside. In that sense, I agree keeping it away would be great except for (inaudible).

CHAIRMAN FIEDORCZYK: It's been talked about long and hard on both things; brought MaryAnn into it – normally, only people going outside are smokers;



asking her if they would use it – probably not. Damned if we do/damned if we don't.

ROLL CALL:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Chairman Fiedorczyk	Yes	
Commissioner Bitondo		No
Commissioner Crossley	Yes	
Commissioner Vandermaas		No
Commissioner Ricciardo	Yes	
Commissioner Carlson	Yes	

Commissioners Carlson and Crossley and Chairman Fiedorczyk voted YES with stipulation that they stay there, not all over – not in front or back. That is their spot, must abide by the rules and relegate other area under the trees as a sitting area for non-smokers. (Table and umbrella have been purchased already.)

VOTE: AYES – 4                      NAYS – 2                      **Resolution #2022-40 PASSED**

Resolution can be revisited in six months; smokers know they have to follow those rules: 10 foot on each side/25 foot from building. If residents start complaining, it will come back before Commissioners.

5. RESOLUTION #2022-41 – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DESIGNATION TO GAIN ACCESS TO N.J. CASH MANAGEMENT FUND ON BEHALF OF NHA (See Attachment)

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

It was estimated there less than \$100,000 in N.J. Cash Management Fund. If NHA does Streamline Conversion, one requirement is that all money in reserve be spent or HUD takes it back. NHA would delay closing until all work done using that money.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL ITEMS**

PHYLLIS - #5M – Please put railing outside Community Room as this is senior building; trouble holding door open and getting inside. ED Snyder will look into it.

MARILYN MILLER - #4L – When looking into new washers/dryers – please could they be elevated as reaching into dryers is very difficult for some people. Laundromats have them higher.

KATHLEEN - #2L – Is it possible to purchase a new dryer while waiting for parts/pieces for those broken. Now there's one dryer working for 80 tenants. She's taken wet clothes upstairs a few times as there is several hour wait to get a dryer. Drying time is 60 minutes. ED Snyder will get prices for commercial washer and dryer; already speaking with vendors to get at least one.

Will someone replace Jenny to answer phone? Chairman Fiedorczyk said it would be taken under consideration about someone answering phone.

ELLEN POOLEY - #5K – Elevator #2 – door still slamming and red light is on. Someone below her smokes in apartment; when she opens window as apartment is too warm, smoke comes up into her place.

ANN WILLS - #5N – Regarding smoking policy now – spoke about where smokers can or can't smoke. Asked how they are supposed to smoke? If NHA wants them to quit, give them money to quit. ED Snyder mentioned patches are free of charge and/or gum to individuals who hope to cease smoking. There are smoking cessation programs, come to office and they'll set you up free of charge.

CELESTE - #4J – Read 2 beautiful Christmas poems she wrote.

It was announced at close of meeting that there would be a Christmas Party in Community Room on Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup> from 1-4 P.M.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Ricciardo.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez  
Secretary/Transcriber