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

May 8, 2023
(Condensed version of taped minutes of Regularly Scheduled
Monthly Meeting of Newton Housing Authority)
Commencing at 5:25 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

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 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 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 ON AGENDA ITEMS – nothing at this time

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 10, 2023

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – ED William Snyder

Recertifications done except for one person.

Everyone submitted their Financial Disclaimer forms – all are filed.

Last month, we discussed a Civil Rights Complaint that NHA received. Our attorney, requested I do a little investigation by visiting a few apartments to smell for smoke. Unfortunately, when I went to one apartment tenant is complaining about, there was excessive smoke. Our attorney was informed to work with the State Attorney; settlement agreement which will cost NHA to move tenant again because of what was found. I'm monitoring smoking going forward, and will deal with it accordingly.

At March meeting, the Board requested I compile all NHA policies. Problem is that policies found are not in a computer – they are on paper. We need to enter those policies into a computer -- need to be retyped. (Debbie indicated she would do that.) Admission Continued Occupancy Policy (Bible in terms of governing NHA operations is not in Word). Company that prepares that document has been contacted, given NHA a new document, but we have to integrate it with what we have on paper – work in progress. Eventually, when everything is together, it will be uploaded to Cloud. Commissioners received memo on Preferences which was discussed at last meeting. There are only 2 Preferences now – (1) Anyone living in Sussex County, which is unusual as most towns have a preference first, e.g., you lived here or anywhere else in County, you get a point for living here/point for being County resident – 2 points, whereas County resident would only get 1. Local resident would go to top of the list – behind everyone already with 2 points, but ahead of those with only 1.

Other Preference is "working people", but I don't know why NHA has that, makes no sense. "Working Preference" is really for family units to aid them economically and integrate into communities where people weren't working to try and bring more population that is working. This building is elderly, handicap, disabled population and not worried about that; just do away with it. Most for NHA would be resident and veteran. In some instances wife of veteran as often women live longer than men. They would get Preference, if veteran is deceased.

Annual Inspections of apartments – everyone notified of these in-house inspections as required once a year.. Results -- if there's an issue, we send letter to tenant to resolve issue.

Capital Fund Program – Annual Contributions Contract in packet. NHA got a bit more than last year. Federal Government sent \$137,000 – as we are under 300 unit threshold; you can put that money right into Operations, putting it into bank. My suggestion: we sent notice to residents regarding painting all of the apartments – however, received only 5 positive responses so far. Since we have the money, I suggest we paint all the other areas: common areas, floors, doors, etc. Laundry Room being painted by in-house maintenance man Ed; also removing dry wall from wall – took all of the pipes out. Complaints received from tenants re: 2 washers side by side, water would back up all over floor. Reason: pipes were filled with sludge, soap, etc. Ed cut out piece of pipe, showed to me – 1/3 of pipe was open. Ed took out pipes; replaced with new PVC, replaced drywall today; taped/spackled and will finish tomorrow; paint room and then opened for use. Hopefully, that will resolve that problem.

Incidents – Newton Police were here as one resident indicated some of his personal papers were stolen, Police doing an investigation. Long and short – Police love our cameras, everything crystal clear, recording everything.

Vacancies – no vacancies – 100% full, however, we do have notices from 2 people that they're leaving – going through waiting list now. Office also purging Waiting List, notifying everyone – some several times – either they've moved or don't want to come here any more. If we have to, we'll go through process of readvertising for more applicants.

Resident Association has their meeting on Wednesday, May 10th – Pizza Party for Jenny's 106 birthday.

Fire Extinguishers – All fire extinguishers were inspected/upgraded on May 8th.

Generator inspection is scheduled for May 10th.

Elevators – Complaints re: Car #2 when door opens it bangs back and forth. Elevator company got here, turned out it's a defective clutch; waiting on them and monitoring their response. Elevator working, but makes noise; waiting for new clutch ASAP.

Circulating Pumps – 3 circulating pumps in Mechanical Room needed gaskets; those have been replaced.

Air Handler on roof. By code that air handler has to be running 24/7. We know in winter it blows cold air/summer can blow hot air. It puts fresh air into building. We will be looking at that as part of the big upgrades to the building; repairing that by possibly installing a heating unit, so that it can blow warmer air when cold outside.

Agree to Consent for Project Based Voucher – 3 residents didn't agree to signing, but 77 did sign.

Landscaping – Mulching finished on May 2nd.

Windows – Maintenance man Ed had to stop doing windows in apartments as he ran out of material. Materials have been ordered, and he'll start on them again. Those who had windows repaired – very good feedback – can now open/close easily.

Air-conditioners – Now in process of putting A/C in all apartments. With renovations, hopefully this will be corrected. Notices sent out in April to tenants, they fill out, get back to Office, and have to pay us: \$20 to put in/take out. \$35/month charge for **Excess Utility Charge**, which HUD demands and is to pay for additional electricity for unit. Memo sent out today from me to residents, as weather is changing. Some people feel if they wait as long as possible to get A/C installed – and they do not return their A/C form, and then want it installed ASAP, it can't be done as there is other work to do. At the end of month, we install. Memo also in elevator: Get on list as early as possible to get on schedule. Eventually it will be 90 degrees and lots of complaints. Some don't pay fee as they say A/C broken or they don't use. It will be checked!

Laundry Room – New equipment to be installed on May 24th. Memo sent regarding Laundry Room to be out of service on 5/24 as old machines being removed/putting in new ones. We are also reprogramming card machine to do laundry. Spend your cards **down before May 24th**. After May 24th old cards will not work. On May 25th – 10-11 A.M. and other times if needed, please come to Community Room. Everybody will get free new card with \$10 credit on each card.

Capital Needs Assessment - Commissioner Ricciardo and I spoke with engineer. Engineer will get me a paper copy of it. I issued an RFP for Par 54 Environmental, not like a Phase 1 or 2, but essentially a form that HUD requires us to fill out the form that includes so many miles from an airport; so many miles of toxic waste or a railroad. They will do it and send to a "responsible entity" – Administrator or Borough Engineer – they sign it, get it back to NHA, which is final piece needed to actually start process of uploading everything to get Streamline process going.

Verizon – They removed all their equipment, but damaged our roof. It still needs to be repaired, which they will do after they figure out when. Good news is they are paying NHA rent. We've received rent for April-May.

Memo included in Packet – Courtesy and Politeness – My requirement are: treating members of the public, residents – anyone you deal with – it has to be professional and in a courteous/polite manner. However, I have seen times here where residents are frustrated for various things: A/C, recertification of income, etc. Sign on door of Office is because everybody knocks on door. Karen might be talking to a resident about recertification or something and has to keep answering door. Maybe you just want to leave a compliment. Note says: if you need to get in touch with Karen, call ahead of time and she'll tell you when to come down. I answer the door if she steps out. It takes away from us being able to do what has to get done. For those reasons, the memo was issued.

(Discussion about policy documents: ED told Commissioners they are old, cannot be scanned, have staple marks, folds, etc., not a clean copy.)

OLD BUSINESS

Vice-Chairman Bitondo asked about Commissioner Vandermaas' term which expired. ED Snyder said she was reappointed and term ends April 30, 2028.

FACTORS FOR WAIT LIST:

1. Local Resident
2. Sussex County Resident
3. Veteran
4. Spouse of Veteran

Local Veteran would go first – 1 point/local + 1 point/veteran = 2
Veteran Non-Sussex County or non-local resident would be same as Sussex County Resident. Sussex County Veteran would get 2 above everyone else. V/C Bitondo: What is husband and wife both Veterans – 2 points? **Decision: Each should have own priority.** (Spouse or partner.) ED will prepare a Resolution next month.

NEW BUSINESS

V/C Bitondo asked if NHA has Q1 budget performance data from NHA finance person, can we have for June meeting? ED said yes.

RESOLUTION #2023-14 – APPROVED BILL LIST FOR MAY 2023 MEETING

Motion to approve May bill list in amount of \$58,658.48 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Bitondo.

V/C BITONDO: What is NTN? ED: National Tenant Network, screening program for applications – credit and criminal background check.

CHAIRMAN FIEDORCZYK: There still is no bill for snow removal either. ED: Many times they push out their payments so they support themselves for 12 months. I'll check again.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

PUBLIC COMMENTS – General Items

STEVE ROMANO - #2M – Could we get a railing for ramp that goes up to smoker's gazebo; a few people almost fell; a railing is really needed before someone gets hurt. Buildings & Grounds will look at it. Just one side? STEVE: Yes. ED: Pipe rail ok? STEVE: Fine.

MARILYN MILLER - #4L – Are they painting ceilings and when are they painting?
ED: Popcorn ceiling may have to be sprayed; when using a roller, paint goes all over.

KATHLEEN - #2L – Requested just her kitchen be painted, as that is where the grease is.
ED: They would have to get price for partial – some don't want closets; some just want

bathroom. It becomes an administrative mess. Perhaps we can get prices for different rooms. Painter has been contracted. CHAIRMAN FIEDORCZYK: They will look into it and let you know.

JOSEPHINE - #5G – What is going on with "push door" in Community Room? Present one is heavy; almost a year waiting for something to be done, as ED said push door would be done when outside of building was done – which it was. People with walkers, wheelchairs cannot get in and out easily. ED: Perhaps it was misunderstood – we will look at it as part of the Streamline Voluntary Conversion, not there yet. Price for door was expensive and Board decided we'd wait because of cost – in excess of \$10,000, and both doors would have to be done. It would have to be widened. CHAIRMAN FIEDORCZYK: We are going to attempt to get it done. It will be part of Capital Project.

CELESTE - #4J – Thank you for all the improvements that you've made in this building. (Board thanked Celeste for compliments.)

ANN MARIE WILLS – #5N – Re: A/C – regarding memo mentioning 8,000 BTUs. Wasn't 10,000 BTUs discussed, as she is on 5th floor with one bedroom. 8,000 BTUs doesn't work there. 10,000 might work. ED: Today's memo – the form for 8,000 BTUs was inherited – people before ED Snyder. New form says: Providing that the A/C fits the window and it can be installed safely, not damaging window. Today 10,000 BTU A/C is smaller than they used to be. Some people already have 10,000 BTUs. They won't get new A/C, as that's what we are installing.

PHYLLIS - #5M - What is my new rent, I put my recertification in and a few of us don't know new rents. ED: I believe they're all done and you should be called shortly, unless they're waiting on paperwork that's missing. She will have you come in and sign.

JOSEPHINE - #5G – Needs A/C all year as I have asthma. Paid for 20% discount – 6 months, asking Karen can I pay for next 6 months in June, as I don't have \$360 to put out all at once. Karen said no as there was a problem with it. ED: You can do that. I'll talk to her about that; I think she misunderstood you as you already paid for summer months. No problem, I'll tell her.

PHYLLIS – #5M – You changed locks on decorating closet. I gave you the key. It seems the items I bought for 3rd and 5th floor are permanently sealed as we can't get into them to change decorations. There is also a transport chair in there and Annabelle has a wheelchair in there that we use in case someone in building needs it. ED: I'll look into it, try to find another spot. When you need them, just let us know and we'll let you in. The problem is somebody had a key to that and kept turning off the make-up air unit. Unfortunately, that's a Code requirement. We turn it on and in the last 6 months, it's being turned off.

ADJOURNMENT - Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2nd by Chairman Fiedorczyk. VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Respectfully submitted, Deborah L. Alvarez