

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

January 23, 2023

(Condensed version of taped minutes of Regularly Scheduled Monthly Meeting of Newton
Housing Authority
Commencing at 5:17 P.M.)

ROLL CALL:

Present: Vice-Chairman Richard Bitondo
Commissioner Mary Ann Carlson
Commissioner Karen Crossley
Commissioner Joseph Ricciardo

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

Excused:
Chairman Maria Fiedorczyk
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas

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 28, 2022. 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.

ANNUAL REORGANIZATION – Election of Officers

Nominations for Chairperson: Commissioner Ricciardo nominated Maria Fiedorczyk. No other nominations were received. Nominations closed.

Roll call: Commissioner Ricciardo Yes
Commissioner Crossley Yes
Commissioner Carlson Yes
Commissioner Bitondo Yes
Absent: Fiedorczyk/Vandermaas

Nominations for Vice-Chairperson: Commissioner Crossley nominated Richard Bitondo. No other nominations were received. Nominations closed.

Roll call: Commissioner Ricciardo Yes
Commissioner Crossley Yes
Commissioner Carlson Yes
Commissioner Bitondo Yes
Absent: Fiedorczyk/Vandermaas

Nominations for Treasurer: Position entails signing checks, look at monthly bill list. There are 3 signatories for checks at this time. Commissioner Bitondo nominated Karen Crossley. No other nominations were received. Nominations closed.

Roll call: Commissioner Ricciardo Yes
Commissioner Crossley Yes
Commissioner Carlson Yes
Commissioner Bitondo Yes
Absent: Fiedorczyk/Vandermaas

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 19, 2022

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4) Absent: Fiedorczyk/Vandermaas

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SNYDER

The recertification process has begun. Residents on the 2nd floor were sent letters regarding their recertification paperwork that is due mid-February. The recertification date for 2nd floor is April 1, 2023. Recertification for 3rd floor is May 1st; 4th floor is June 1st and 5th floor is July 1st.

Resident issues presented at Commissioners' meeting are looked into; memo sent to residents regarding pet policy, moving furniture and recyclables. Letter sent to tenant having excessive clutter in apartment, which is potential fire hazard. Letter placed in file. ED does inspections; tries to get matters resolved before problem gets out of control.

There are 3 vacancies: 3N, 3H and 4V. 3N will be occupied on February 1, 2023. Other two apartments are ready. Calls are being made from list.

Office is having problems with internet and telephone service (VOip telephones). NHA's internet provider is PenTelData. PenTelData uses a 3rd party to do repairs, which is Optimum. NHA pays for PenTelData for Internet, Brightspeed (formerly CenturyLink) for 2 phone lines (Fire and Elevator) and 1 fax line, and Unified Vox for 4 lines in the office and maintenance.

Masks being worn again here. Holiday party canceled as a result of outbreak. There were at least 8 substantiated cases, probably more. Now getting better. Office recommends wearing masks. Karen trying to get everyone in compliance because it's in everyone's best interest. Please cooperate.

Still trying to get Verizon to take their equipment away; they entered into contract with 3rd party who was supposed to come today to remove equipment – they never showed up. Eventually, it will be removed; still after them re: lease removal; additional lease payments as they are to pay until equipment is gone. We do have a lawyer on retainer, perhaps a letter from him may help at some point.

As reported last month, we had a fire drill – Chief Jason Miller came here and conducted it.

We received bids on cameras from 5 companies; 1 vendor raised a question if everybody's price was based upon prevailing wage rates as its Federal money and required to be. Two low bidders were not; 3rd bidder was relatively close. It's on agenda tonight to award it to 3rd bidder.

Snow removal mentioned last month. Vendor, Gerber Landscaping Services, was informed that they must use calcium chloride on sidewalks. No other type of salt should be used. It ruins concrete.

Leak on porch – all lateral lines to main in building where it seems to leak – all rotting. We're doing this job in-house as we turnover units or seeing a leak. There is a threaded piece that goes into main; all rotten, starting to leak all over. Point is: as part of Streamline Conversion and big rehabilitation – we may do a lot of plumbing work in terms of replacing infrastructure.

Numerous leaks in many apartments are being monitored; ED has analysis of where they are; will be kept up to date as to where leaks are to determine whether roof leak or plumbing leak. Many now are plumbing leaks as it leaks when not raining.

There were issues with our electrical panel. Electrician came, couldn't find anything here as it was humming; annoying some residents. We are following up to make sure if there is a problem, we get it corrected.

Problems with laundry equipment here: 2 motherboards replaced in those machines and working again. It is used equipment, new motherboards not available with ongoing supply chain problems. NHA out to bid for all new washers/dryers – bids come in February 8th.

Price received for automatic door into Community Room; other price was replacement of roof. Those items would go into Streamline Conversion also when we move ahead with that.

Railing in Community Room requested by residents has been installed. Trees removed. Fall clean-up was completed. Grounds look better than what they have. Excel Elevator – had problem with them. Since ED sent a few nasty letters, had them on phone, now no major problems, but when we have, they responded on time. Still monitoring that, keeping a file on them. Perhaps when we rebid this, we will have a tete-a-tete and tell them just don't bid on it.

Painting: we waited until after holidays to paint lobby here; to replace fake fireplace with a new one – will be done in-house.

Streamline Voluntary Conversion – ED in process of doing presentation for residents and Board; memo to Board explaining what we need to do. We've met with engineers; coming back

again to go into some apartments. Finally, got engineers access to portal and data; now waiting for them to come up with work items/price. ED suggests to Chair and Vice-Chair a Buildings & Grounds Committee of Board members be created – Commissioner Ricciardo has construction background; a committee of 3 so we can meet and figure out what we have available to actually do the work. ED ran some pro formas today, estimating with Streamline Conversion, NHA can do about \$3 million in renovations; fairly substantial and be able to do work needed – new roof, which is expensive; other elevator coming also. Draft application completed; will need support from Mayor & Council, letter at some point will go to them. Draft will be sent to Mayor also and they should be happy to support this.

Issues with SLC (streamline conversion) is meeting with residents and given Tenant Protection Vouchers. Those vouchers are like Tenant Based Vouchers; tenants can take and go anywhere they want. SLC, when we meet with them, there's a template that they have to agree to sign voucher over so it stays with apartment. If they don't and they leave, voucher goes and we have no way of subsidizing apartment. Issue comes down to we show them work we will be doing; either SLC for \$3 million or a lesser program for much less, where we don't need permission to sign them over. NHA doesn't have Tenant Based Program, ED has reached out to industry, spoke with housing authorities and with HUD about Contract Administrator. Tenant Based Voucher Program is where you subsidize people throughout community. Because of that, HUD is not allowing new contracts for Section 8, unless you currently have one. In that case we need Contract Administrator in their name – which ED has done in other places – ED negotiates a fee as there's an Admin fee that goes along with this – could be an additional \$100,000/year. ED tells them it's not a lot of work and you get up to half.

Once NHA gets Contract Administrator, we need HUD approval of Contract Administrator. Problem is there's been problems in past with having an agreement with another housing authority outside your County – things have changed with HUD and ED will work on that. If NHA can't do SLC, our only other option is RAD Program. ED did pro forma today and it shows the \$3 million; NHA gets about \$700/month rent per apartment – combination of what tenant pays – we get an operating subsidy and what we get in capital fund to make repairs to NHA. Difference in rent between that and SLC is – on studio apartment about \$400-\$500 – additional cash flow of – NHA could issue debt of cash flow for another \$280,000. It might seem slow, but ED working on a lot of papers and talking with many as ED wants SLC, allowing to make lots more in repairs.

Capital improvements: After inspection – we need balance of asphalt done here as it's been done a few times – asphalt up on curbs, only few inches left. When at that point, it needs to be milled, taken out and redone. We will fix some of catch basins collapsing. All sanitary lines, etc. will be done then. Sidewalk/curbing deteriorating. Looking to replace that. Retaining walls made out of pressure-treated wood – some collapsing, take apart and fix. Site lighting we might upgrade to more energy efficient lighting, more modern, and some landscaping work.

Roof needs to be replaced – will go out to bid. Different types of roofs and now using wood coatings. ED will talk to people, go over EPDM – it's a rubber roof adhered to a rigid insulation board. Because here we are wide open, differential pressure from winds, etc. suck that up sometimes – coming off like a pool liner. A few roofers are doing a mechanically fastener roof – fasten rubber membrane to roof, right into concrete planks so it doesn't come up. These are things to be considered. B&G Committee would go over this, costs more money, but lasts longer.

Windows: will be considering. Our maintenance man Ed worked for a window company. We found a company that sells balances; already have some on order, enough for a few

apartments. He will replace balances; replace broken hardware and going to select a few apartments with difficulties. If it works, it will last a longer. One apartment where window was never opened, you could easily pick up and down. Other windows are missing balances and would slam down on your hand.

Painting: Spring we will send notice to tenants, doing this by floor, to begin cycle painting not done here in a long time; need to paint common areas also. Tenants will sign off if they don't want apartment painted. We would move furniture, etc. and begin over a series of years. During Streamline Voluntary Conversion, NHA has about \$500,000 reserve here or \$750,000. Part of SLVC you have to use your reserves before you close, otherwise HUD takes it back. As part of process in doing renovation work, there will be phases. When we close Phase 2, we will have a loan, be able to use that money and propose to set up "Reserve for Repair or Replacement". We take some money out, put it right back in reserve so we start fresh again with a bit of money in case of an emergency; using balance to make repairs.

One of the other things is air-conditioning in apartments - doing something that will provide some relief to tenants having this system of putting a/c in/ out 2 times a year. Just have a sleeve or some other system that could be more comfortable.

All damaged concrete benches outside replaced; now all pressure treated wood on them; painted retaining walls; some new picnic tables and umbrellas and chairs for non-smokers going out in spring; power washed lower end of building; installed awnings.

ACTIVITIES: Various lists of activities going on: most recent is Pen Pal with high school. 8 people have signed up so far and list of students - teaming up and will write back and forth. We are looking for more residents to participate as there are many students interested. Students coming Wednesday, January 25, 2023; paying for it themselves and having luncheon for residents. Great program for both age groups.

We have been doing some things with our limited funds in terms of making repairs. We have an ACC amendment for 2022 - over \$100,000 in capital money. Some of that can be used for cycle painting and other items mentioned. No access to that money as ED needs access to another portal. It has taken ED a year to get access to some systems - now ED can use EPIC System (Energy Performance Income Certification System), but all dropdown menus ED can't get into.

FINANCIAL REPORT: NHA having another good year like last year. Actual total increase in our net position about \$45,000; NHA very smartly tagged onto a law suit that was against HUD by Public Housing Authority Directors Association. They recaptured many years ago public housing reserves when Obama was President and distributed money to everybody. This Authority lost funds; tagged onto law suit and \$40,000 was deposited in July; listed under **Other**. Verizon receipts are less because of antenna. NHA is in black. Financial statements will be completed and sent to HUD within 60 days of close of fiscal year. Last month we approved agreement for Auditor; he will come in to do 2022.

OLD BUSINESS - nothing at this time

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Crossley as Chair of Recreation Commission has scheduled several events for seniors in Newton - Senior Luncheon at high school and then go to a play on March 19th; Easter Egg Hunt - April 8th; hoping to get bus to bring residents down to see St. Patrick's Day Parade - sit

on the bus and free coffee provided; trying to do a Craft Day and this Community Room would be great for that; looking to bring Seniors down to concerts and movies at park – bus would provide transportation. Commissioner Crossley will get specific dates and flyers for next NHA meeting. ED noted residents could sign up, list given to Rec Department.

Commissioner Ricciardo: SAGE Farm on #206 grows vegetables; they will bring them to NHA at a very low cost, if not give away, if Seniors are interested. He will discuss with Director there. Also discussed was amount of paper used just on monthly Commissioner packets. Tablets for each Board member should be purchased so amount of paper cut down, get proper internet service and use tablets here at meetings. When Commissioner Ricciardo was Mayor, all Council members had laptops, took them home, had specific email so that citizens, residents could email to that address and Karen could send all meeting information instead of printing. Commissioner Crossley: When NHA gets new internet, minutes could be streamed for tenants saving more paper. V/C Bitondo: We want someone to help set up the tablets so Commissioners can use proper way, technical support incorporated into the proposal – not just purchase equipment. Discussion about various possibilities discussed.

V/C Bitondo: ED mentioned Policies & By-Laws recently. Are they in one place where easily accessible? If not, can we work toward that and have them posted on web site? ED noted documents he found are hard copy, not on computer. They'd have to be retyped. (Secretary asked to be considered.)

PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS

MARY - #3D – Mary has a booklet that was given to her 20 years ago received from Newton Housing Authority when she moved in. She will show it to ED Snyder.

RESOLUTIONS #2023-1 THROUGH #2023-5

1. RESOLUTION #2023-1 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR JANUARY 2023

Motion to approve January 2023 bill list in amount of \$51,660.57 made by Commissioner Ricciardo; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

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

2. RESOLUTION #2023-2 – APPROVAL OF REVISED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

V/C Bitondo: Hold up was approval by Emergency Management Coordinator, taken care of by Mr. Teets; now approved.

Motion to approve Revised Emergency Response Plan made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Ricciardo.

V/C Bitondo: As this is new plan, Staff training is critical, making sure that everyone is onboard, understands contents of Emergency Response Plan. ED added in Resolution noted plan to be implemented – meaning items must be purchased, location room, training staff also. We have floor captains and will ask them to help in Emergency Response.

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

3. RESOLUTION #2023-3 – APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR CCTV SYSTEM INSTALLATION

ED supplied chart with bids from 6 different contractors to Commissioners including amounts. 2 bids rejected as not based upon prevailing wage.

Motion for approval of contract for CCTV System Installation made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Ricciardo.

Contract is to GoGo Generators, LLC in Warren, N.J. in amount of \$24,885.00. ED documented about 2 rejected bids in the Resolution.

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

4. RESOLUTION #2023-4 – APPROVAL OF CAPITAL FUND PROGRAM ACC

Motion to approve for 2022 Capital Fund Program ACC made Commissioner Ricciardo; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley in amount of \$136,080.00.

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

5. RESOLUTION #2023-5 – VACATED EASEMENTS – 280 SPRING STREET

Commissioner Ricciardo: Years ago property was going to be expansion of NHA, put up another complex there; Town of Newton loaned NHA \$265,000; design for project built; completed based on a budget that Town given, but bids were 3 times amount budgeted. Money sort of disappeared, never settled. These vacated easements should have been done before Thorlabs constructed their building. ED got background history from Dave Simmons, Engineer; was requested by Mayor. Thorlabs did a search, found these things and now Mayor requesting NHA vacate easement. Title of property was never passed to NHA; easements were placed in NHA's name, which was highly unusual when found out and why they did that. V/C Bitondo: It dates back to the '80's – early '90's. Commissioner Ricciardo: Thorlabs put up new building – 280 Spring Street, their original building. Is it original building or new one they are vacating? (Discussion about exactly where this property/easement is located.) ED added its more than one area – easements of pipes, sanitary lines, they may be on other properties besides these. NHA came up as listed under NHA's name, so they're asking NHA to vacate it. Other property owners might be asked as well at this time.

Motion to approve Resolution #2023-5 made by Commissioner Ricciardo; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS – GENERAL COMMENTS

BARBARA DARREN - #4G – Going to her car and carrying trash; tenant offered to put in dumpster; Barbara waited in her car – other tenant threw garbage in right dumpster, threw other entire bag of recycling in – people are throwing in plastic bags in recycling. ED has sent out notices to residents regarding recycling.

DEBORAH KING - #2S – Will cards be compatible to new laundry machines, if not, will residents get their money back or credited on new cards. ED said new cards will be compatible. If for some reason they are not, you will be credited back. It isn't simply purchasing new machines, everything has to be coordinated.

PHYLLIS – #3M – People should empty their pockets before using machines. Screws were in bottom of washing machine. ED will put up signs to "please empty pockets before putting items in machine".

KATHLEEN - #2L – Asked about new copy machine in office and other one for tenants outside in hallway. V/C Bitondo requested she speak with ED Snyder about it.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Ricciardo; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Excused: Fiedorczyk/Vandermaas

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber