

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

February 13, 2023

(Condensed version of taped minutes of Regularly Scheduled
Monthly Meeting of Newton Housing Authority
Commencing at 5:19 P.M.)

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman Maria Fiedorczyk
Vice-Chairman Richard Bitondo
Commissioner Mary Ann Carlson
Commissioner Karen Crossley
Commissioner Joe Ricciardo
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas

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

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.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – nothing at this time

FLAG SALUTE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 23, 2023

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – ED WILLIAM SNYDER

Recertifications of tenants have begun. Residents can use copy machine in Conference Room after making an appointment with Joan. (Joan maintains copy machine only.) Copies of paperwork can be placed in Office drop box. Envelopes will be provided.

There are 3 vacancies. Due to phone problems for several weeks, people were not able to be called. Phone issue now fixed; NHA now has new service Planet Network – internet speed much better, phones working. There will be 2 more vacancies in March, work will be done on those 2 units. Total in March will be 5.

Letter received from attorney representing **Newton Housing Authority in Newton, Massachusetts** stating NHA is using their logo on our website, which is their trademark. Our NHA has already replaced logo on letterheads, etc. with a design created for us. ED will answer that attorney's letter.

Emergency Response Plan – all materials being purchased at this time, coordinating with Karen and Ed; ED will meet with Resident Association and do training with them.

Three different groups were involved with NHA telephone & internet – PenTelData, Century Link and Unified VOX. When one thing went out, Office called all 3, they pointed finger at other person. Planet Network will handle internet; phones connected to Bright Speed as NHA has some regular phone lines. Office phones are internet based. Hard line phones are needed by Code – fire system, elevators.

COVID – County dropped off 100 test kits, which are in Office. If any resident needs a test kit, come to Office. Mask requirements are up to individuals at this time. COVID cases are gone, it is back to normal here. Resident Association Party will be scheduled soon.

HQW has been going through apartments to do Capital Needs Assessment; having same access problems as ED also has – cannot access online portal to enter data – working on that.

NHA submits Right-to-Know Survey, which lists all chemicals in building, etc. Last year ED tried to do alone; didn't work as NHA had so many chemicals on-site and impossible to enter on portal; threatened to fine us. We hired Ramm Environmental Group to do the job; they will be here March 1st, so NHA on time this year.

Signage – NHA ordering new signs. A post installed at entrance to parking lot – ED will put chains on "PARKING" sign with an arrow. In spring, PARKING will be painted across driveway in visitor parking. All signage around building will be replaced including sign "VISITOR PARKING IN THE REAR" so residents spots are not used. There will be bigger sign on wall for people to see.

ED met with GO-GO at pre-construction conference; they are doing new camera system for NHA. Contractor gave us specs; we went through the building as to where cameras are located; current & new locations – all mapped out and equipment will be ordered. ED wants

week's notice before contractor starts so residents can be notified – nothing in apartments, just grounds and common areas.

Broken fireplace will be replaced in lobby. February 20th Ed will be painting lobby, taking down blinds, etc. Cornice on top will be freshened up.

Balances for windows on order. We will do 1 apartment that has major issue, test it. If it works out, we will purchase balances and do all windows in building.

Still working on leak on porch – thought we got it, but it came back. We've cut holes in many apartments, finding many waste lines – horizontal pieces coming in from units are all rotten when getting to waste line. Ed has been cutting it out, putting in new ones. Usually, a plumber would do this – saves NHA money – not patching up drywall, just waiting to make sure leak is gone.

Exterminator – has been coming as NHA had a "situation", putting people on notice that we are coming into their units, exterminating for that. This is aside from their monthly visits. Someone came in with a 2nd hand mattress, not covered. NHA made them cover it when brought in, but you must be cautious when purchasing 2nd hand items like that. Woman had bites in apartment where mattress went. NHA being proactive in that regard.

We've confirmed that when plowing/salting is needed contractor will use calcium chloride on all concrete areas.

ACTIVITIES: Center for Prevention & Counseling – started last week, doing smoking cessation for anyone that wants to sign up – we mentioned to a few people that with that program they give you patches/gum at no charge. UnitedHealthcare is coming March 7th and April 4th to speak about Medicare Plans and all the details. Sussex County Senior Programs – **A Matter of Balance** will begin on September 13-October 18th and **Walk with Ease** from Arthritis Foundation – April 18th to June 16th.

Tablets for Commissioners: NHA's IT provider is Maztech – ED spoke with them, expensive. Price to maintain each unit - \$59/month – too much. Tablets quoted are refurbished - \$700 without keyboard. Maintenance on unit more than unit cost. ED mentioned many lower level tablets available. Each Commissioner now will have individual email with own email address and password. Agendas will be sent to that email; perhaps upload it to Cloud and Commissioners can access it there. ED would purchase 1-2 tablets, upload items, let 1-2 Commissioners try and see if that works. Discussion among Board regarding using their own tablets, etc.; internet is in Community Room, have password and IT tech can set up time period 5-8 PM for Board. Service wouldn't be needed; Board brings their own tablet, laptop, etc. NHA could purchase 2 for spares in Office in case one is forgotten by Commissioner. Board would download monthly package as PDF and follow along on their own device. ED will order 2 this month. Agenda will still be printed out for tenants in attendance.

Streamline Voluntary Conversion – ED sent draft application to HUD; in process of developing all documents including application. Nothing can be done until ED's partner and ED finish developing presentation; notify residents – notify HUD as they have right to be here. One issue has to do with when you convert HUD gives Tenant Protection Vouchers. Those are the "tenants" and could take them, go anywhere they want in USA. As NHA doesn't have Section 8 Tenant Based Program, if someone had a voucher and left, NHA would have no subsidy for that unit. Streamline Conversion doesn't work unless all tenants agree, set form they have. HUD comes here, explains concept; if majority of tenants are not willing to sign voucher over as "begin Project Based staying with building" then NHA goes to Plan B. Plan B is RAD – difference

is – no voucher, but amount of cash flow is half of what we'd be getting under Streamline Voluntary Conversion – as a result of that – there is a lot less work we can do in the building equally maybe a few million dollars.

We will update tenants on what we plan and Capital Needs Assessment will be further along by then. Board needs to set up Buildings & Grounds Committee – Commissioner Ricciardo (construction experience) – yourself perhaps. When we get that assessment, we meet, go over it, decide what major items – elevators, HVAC equipment, putting in a/c, the cost. After we hit major items, rest is "gingerbread" list as to what else we can afford to do. I want Board involved as to what work gets done, meeting with residents stating how we arrived at what items to do. Will need more than 3 Commissioners at tenant meeting, and to be noticed as a public meeting. After that meeting entire application package will come to Board for review, Resolution for Approval – prior to that application will be sent to Mayor & Council with "draft letter" from them supporting NHA application, then Commissioners approve Resolution. When that is all done, it is uploaded to web site for HUD. HUD assigns people, process starts taking place, which could take up to a year for HUD to approve it all. NHA needs to make sure current attorney is capable of doing closing; closing, then conversion. Before Streamline Conversion begins, NHA needs to spend Public Housing Reserve or HUD will take it back. We might do roof, whatever we decide we'll bid out, close on that, separate money so we can pay bill just before we close. ED suggests, as we have money in reserve for "emergency", when we get loan, we take a portion of it, put back in Reserve & Replacement. Balance of money, we can do improvements in building.

Commissioner Bitondo: You said majority of residents need to agree to keep Project Based Vouchers in-house -- what if 1 or 2 tenants don't agree, what is break point? **ED:** We like to get everybody, if 1 or 2 won't, then we come back and discuss it. Possibility is those units are filled by Department of Community Affairs with Section 8 Tenant Based Subsidy or someone else. There are a few ways around it, as NHA doesn't have a voucher program. For NHA to participate in Streamline Voluntary Conversion Program, because we don't have Section 8 Program that subsidizes people throughout community, NHA needs a Contract Administrator, which is another housing authority that has a Tenant Based Program and I was able to get someone known to me from Cliffside Park. There is a fee; they pay an Earned Administrative Fee -for NHA 80 units, that fee is money we make on top of rents, which is \$80-\$100,000/year. In getting the Contract Administrator ED asks them how much will you let us keep – which I've gotten 50/50 – 75/25. So it might be another \$25K that NHA would get that we don't get now. It is another requirement to do Streamline Conversion.

Next hurdle is to get HUD to agree that we have Contract Administrator that is not in Sussex County. There have been problems in the past with that, but am proceeding that it will work for NHA. If not, we may have to hire an attorney or see if NHA attorney can look at case law on things like interlocal agreements between governments. There is a new Field Office Director of Public Housing, Leonard Spicer. ED knows him and is a workable person. There are no other housing authorities in Sussex County. Only tenant based program in Newton with vouchers is State Department of Community Affairs. Discussion about working with Cliffside Park HA.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Crossley: Did NHA hear anything about parking across the street. ED Snyder had no response from them. Letter was sent on tenant's behalf. Commissioner Ricciardo added when and if redevelopment plan is done with HQW, front driveway should be looked at – describing – hard to make turn out – redo circle – traffic on Liberty Street is difficult – describing. Discussion among all Commissioners and ED. B&G will discuss after Streamline Conversion.

Commissioners Crossley and Bitondo could go as residents and Commissioners to discuss with Town Council. Discussion about sending letter from NHA to Chief of Police. Petition from tenants and the neighbors was discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Bitondo: Is it possible to get 2 week update, e.g. COVID in December; any critical issues, emergencies that have arisen – so Board is aware if speaking with citizen in town about something; perhaps few bullet points on a single page at end of 2nd week.

RESOLUTIONS #2023-6 THROUGH #2023-8

1. RESOLUTION #2023-6 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR FEBRUARY 2023

Motion to approve payment of bill list made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Ricciardo.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

2. RESOLUTION #2023-7 – APPROVAL OF CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR SERVICES WITH THE CLIFFSIDE PARK HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR SVC

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2nd by Chairman Fiedorczyk.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

3. RESOLUTION #2023-8 – REJECTION OF LAUNDRY EQUIPMENT BID

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

ED explained it was publicly bid because of cost of machines being over \$17,500; had a preliminary proposal from a vendor, but had to go out to bid. Lots of interest through different vendors – only bid submitted was from HVAC person - \$26,000/\$10,000 more than quote from laundry vendor. ED will contact people he already deals with who do laundry equipment, encourage them to bid this time. Readvertise bid is noted in Resolution #2023-8.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

CELESTE – 4J – Thank you to Commissioners/ED Snyder for all that's been done so far.

ANN - #5N – Is it possible to put platform underneath washers/dryers when new ones are installed? It would be easier. ED – it will be looked at.

MARY - #4D – Doesn't quite understand information about SVC, can it be explained again? Why is it beneficial to NHA? ED – we will have meeting with all residents to explain it. It benefits residents – NHA will have money to make repairs to building.

ANN - #5N – Could I get a wood floor? I've been here 10 years. ED: If we do it for one, we have to do it for everybody and NHA does not have that money. There will be B&G Committee.

When we get to that point, we'll discuss can we replace all the floors, which are being replaced when people move out.

ED considering starting cycle painting by floor, sending a notice around to tenants – do you want to be painted or not. If not wanting painting, tenant must sign a waiver saying you won't be painted until next time; perhaps 1-2 floors a year. Painting should be within this year for certain.

ADJOURNMENT – 6:05 P.M.

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Vandermaas.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber