

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

November 25, 2024

(Condensed taped minutes of **SPECIAL SCHEDULED MONTHLY MEETING** of
Newton Housing Authority - Commencing at 5:19P.M.)

ROLL CALL:

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

Absent: Commissioner Joseph Ricciardo

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 a Special Meeting Notice with Municipal Clerk, posting on the official bulletin board and delivery of same to New Jersey Herald & Star Ledger on December 6, 2024. 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. 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. All questions and comments from the public will be directed to the Chairperson and when addressing the Board of Commissioners, please give your name and address. 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.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – ED Snyder

Roof replaced; final inspection by manufacturer – Carlisle Roofing on 10/30. Chairman Bitondo, architect, and I in attendance. Several items need to be repaired, nothing major. Building & Grounds Committee (B&G) has a copy of architect's report for follow-up. Until repairs are made NHA won't get warranty document. There has to be a final inspection, which I requested in an email today, from the local Building Department. When we get that, there will be final requisition having all closing documents. With final requisition, we have to determine whether or not they're going to be repairing the wall or we're going to be issuing a credit to NHA. The contractor did come, told him he couldn't start the work until he gave us an insurance certificate, which he hasn't done yet. Ed went looking for the rocks, which couldn't be found, including Tom's house; found rocks in different spots, loaded his truck and has them. Ed said if they don't build the wall, he will rebuild it. Before we make the final payment, we'll settle with them.

We had a meeting with Resident Advisory Committee on 11/6 and went over several items including RAD Program, distributing schedule for meetings to be held in 2025. I explained Capital Needs Assessment we'll be doing with good suggestions: #1 Arrange for a CPR class for residents, Karen looking into that to see if County will come and do that. #2 Provide cable TV in Community Room to be able to watch TV, hopefully to get it free.

We had 2 vacancies per last report, 2 people are coming in next week to fill those apartments. We've asked for their income information.

Tonight, we adopt the budget, which is a 2-step process: already introduced, uploaded to a web site to Department of Community Affairs; they approved budget and authorized to actually adopt it.

Interim Financial Report is included in Commissioners' Agenda. Streamline Voluntary Conversion has been changed to RAD Blend for Small Housing Authorities. Had a second meeting with residents today, reason being HUD originally said only one meeting needed as we had 2-3 meetings on old program, and did discuss RAD at that time. HUD said we want another meeting. I must redo application again. The meeting was at 3 P.M. today. Karen is doing minutes. I'll upload minutes, sign-in sheet and get that done. I spoke with the attorney who represents Cliffside Park Housing Authority. We have a Contract Administrator's agreement with them for vouchers. HUD still hasn't approved it, but we're prodding them. They're reviewing it. Chief Counsel in Washington, D.C. has been named as Acting Field Office Manager, doing two jobs. Once we get the application in, HUD reviews it and issues a **CHAP** – Commitment to Enter Into a Housing Assistance Payments Contract. Then we proceed to the next step, which is preparing a financing plan. With the financing plan we will hire an attorney to handle the special closing, getting them under contract. We prepare a pro forma, a PILOT agreement (getting something from Newton) saying PILOT will extend further with the conversion plus other things NHA does: capital needs assessment – all going to HUD, they review it, which will take at least 6 months – HUD time. Once they approve RAD Conversion Commitment (RCC), then we prepare financing documents to close.

Once we close there are certain things – Declaration of Trust, which is withdrawn, which allows NHA to go to a bank and seek financing; then we'll be negotiating during financing phase with banks with best rate to see how much we'll borrow. Unfortunately, they take time especially when dealing with HUD.

Residents Association had Halloween Party, which went very well, held on October 26th. Bingo is scheduled on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 6:00 P.M. Residents Association is going well, keeping people involved. Sunday matinees at 2:00 P.M. in the Community Room have not been successful, don't know if that will continue. Sussex County Department of Health in conjunction with Residents Association are working to have a session tomorrow, 11/26/2024, speaking about healthy tips for holidays. In return we pay the Residents Association a stipend or up to that stipend (\$50.00 a unit) so food, etc. will be paid for by NHA since it's eligible because you're having an educational session. There is a holiday party scheduled for December 18th.

