

①

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

June 12, 2023
(Condensed version of taped minutes of Regularly Scheduled
Monthly Meeting of Newton Housing Authority)
Commencing at 5:23 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

Vice-Chairman Bitondo noted to those in attendance, one Resolution has been added to tonight's agenda regarding waiting list.

There were no public comments at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 8, 2023

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – ED WILLIAM SNYDER

Verizon completed roof repair, removed all of their equipment.

Window parts arrived and tenants' windows will be worked on.

Sprinkler Inspection – Annual Fire Sprinkler Inspection was done 5/18/2023 by RJM Automatic Fire Protection. Everything passed. Ed discussed with RJM issues with the circulating pump, i.e., leaking from time to time; rusted. Ed is waiting for quote from Matt Snyder of RJM.

Some tenants requested a handrail be installed at The Gazebo, now installed.

Generator – Annual Generator Maintenance was performed. Inspected all serviceable parts and all are good. No issues found.

Boiler – Repairs were made on 2-air-release valves.

Painting proposals for the building are due June 28th. Work will be in common areas, Community Room, Mechanical Room, bathrooms. First floor done, corridors and 5-7 apartments tenants would like painted. We are asking for prices for kitchens, bathrooms and apartments. If someone just wants kitchen and/or bathroom that can be done.

We are getting pricing from flooring contractor as part of painting, we will take all cove bases off in the building; upper floors have it, but color doesn't match walls.

Some areas outside have been reseeded, notably around American flag near Gazebo.

Laundry equipment has been installed. A notice being sent to all residents recommending liquid detergent be used instead of powder detergent, as someone put powder detergent in softener area and jammed up machine.

Elevator inspection was done. Both phones in elevator are not working, and don't know why elevator company didn't know that during their regular maintenance. Resolution regarding elevator company on Agenda tonight.

Inspections completed that NHA does internally on all apartments, not HUD but NHA required inspection. 80 apartments were done; 72 passed with 8 failures. Work Orders will be forthcoming regarding what has to be done, e.g. resident issue, letters will be sent out to resident.

Commissioners received emails today re: HQW Capital Needs Assessment, part of Streamline Conversion. We will set up zoom meeting later to go over all of that.

Secretary Debbie Alvarez has been retyping NHA Policies. When finished Executive Director will suggest revisions, upload to Cloud.

Sussex County Health Department – Administered Covid shots to 9 tenants and Executive Director.

There are 2 vacancies at this time – 1 may be a transfer and tenant wants to paint her own apartment, but we don't allow that. She may decide she doesn't want a transfer.

Resident Association has a meeting on June 14th at 6:00 P.M. and is planning a July 4th BBQ.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Bitondo asked about status of non-consents for Streamline Voluntary Conversion and what is financial implication of that not being 100%. ED Snyder said nothing has changed, still 3 tenants said no. NHA cannot go to bank and borrow money against units that aren't guaranteed income, so we'll be borrowing less money, but only 3 units. COMMISSIONER BITONDO: It's not a terribly detrimental effect on NHA's ability to move forward. What about new tenants? ED SNYDER: New tenants coming have been signing the consent form; they are asked at their certification if they will sign it and explain it to them.

FINANCIAL REPORT – ED SNYDER

NHA is over-budget by \$2,700. One reason is NHA charged an excess utility charge for air-conditioners that residents had installed – through April. It will be deposited in May and June, so there's another \$7,600 that will go in for that period. Legal number is because NHA had a Civil Rights case. Water and Sewer – notes on bottom of page – NHA was getting estimated bills since 2018 unbeknownst to us, before Covid. One bill was \$30,000 actual. Now going forward Karen told them to read meter every month. They were paid. Meter is probably in Mechanical Room. ED SNYDER: During Covid most buildings like this, the meters were not read. These items are why NHA was over-budget.

Under Materials and Contracts, NHA purchased closed-circuit television for almost \$25,000. On Maintenance Materials and Contracts, so far to date the cost of materials to repair all the windows was a little over \$12,000 just for parts. Well worth it. It will trend itself out over the year.

NHA got a lease payment from Verizon for month of June. Karen will deposit it and it's probably the last one.

RESOLUTIONS

1. RESOLUTION #2023-15 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR JUNE 2023 MEETING

Motion to approve bill list in amount of \$64,203.24 made by Commissioner Ricciardo; 2nd by Chairman Fiedorczyk.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

2. RESOLUTION #2023-16 – APPROVAL OF RAD PART 58 ENVIRONMENTAL

Motion to approve Resolution #2023-17 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Bitondo.

ED SNYDER: That is required by Streamline Conversion; \$5,000 isn't that bad. This company has done these specifically, which is a good thing.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

3. RESOLUTION #2023-17 – TERMINATION OF ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Motion to approve Termination of Elevator Maintenance Contract with Excel Elevator Maintenance made by Commissioner Ricciardo; 2nd by Commissioner Vandermaas.

ED SNYDER: Current Elevator, who bid last time and is used in other places, will be new elevator maintenance company; they've been here already stating door clutch was no good. NHA paid \$6-\$7,000 to replace the door clutch about a year ago; door was banging and tenants still complaining about it. They were called, came in, looked at door clutch and said NHA had the wrong door clutch, but they had installed that door clutch and charged NHA for it. Then they wanted to replace it; got back to ED and said part no longer being made. In order to fix door clutch, they wanted to replace entire door assembly - \$12,000. I called Current Elevator, which had been here a few years ago (small, honest company). They told me NHA has GLA elevator parts, which is generic elevator part, and laughed when told Excel couldn't get the clutch. Current Elevator gave me a price to replace the clutch - \$5,000. Then I told Excel Elevator, if I get a price and you are gouging us again (I cited when they removed the oil when repairing the elevator), I will get rid of you.

I get here one day and man replacing elevator clutch. Man stated at bottom of a pile in Excel's warehouse, he found an elevator clutch. I informed him this was a GLA

elevator clutch, then called Excel Elevator in NYC and was told they had plenty of those clutches, and didn't know what to say. They were called out on more items. Higher-up sales rep told me Excel has done everything that I've asked. I have documented everything: letters, termination notices and gave them 5 areas where they lied to NHA/me, verified them with another contractor, and NHA is terminating your contract; bringing it to the Board of Commissioners' attention and June 30th, bringing in a new company. New company is \$2,000 more, but in the end it will be worth it. When Excel was called, they always asked if NHA was authorizing overtime. We'd call at 10 A.M. and they would ask that question saying by the time man gets there it probably will be. Sometimes it would be days before they showed up.

COMMISSIONER BITONDO: Are you expecting any repercussions? ED SNYDER: We have all the paperwork, but it is what it is. They wanted \$1,600.00 to install Braille signs. I sent them an email stating NHA can purchase the signs on Amazon for \$150. They put the signs on/they fell off. Karen has kept a log.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

4. RESOLUTION #2023-18 – ACC AMENDMENT FOR 2023 CAPITAL FUND PROGRAM

Motion to approve Resolution #2023-18 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Chairman Fiedorczyk.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

5. RESOLUTION #2023-19 – AMENDMENT TO THE ADMISSIONS AND CONTINUED OCCUPANCY POLICY

Motion to approve Resolution #2023-19 made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

ED SNYDER: In reviewing documents – Admission Continued Occupancy Policy – that NHA had a preference for Sussex County residents and working families. Ordinarily in an elderly project, working families are more when it's a family project, trying to bring more working families in so they are not on programs, etc., idle time, etc. Most towns like the preferences that were brought to your attention: 1-local resident; 2-veterans or spouse of veteran. In NHA's case, 1 left County resident. If you lived in Sussex County, you'd get 1 point. If you lived in Newton, you'd get 1 point for living in Newton/1 point for being Sussex County resident – 2 points, going above everybody else from Sussex County. Reasoning being: this property pays PILOT – **Payment in Lieu of Taxes** – approved by municipality and only do that with understanding, we are helping out our local people first. We also like to help veterans, finding that when veterans pass sometimes before their spouses, so we're giving the spouse the same preference as we gave to veteran. If you were a veteran living in Newton, you would have 3 points: veteran/Newton resident/Sussex County resident – you go behind everybody else with 3 points – date order. Ten people with 3 points and you apply today, you'd be #11.

COMMISSIONER BITONDO: What about Newton and Sussex County residents – what if they work in County or town – is that part of residency? ED SNYDER: That's a HUD requirement – **living or working**. CHAIRMAN FIEDORCZYK: They could technically live in Pennsylvania, work in Newton. ED SNYDER: Yes, 1 point for being local resident – it's called living or working. COMMISSIONER BITONDO: Rather than say local residents, can it state "either residing in Newton or working in town or employed by a Newton business"? ED SNYDER: Yes, we can amend it. COMMISSIONER BITONDO: Working in Newton doesn't make you a local resident; it's either a local resident or you're employed by a Newton business. ED SNYDER: Living or working is considered the same. If we use that preference, yes, and has to be approved by HUD.

(Major discussion continued at this point regarding Resolution #2023-19. **Resolution #2023-19 was TABLED at this point in the meeting until August 2023 Commissioner's meeting.**)

Motion made by Commissioner Bitondo to table Resolution #2023-19; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

MARY - #3D - Thanked Board for their work and happy here. Worried about people coming from New York City and no availability for Newton residents.

KATHLEEN - #2L – In winter when it rains, her car sits in water, is it possible to even out area where her car is parked. ED Snyder said part of work to be done will be remilling parking lot in all areas. Is anyone donating to fireworks that tenants like to have outside on July 4th?

Discussion: Do tenants have a fireworks permit? Man no longer in building that furnished fireworks. Big Lou will set off fireworks, if someone supplies them. As this is a public facility, Commissioners are alarmed that fireworks are even being considered; done without bringing to ED Snyder's attention. Residents said they've had fireworks here for many years. Commissioners in agreement that fireworks are illegal. Board of Commissioners set policy under guidance of ED Snyder. ED SNYDER: Even if it's a little bit of fireworks, and person doing it is condoned by Commissioners and should happen to get burnt, it's a law suit against NHA – they will sue NHA. ED Snyder had neither knowledge nor any other Commissioners that fireworks were set off at NHA.

ANN WILLS - #5N – Staff doesn't respect tenants. If Karen and Ed want respect, please give respect. Tenants would like calm conversations not yelling or screaming.

STEVE ROMANO - #2M – I'm sitting in smoking area and Ed/Maintenance yells at me about cigarette butts up in parking lot. Please don't yell, talk to me and others respectfully.

Chairman Fiedorczyk informed audience she will request ED Snyder speak with staff about everyone going in a better direction; not to be afraid to ask somebody something.

KATHY - #2G – Another incident regarding an aide that's coming here 20 years. Tenant having problem with Optimum and without TV for over a month. Optimum was trying to get into a particular room where they needed access to see what problem was, repairman was yelled at and not allowed into the room. Ed/Maintenance said no one allowed in the room.

ANN - #5N – Ann invited Commissioners to 4th of July party. Also, there are many duplicate items in kitchen. Ann wants to clean up kitchen and sell extra items at August garage sale. Ann asking for permission to get rid of excess and money put back into "kitty". ED SNYDER: Yes, through Resident Tenant Organization. ANN: Why do tenants pay Ed/Maintenance \$20 to install air-conditioner into windows when he is getting paid by NHA? ED SNYDER: Only aware of money paid when tenant fills out form and pays for installation and monthly charge. \$20 does not go to Ed/Maintenance, but towards the Excess Utility Charge. It is all accounted for and deposited in NHA account.

CELESTE – #4J – I want to thank you for what you've done for our building and our home. Celeste read a lovely poem as well.

STEVE ROMANO – #2M – Thanked Commissioners for handrail at Gazebo.

PHYLLIS - #5M – ED Snyder had said tenants could use Verizon room for seasonal decorations, but Ed/Maintenance says no. Karen locks doors where all decorations are, no access available; also wants transport chair in there. Are there lights in there or can we purchase battery operated lights? ED Snyder will check into it and thought that was taken care of. Yes, there are lights in there, it will be checked also.

CHAIRMAN FIEDORCZYK: I recall at last meeting, we said it was okay to use that room. Phyllis added all decorations would be in one room finally, and other room (indicating) used for something else.

MISCELLANEOUS

Commissioner Bitondo requested a Resolution be approved by the Board of Commissioners not condoning and approving any fireworks; 2nd by Chairman Fiedorczyk. Discussion amongst Board members and ED Snyder regarding safety and fire hazard.

6. RESOLUTION #2023-20 –FIREWORKS PROHIBITED ON PROPERTY OF NEWTON HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the **Newton Housing Authority** Liability Property Insurance Policy does not allow for fireworks anywhere on its site, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of the Newton Housing Authority are concerned about any potential liability as a result of fire or any other damage caused by fireworks,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Newton Housing Authority that fireworks on its property at Liberty Towers is prohibited.

Motion to approve Resolution #2023-20 made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2nd by Chairman Fiedorczyk.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Chairman Fiedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Meeting adjourned at 6:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber