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

JUNE 10, 2024

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Richard Bitondo
Vice-Chairman Karen Crossley
Commissioner Mark Fiedorczyk
Commissioner Joe Ricciardo
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas

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

Excused: Commissioner Mary Ann Carlson

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 6, 2023. 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. Generally, we have two public comment sessions, but in the interest of time this evening because we do have some special guests, we're going to limit the comments to items on the Agenda. All members of the public should be cognizant of the rights and feelings of any individual they feel compelled to discuss at an Open Public Meeting. General comments and statements should be made in a calm and civil manner. Comments that violate the rights of employees, residents or members of the public could be subject to a civil law suit for damages. The individual making such statements will be personally liable for any monetary damages resulting from their statements.

FLAG SALUTE

INFORMATIONAL

Chairman Bitondo: In addition to what is on Agenda, additions will also include Policy Resolution to approve revisions to Grievance, Parking, Resident Charges, Pet and By-Laws; adding also approval of bids on 3 minor projects: roof replacement on gazebo, repairs to walkway to gazebo and duct work cleaning.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

MARK - #3N – Asked about repairs to gazebo roof and walkway, that gazebo wouldn't be torn down. Mark appreciates the view of gazebo from his apartment.

APPROVAL OF MAY 2024 MINUTES

Motion to approve May 13, 2024 minutes made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Ricciardo.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Excused: Carlson

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – ED SNYDER

Resolution #2024-16 – APPROVAL OF POLICY CHANGES – I'm recommending it be tabled so more in-depth analysis of policies. Commissioners will all receive before next meeting "red-lined versions" of each policy showing all recommendations and changes; how it was before and time to comment on them in case something was overlooked. Some policies are relatively new.

A Resident Advisory Committee was formed, meet in May and next meeting is July 17th. At last meeting there was recommendation to purchase certain games – corn hole and a few others. Commissioner Crossley: I already have them and we'll talk after this meeting.

Currently there are 6 vacancies: 3 of them have people already approved, about to move in. 2 just became vacant; Ed is in processing of painting and replacing the floors. Looking at 4A as people are coming in now for that.

Reviewing Elevator Machine Room which has an exterior door behind elevators. It was a mess, but now has been cleaned out. Ed has painted the floor and it looks great.

Maintenance Ed in #3E replaced shower diverter, took all tiles off the wall, dry wall, and replaced everything as we had another leak there. Now it's back in service. Fortunately, Ed is able to do that work, and great he is able to do it.

Bids are out for 2nd item, which is air-conditioning in apartments for residents. RFB went in newspapers today for air-conditioning, which will be installed in all apartments. Pre-bid will be June 26th. Bid will be due July 10th, reviewed and decide then if want a special meeting after that date, then award both contracts.

Roof bid due date is 6/19, which is coming up. Chairman Ricciardo mentioned we will have a special meeting to award that get it underway before bad weather begins.

Two exterior steel doors – one to boiler room and one to maintenance – those from use over the years, perhaps salt rubbing against them are now in bad shape. We're looking at prices, and have one price for one door with frame is \$4,500; another one at \$10,000. Nothing will be done now, but wanted to make Commissioners aware of it. One door has a transom above it.

Gazebo in rear of building: there was talk about getting a new one. I inspected it, it is older style and very well made; hard to get that type of construction any more. We have prices to do a few things: 1-replace existing roofing off & replace sheathing underneath; replace shingles to match other gazebo so they are both timberline-type shingles; also to replace asphalt walkway going from parking lot to gazebo. Tree roots are coming through and a tripping hazard if someone is walking up there and doesn't realize it.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Notice to residents Sussex County offering a \$50 electronic coupon to be used at food markets, if income eligible, over 60 years old. Some residents are getting that.
2. Resident Association having their 4th of July BBQ on July 4th at noon. There is a \$5.00 charge.
3. Residents having a garage sale, which is town wide, here on Saturday, July 19th. Resident Association is advertising that. If you want a table, placement will be out front of building in lobby area.
4. Zomba Class being proposed here, however, it's Recreation Department – cost is \$5.00 a person. Karen will work on getting cost lowered, but is available Fridays at 9:30 A.M. at American Legion.
5. Commissioner Crossley mentioned a larger bulletin board for Community Room and for tenant use and posting of activities also. Ed will work on that.

OLD BUSINESS - nothing at this time

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Bitondo: There is a special meeting to approve bid for roof replacement. Bids coming in on June 19, how long will architect need to review bids? ED Snyder: About a week. A/C bids coming in on July 10th; have special meeting on July 15th. I'll tell architect to review it that quick and we can consider roof replacement and A/C bid same week. There were only 2 people at the HVAC pre-bid meeting. 13 picked up bidding documents, 2 showed up, but Liberty Street was shut down and no in/out. **Monday, July 22nd was decided for Special Meeting at 5:15 P.M.** ED Snyder will post legal notice in newspaper and to municipality.

Chairman Bitondo: Liberty Towers is approaching 50th anniversary, having received its Certification of Habitation from Town of Newton on September 11, 1974. We'd like to put together a half-century celebration which might include a rededication of building;

maybe some refreshments in Community Room; invitation of guests both from municipality, County government, State government, etc. Commissioner Crossley has graciously agreed to Chair that committee to head the celebration. Commissioner Fiedorczyk also volunteered to help. Commissioner Crossley will get together with Wade McCade/Historical Society, who is a wealth of information. Create some special invitations after Board approval. Report on progress will be made July 22nd at Special Meeting.

RESOLUTIONS #2024-15 AND #2024-16

1. RESOLUTION #2024-15 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR JUNE 2024 MEETING

Motion to approve payment of \$52,455.93 made by Commissioner Ricciardo; 2nd by Commissioner Fiedorczyk. Chairman Bitondo did review Executech invoice and it is in order.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Excused: Carlson

2. RESOLUTION #2024-16 – APPROVAL OF POLICY CHANGES

Chairman Bitondo recommends Resolution #2024-16 be postponed as there were some inconsistencies amongst policies and handbooks, some incomplete information also. Policies need more clarification. ED Snyder is in agreement with this decision.

Motion by Chairman Bitondo for postponement of Resolution 2024-16 until August 2024 meeting; 2nd by Commissioner Ricciardo.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Excused: Carlson

A portion needing clarification: maximum size of a dog; new fee guide delineated/itemized, but not reflective in policy itself, for example. Consistency needs to be there for information sent to residents and what it says actually in policy.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

PHYLLIS - #5M – Side door going out to parking lot is difficult to open; a piece of metal on the bottom scrapes along making it difficult for people with walkers. ED Snyder: Please call Work Order into Office. Ed cannot do any work unless a Work Order has been filled out and ED Snyder reviews request first. Chairman Bitondo: Any resident that sees any issue in any common can call in a Work Order. Board is not at these meetings for day-to-day issues and operations.

AMANDA - #5J – Asked about building roof repair? Chairman Bitondo: It's going to be torn off; demolished and a new EPDM rubber membrane roof installed. It is decking, insulation and rubber membrane to be replaced. The roof now has rubber membrane called EPDM; ripped off; underneath is insulation; also ripped off. Then it will be replaced with new insulation, new rubber membrane – a major production with a 30-

year warranty. Water will be pitched to drain off. Engineers and architects have put together the specs for this. We trust the professionals.

KATHLEEN - #2L – Asked about security cameras and being able to view what is going on in the building. What are the rules in that regard? Chairman Bitondo: Camera and monitor is not for residents; it's to record anything that might be occurring if we need to review later. Commissioner Crossley: It's for security and liability and laws about privacy issues. Someone might not want you to see them. You have no authorization, but staff of this building does. Commissioner Fiedorczyk: If there's a complaint, if something happens to you outside, then we can review the footage, but it is a privacy issue. You could be spying on everyone in the building with access to the camera.

MARY - #3D – Will air-conditioning be one temperature at all times for all apartments or will there be a control for each resident? Chairman Bitondo: They will be able to control air in their apartment; there won't be that opportunity for the heat. Heating is for supplemental use only – still rely on our boiler and our existing heating system to heat the building.

CELESTE - #4J – Thank you for all you do for our building. Board members thanked Celeste for her kind comment.

PROPOSALS TO BE APPROVED THIS EVENING

1. ROOF REPLACEMENT OF GAZEBO – Proposals received from 3 contractors. ED Snyder reviewed bids; making recommendation that it be awarded to Up & Above Contractors at a cost of \$2,500.

Motion to approve Up & Above Contractors, LLC to replace gazebo roof at a cost of \$2,500 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Excused: Carlson

2. ASPHALT WALKWAY TO GAZEBO – 3 quotes were received. ED Snyder recommending Notchwood Landscape do the work including widening walkway to four feet at a cost of \$2,700, which includes disposal of old asphalt.

Motion to approve Notchwood Landscape to widen walkway to gazebo to 4 feet at a cost of \$2,700, which includes disposal of old asphalt made by Commissioner Ricciardo; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Excused: Carlson

3. DUCT WORK CLEANING – 3 contractors bid. ED Snyder recommending Benzbac, Emerson, N.J. to clean ducts including main duct and all apartment ducts at a cost of \$8,256.

Motion to approve duct cleaning by Benzbac at a cost of \$8,256 made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4) Excused: Carlson Abstain: Ricciardo

STATEMENT BY CHAIRMAN BITONDO

We need better relationships amongst our residents. We need improved relationships in our residents and Staff and between our residents and the Commissioners. We're looking for harmony; we're looking for cooperation; we're looking for a sense of tranquility.

Please understand that Bill, the Staff and we, the Board of Commissioners, are all here for you. We're striving to make Liberty Towers a safe, secure, healthy and comfortable environment for you.

Five short years ago, Liberty Towers was operating, probably illegally, without Executive Director. For several years, we were struggling to meet the quorum for Commissioners to just conduct routine business and to pay the monthly bills.

Now we have one of the best, most experienced, most knowledgeable Public Housing Administrators in the whole country. Now we are equipped with a Staff that is hard working, reliable, responsible and dedicated. Now we have as close to a full Board as we've had in years. A Board that is cohesive, committed and focused. We have a lot going on. You've heard about those items this evening. We have a half century celebration to plan. We have policy and handbook work to complete. We have a roof replacement project out for bid. We have an HVAC project, which is cooling and supplemental heating equipment in all 80 units out to bid. We're in the final stretch of Streamline Voluntary Conversion, which will enable us to tackle additional critical, capital projects.

We need harmony, cooperation and tranquility. We do not have time to be distracted with unnecessary conflict. We do not have time to be playing referee. We implore you to work with us, not against us. The bottom line – if you are that terribly unhappy here, you owe it to yourself to explore other living options. You are not shackled or handcuffed to this building.

Have a nice rest of June. We'll be back to approve a roof contract in July. Please do some introspection and seriously think about the thoughts and concerns that I've shared with you this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Bitondo: May I have a motion for adjournment.

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Excused: Carlson

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED, Deborah L. Alvarez – Secretary/Transcriber

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