On November 7th, Sussex County Division of Health and Nursing did a presentation on Emergency Preparedness. Fall flu vaccination schedule is on the bulletin board. A Medicare consultant has been here on 2 different occasions, and she will be here again on December 3rd for the open enrollment period to be able to change your plan or ask questions. Farmer's Market ending on November 30th. Residents who obtained vouchers, please spread the word to make sure people use them.

Chairman Bitondo asked ED Snyder about NHA attorney not capable of handling the closing. ED Snyder: He is not, but he won't want to do it, as I've worked with him on other jobs. It's a specialty and there are a handful of firms that do it. We'll solicit proposals and bring them to Board and you can decide. It will cost about \$65,000; they charge a lot of money. We got the proposal from H2W, who did the original capital needs assessment that wasn't 100% complete. We still owe them \$4,000, which we won't pay and they're not asking for it as they didn't have to do online entry but will do with this. They want \$7,000, which I told residents at Advisory Committee meeting; we're keeping a file and list of things needing to be done: automatic doors, parking lots, entrance to building, air-conditioning. Ed is getting prices from vendors to replace apartment doors, this way we have a budget number, which is over \$80,000 just to purchase hardware – locking sets with master lock for apartments.

Board first and B&G will go down items in that report; prioritize them based on things having to be done, i.e., one major item is elevators – upgrade them. One piston has been replaced, now other elevator piston is leaking slightly; motors, inside of cars need to be updated, more ADA compliant. We're talking about \$250,000 an elevator. We have exterior work: drainage, etc. Some tenants said I promised them things. I never promise anything because I can't say for certain what we're going to be doing. It is transparent, go over list with them as I will with B&G, but we decide first those items. Priority order and things go in that order. After that and money is left over, we can finance – hit the gravy – kitchens/bathrooms/flooring in all apartments that haven't been done.

HQW can be done as a Change Order as original contract was \$40,000 and you can issue Change Order up to 20%, which is 8,000. So it's within the change, \$7,500 and on next month's agenda.

Chairman Bitondo asked for review of how NHA is fairing financially at end of 3rd quarter. ED Snyder: It is through September 30th, 75% of NHA year. Annual budget is 1st column for year; 2nd column is 75% of that. Then actual revenues to date. NHA up by over \$10,000. Chairman Bitondo: Revenues up almost \$11,000. ED Snyder: Expenses up by \$20K. For that period through the year, we're about \$10,000 expenses in a deficit position, but in looking at budget overall, this budget is forecast \$80K surplus. It changes by quarter in what's going on. My contract was slightly over; reason is we had extra maintenance men.

(At this point in the meeting, Commissioner Vandermaas arrived.)

Commissioner Crossley thanked Resident Association for being up and running; it is extremely positive and am happy and proud and it is making a difference. The atmosphere has changed. Commissioner Carlson and Commissioner Vandermaas agreed.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Bitondo noted beginning of year is annual recertification process. It requires thoroughness and diligence. We will have appropriate resources in place to accomplish it in a thorough and efficient manner. Karen has reached out to Community College in Sussex, looking for an intern – we can pay up to \$20/hour. The State Trade Association will pay one-half of that – maybe 15 hours a week around the student's schedule. ED Snyder added Association would only pay half if it's an intern. Only thing done here is collection of data and documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 21, 2024

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

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

RESOLUTIONS #2024-32 THROUGH & INCLUDING #2024-34

- 1. RESOLUTION #2024-32 - APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR NOVEMBER 2024 MEETING

Motion to approve bill list in amount of \$99,570.32 made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley. \$31,000 is payment to municipality for NHA PILOT.

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

- 2. RESOLUTION #2024-33 - ADOPTION OF 2025 BUDGET

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

ED Snyder mentioned budget calls for revenues in amount of \$738,000 and expenses in area of \$651,000; that's very unusual and a projected \$87,000 projected budget surplus, which for a small operation like NHA is outstanding. Rental income from tenants is \$465,000; subsidy from HUD is \$197,000. If you add them all together with excess utilities and under Section 8 platform, tenants won't have to pay excess utility charge any more.

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

- 3. RESOLUTION #2024-34 – AUTHORIZATION TO SOLICIT BIDS & PROPOSALS

Motion to approve for bids and proposals for auditing, accounting & legal services made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS – nothing at this time

ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Ricciardo

Chairman Bitondo wished all those present and to neighbors at Liberty Towers a very joyful and rewarding Happy Thanksgiving.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber