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

August 14, 2023

(Condensed 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 Wendy Vandermaas
- Also Present: Executive Director William F. Snyder
Deborah Alvarez, Secretary/Transcriber
- Excused: Commissioner Joseph Ricciardo

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 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. The first comment is on Agenda items only and the second Public Comment is for other items. All questions and comments from the public will be directed to the Chairperson and when addressing us, please give your name and apartment number.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Agenda Items

MARY - #3D – Asked about the section regarding family coming into NHA. ED Snyder said it had to do with people on NHA waiting list.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – June 12, 2023

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

There were was no discussion, questions or comments.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Ricciardo

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – ED WILLIAM SNYDER

A resident put up a notice in the elevator requesting that if you are ill, please wear a mask. We agree with that, whether a cold or if you are sick, please stay in your apartment; wear a mask if you have to leave apartment. The notice was polite. NHA is still being sanitized once a week as a precaution.

The Environmental Survey that NHA needs to do the Streamline Voluntary Conversion. Information was provided to them last week, hoping that they finish soon. That Environmental Survey is one of the last big pieces needed to submit NHA's application; also need to update our surveys. We are going through old files and today I found the survey dated 2015, but no legal description. We reached out to Catalano Surveys asking to get a price to update that and give a legal description, which has to be uploaded to HUD website.

Proposals came in for painting. All common areas – hallways, stairwells, doors in hallways. For those tenants wanting their apartments painted, we will move all the furniture, doing apartment in one day. So far only 5-6 tenants agreed to have painting done. 30 plus tenants never responded to survey. Once painter goes into an apartment and others see how easy it was, then they want their place done also.

Complaint was filed with N.J. Civil Rights; that will be discussed in Closed Session, having met with attorneys here today; came up with a nice end result.

Several months ago the Board of Commissioners requested I compile all the NHA policies; Debbie has been typing them. Many policies we could not find. This is but a partial list, but found more today: Original By-Laws – so those will be typed and work on them. Grievance Procedure also found; deed as well.

Closets in the compactor rooms on each floor have been cleaned out. Some residents had decorations stored there. Friday the stuff is being moved down to first floor to storage area on front porch. Office files were moved into former Verizon room located on porch. We will be organizing those files once lighting is added.

August 9th, the auditors were here and completed their work. We should receive report back in time for September meeting.

Town of Newton reached out to ED Snyder regarding PILOT Program. (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) that NHA pays. Town was given calculation; they're waiting for audit to confirm it. On bill list this evening, our tax payment is there - \$28,316 – for the year. If someone says NHA doesn't pay taxes, we do. The formula for payment is 10% of Net Shelter Rent minus Utilities. As utilities go up, a lot of times the PILOT goes down.

All HAs are now required to provide a report once a year to State of New Jersey re: crimes committed on Housing Authority property – homicide, rape, robbery – nice here because zeros are put in all categories and has been submitted to the State.

Parking – one of the items we're looking at: redo the entranceway here because of some complaints about ambulances getting in. So part of redesign will take care of that – making the circle better. We're looking at finishing rest of parking lot that wasn't finished; handling drainage, which has been a problem and then resurfacing the rear parking lot, which is visitor's parking lot. Right now in back lot there are 18 visitor parking spaces; there are 13 residents who park there on a waiting list to get a regular spot. Newer residents coming in – and what I did 40 to 50 years ago – rule of thumb was 25% of number units were parking spaces – 100 unit building only had 25 parking spots. Today everybody drives at 62, so you need many more. We need to expand that and will be considered in the future.

Vacancies – currently there are 2 vacancies, 3K and 3U. One being held for the Civil Rights settlement (3K). One of our residents passed away – 4A – that will become vacant. Family believes they'll be out by end of August giving them as much time as they need.

Elevator – new elevator maintenance company has taken over, a company known to me. Staff happy with them, they respond right away – had an outage, they fixed it.

Tom, when he's here on Fridays, has been cleaning the shed outside, to be used for certain things. Notice went out to all residents requesting if you have anything in there, please claim it by tomorrow. After that, we'll send another notice out, leave items on porch, please take it or it will be discarded. Residents' snow shovels will be kept in there.

Front porch was power washed.

Plumbing as part of renovation – NHA having plumbing problems. Drain in tub in some units – around that and the spout going down has been rotting; when it rots, nothing can be done. Resident in one unit had to be moved from 2T up to 3U and then we took tub out and renovate bathroom because it was so bad. Ed, Maintenance Man, took all sheetrock out; TGM put tub in, Ed put all sheetrock back in, did tile work and finished it. Beautiful. There are some other ones and we will proceed with those; also looking at replacing all the piping as part of the big renovation. There have been problems with back-ups forever because of the age of pipes in NHA.

Ed also replacing stems in bathtubs. One major leak on the porch was leaking – stem used on valve from tub wasn't seated properly, leaking behind wall and now has found more, cutting holes and replacing all those stems – 6 apartments with those leaks.

Air handler on our roof provides fresh air into our building. It has not been working properly. TGM will give a price to repair it.

Landscaping – Ed cleaned area outside the Community Room door on the parking lot side. He installed landscaping fabric and purchased more rocks to fill in the gaps.

Window repairs are done with the exception of a few units that he couldn't get into and windows where air-conditioners are installed. I visited 2 units today and windows work great compared to how they were. New gaskets were installed, there is no air leakage.

Boiler – Hartford Steam Boiler was here, gave some recommendations to Ed and he will be implementing all those recommendations.

Activities – Sussex County Seniors has a program – Farmer's Market Voucher – on 7/24 if you were eligible and they increased the value for those eligible from \$30 to \$50. Norwestcap has been in

touch with NHA and they have a sign-up event on September 7th from 10 A.M. to 12 noon here in the Community Room. If eligible, you'll receive 20 pounds of food monthly.

A Matter of Balance will start on September 13th and end on November 1st. As you get older, balance does become a problem; it's a very good program.

United Health Care was here today answering questions about Medicare.

The Pen Pal Program – some people participated in that with the high school. That will resume again in September, and I was here when they were here. It would be nice if more people participated, as there was only a handful.

Sussex County Division on Senior Services is holding a holiday craft activity on November 30th from 1 to 3 P.M. here in the Community Room.

COMMISSIONER RICCARDO: Will NHA need to expand the overall parking, number of vehicles that residents have plus visitors or do we have enough. ED SNYDER: I'm not sure, as we only have 18 spots; 13 people on waiting list, so that would indicate to me there are 13 people in the back who don't have spots. If we only have 18, that's just 5 additional, so we might – as part of drainage and all, we need to look at doing something more up there in terms of curbing, drainage and do a better job up there, expand it if we can.

COMMISSIONER RICCARDO: Did you get a notice from the Town of Newton to respond to their latest Water Pipe Survey? ED SNYDER: No. Some Commissioners did respond and take photos of their pipes, whether its lead, galvanized. Depending on age of house, they could be copper. COMMISSIONER RICCARDO: Please check Town Web Site to see if there is a way NHA can respond to the survey. Town must be working on replacing lead pipes.

OLD BUSINESS – nothing at this time

NEW BUSINESS

ED SNYDER: Capital Needs Assessment Report received. Buildings & Grounds Committee met – Commissioners Bitondo, Ricciardo and myself; went over items on list and were sent out to all Commissioners with what was discussed in the report and things we think should be added. Now as application is submitted, NHA will have to figure out how much money we are able to leverage; from that the Committee will meet again; present it to the Board and prioritize the actual work. Perhaps we'll have another meeting with residents also so they are aware of work that we will be doing.

Before COVID, to renovate an elevator was about \$155-\$200,000. Now to renovate one elevator car is over \$300,000 – how much prices have increased. As part of Streamline Conversion, NHA has to spend down NHA reserve, a million or more. We've talked about roof, elevators, and HVAC. For tenants edification, one project that we want to do is put sleeves in apartments, put PTAC units or something similar to provide a/c, possibly even heat; possibility of having existing system a supplement or back-up. A resolution tonight is to get an architect-engineer that will look at those items for NHA, tell us what is most cost-effective way, best and most comfortable for residents. System of putting a/c in/out of windows is not good. We will try to address that and solution might be in cutting holes in those grills underneath, (waterproof/water tight) – will be reasonably priced way of dealing with that issue.

RESOLUTIONS #2023-19 THROUGH AND INCLUDING #2023-25

1. RESOLUTION #2023-19 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR JULY 2023 MEETING

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Absent: Ricciardo

2. RESOLUTION #2023-20 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR AUGUST 2023 MEETING

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

Chairman Fiedorczyk asked why bills are from Gerber, as Palmer now NHA landscaper. ED Snyder surmises Gerber sent bills in summer for winter work. Karen did "hound" them about sending their bills, but many landscapers like to stretch out their billing for year-round pay.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Absent: Ricciardo

3. RESOLUTION #2023-21 – AUTHORIZATION TO SOLICIT PROPOSALS FOR A/E SERVICES

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

ED SNYDER: For Streamline Voluntary Conversion, you have to spend reserves down to zero or you lose them. When Buildings & Grounds met, Commissioner Bitondo suggested NHA have someone in place ready to go so when NHA gets to that point, the work gets done – question is whether it will be roof, air-conditioning – getting some estimates on that, so we aren't challenged or lose anything.

COMMISSIONER BITONDO: Three priorities which are safety, health-oriented (HVAC) and elevators; hopefully, to get 1 or 2 of those projects undertaken.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Absent: Ricciardo

4. RESOLUTION #2023-22 – APPROVAL OF ANNUAL PLAN

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

This is the Capital Fund allocation.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Absent: Ricciardo

5. RESOLUTION #2023-23 – SETTLEMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS CASE

Motion to **table** at this time made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley. It will be discussed in Executive Session.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Absent: Ricciardo

6. RESOLUTION #2023-24 – AMENDMENT TO THE ADMISSIONS & CONTINUED OCCUPANCY POLICY

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

COMMISSIONER BITONDO: Saw where Mary referenced, word "families" was mentioned. ED SNYDER: What Mary is speaking of is current policy provides for 2 forms of preferences when you apply for the building: 1 is residents of Sussex County and working families. Working families are considered anybody who works in the County at least 20 hours a week. You still have to be income and age suitable. I made it as working for a Newton-based company, not seeing a need to do Sussex County residents because we are looking for Newton residents. You wouldn't have Sussex County residents on same par as local residents – local residents get a point; Sussex County residents get nothing unless they meet one of the other categories. Each person gets points, they are aggregated together. In the event of a tie, then they are put on the waiting list in time & date order.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Ricciardo

7. RESOLUTION #2023-25 – PAINTING CONTRACT AWARD

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

AYES: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Ricciardo

PUBLIC COMMENTS – GENERAL ITEMS

ANN - #5N – Wishes to start breakfast up again. ED Snyder asked if it was Tenant Association or Ann as an individual. Usually, individual not allowed, but Tenant Association is fine, as it is then an organized, approved group by NHA. JOAN - #2U - answered yes; it can be done through Resident Association. ED Snyder asked Joan to come into Office to discuss.

ANN – 5N – Has an emotional support dog with up to date license, rabies shot and is friendly with public. Dog had 1 accident in hallway, Ann informed Karen, and Ann cleaned it. Ann and Karen (Office) had words. A service animal is different from emotional support animal. Discussion was about if service animal, is dog trained. No, not trained as she's emotional support. (Discussion has also been with ED Snyder.) COMMISSIONER BITONDO: It's not a matter for the Board, but to be discussed with ED Snyder. ED SNYDER: We met and you were informed, because of size and weight of pet exceeds NHA Policy and you never mentioned to me, only now, you didn't ask for "reasonable accommodation", which brings up an entire different set of other issues. I requested you write a letter to me, which I will present to the Board, and say you're looking for "reasonable accommodation" and it would be considered here tonight. You never wrote the letter asking for that. I am not an expert on this either, but I do know the Rules and I do know the ties between disability, emotional support animal, service animal. I sent a letter to NHA's attorney today presenting everything you gave to us saying "based upon the FHEO 2020-02 Requirements that go over all these things, I could not determine this animal qualifies, but that had more to do with you not giving me what I asked for. We'll go back to him, he'll get back to me and there will be a letter telling you what we need. COMMISSIONER BITONDO: It's really not a matter for discussion with this Board. You need to deal directly with ED Snyder. ANN: I will not write a letter. No. 2, I don't have to write a letter. You have to accept the dog because she is my emotional support dog. They can't charge me anything; they can't kick me out; they can't say the dog has to go. No. So, I am not writing a letter. That's it.

KATHLEEN – 2L – Doesn't understand the painting of apartments and amount of \$42,000. Is that everyone's apartment? I only want kitchen done, not the walls in living room. ED SNYDER: That's for all the common areas, hallways, stairwells. The apartments are painted at the dollar amount - \$1,195. Every apartment done based upon size, they get paid for that. We will look at that; they did give a separate price for that. We have to pay them.

MARY – #3D - Just wanted to make sure there is no charge and kitchen and bathroom could be painted. ED SNYDER: Yes. Notices will go out to everybody explaining what's going to happen.

CELESTE - #4J – I have a heavy duty shelving if they need to get to my plumbing. Do I have to take that shelf down? ED SNYDER: No, if we have to go in there, we'll work around that.

JOAN – 2U – Doesn't like white, prefers beige.

DOREEN - #5B – Asked about the water pipes in the building. ED SNYDER: We have copper pipes in here. It was not built during the time they were using lead pipes.

ADJOURNMENT OF OPEN SESSION INTO CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion to move into Closed Executive Session regarding potential litigation made by Chairman Fiedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Bitondo.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Absent: Ricciardo

Motion to move back into Open Session made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

5. RESOLUTION #2023-23 – SETTLEMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS CASE (This was tabled previously during the meeting until after Closed Executive Session)

Motion to approve the Civil Rights Settlement Agreement as negotiated with the Office of Civil Rights made by Commissioner Bitondo; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

ROLL CALL

Chairman Maria Fiedorczyk	Yes
Commissioner Richard Bitondo	Yes
Commissioner Maryann Carlson	Yes
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas	Yes
Commissioner Karen Crossley	Yes

Commissioner Joseph Ricciardo	Absent
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VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Absent: Ricciardo

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber