

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

December 18, 2024

(Condensed taped minutes of Special Scheduled Monthly Meeting of
Newton Housing Authority - Commencing at 5:16 P.M.)

Chairman Bitondo called meeting to order and noted this is a Special Meeting rescheduled from last week.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman Richard Bitondo
Commissioner Mary Ann Carlson
Commissioner Mark Fiedorczyk
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas - Zoom

Absent: Commissioner Karen Crossley
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 13, 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 lawsuit 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 has been completed. Subsequently got items needed: warranty has come in; Building Department has approved roof. Only thing not done is to repair the wall. Now it's getting too cold to do that, may be held off until springtime. We need close-out documents from contractor with his final payment. I recommend we withhold amount of money we know wall is going to cost. There are other forms he has to fill out that the architect will get in order to do that.

As of today NHA has no vacancies. Two people are moving in January 1, 2025.

RAD Program – everyone notified today we got our approval. We have a CHAP, which is the approval. It lets us move to next stage, which is preparation of a financing plan. I worked on today. They have us scheduled in their portal for a submission of a Concept Call, first submitting financing plan, for July 25th. I'll try to get everything in sooner, try to push up that call with them.

Tonight Agenda was revised to be proactive, there is a resolution authorizing me to go out and solicit Special Legal Services that are necessary to get to stage beyond financing plan, which is when we close transaction. I deal with several attorneys and ask them for proposals. It can be expensive -- \$65,000 just to handle that phase of it.

I gave Commissioners copies of my **wish list**. We had a Capital Needs Assessment done in 2023. Some items are from that and I've added to it per requests of residents like automatic doors in Community Room, redoing driveway in front of building, milling parking lot, handling drainage, etc. I sent an email today to architect, we have resolution tonight to increase his contract to be able to update Capital Needs Assessment, and meet with him to go over it and take one final stab. Capital Needs Assessment is important because that's at center of putting financing plan together, telling us all work we need to do. Then we'll figure out how to pay for it. The letter that approved us – attached to that in CHAP are proposed rents. I've notified HUD/Washington and Chicago and RAD Resource Desk that I believe those rents are wrong. Those rents are RAD rents and there's a formula used to develop them. Rents we will be looking at will be significantly higher to the tune of over \$1,500/studio and \$1700/1 bedroom. Difference from what you see there and cash flow we'll get that will enable us to do work items on this wish list.

In 2025, we're meeting with our Resident Advisory Services Committee. We will go over work items again, especially when the Capital Needs Assessment is done. We are required to have 2 more meetings now with residents before we can submit financing plan. Today I prepared General Information Notice, which HUD requires we send out. General Information Notice talks about relocation. So when residents get these letters, please spread the word, we're not relocating anybody. HUD requires we do this. People panic when they get these letters. Everyone will stay in their apartments, but that is one of the requirements when we send it out. I'll discuss that at first meeting with residents so they're calm.

We got our approval relatively quickly because I've been sending emails as HUD doesn't do much this time of year.

Resident Association bingo still being held. Sussex County Division of Health held an event at end of November, holiday tips and healthy theme lunch was served with that. Today was

holiday celebration with Resident Association, very well attended. Everyone getting along and having a good time. Sussex County Division of Senior Services will give us calendar for things they'll be doing here in 2025. Agenda tonight has meeting schedule for 2025. We can publish that, but please take a look at it to make sure those dates and times are good. Some might be incorrect because of a holiday or March; I'll be on vacation 2nd week.

On Agenda tonight 3 things were added: proposals coming in for legal, accounting and auditing and on your agenda for approval; only received 1 for each. All of them are in line with the exception of legal proposal. Legal proposal on Agenda is last as you might want to discuss that. The attorney handling our legal issues has been working on an hourly rate. It looks like in his proposal, he put a retainer in there. He's looking for \$1,000/month, perhaps figuring it's too small for him, so that's at your discretion how you want to handle that. I did call him today to ask about the retainer charge, but he wasn't in the office.

Chairman Bitondo: Dates primarily established for NHA meetings are: January 13th, February 10th, March 17th, April 14th, May 12th, June 9th, August 11th, September 8th, October 20th, November 10th and December 8th.

Resolution for Change Order of \$8,000 for HQW Architect to provide him with opportunity to respond to needs of RAD Application. Resolution for Auditing Services, Accounting Services and Legal Services; resolution to solicit proposals for Special Legal Services for RAD Program.

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 25, 2024

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Bitondo inquired about extra assistance for work involved with recertification process, is there a back-up plan. ED Snyder had no responses from any local colleges. Does anyone here know of anyone? Hours would be flexible to work around a student's schedule. Association would pay half of student's cost. Commissioner Vandermaas will have her son ask others at his college if they're interested.

NEW BUSINESS – nothing at this time

RESOLUTION #2024-34 TO AND INCLUDING #2024-40

Commissioner Fiedorczyk noted there were two #2024-35 so numbers were changed accordingly.

1. RESOLUTION #2024-34 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR DECEMBER 2024 MEETING

Motion to approve bill list of \$50,980.20 made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo.

2. RESOLUTION #2024-35 – APPROVAL OF ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE FOR 2025

Motion to approve 2025 Annual Meeting Notice made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

3. RESOLUTION #2024-36 – APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER #1 TO A/E CONTRACT

Motion to approve Change Order #1 to A/E Contract made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

4. RESOLUTION #2024-37 – APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR AUDIT SERVICES

Motion to approve Contract for Audit Services with Giampaolo & Associates in amount of \$8,325 made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

5. RESOLUTION #2024-38 – APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR ACCOUNTING SERVICES

Motion to approve Contract with Polcari & Company for accounting services in amount of \$21,600 made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

6. RESOLUTION #2024-39 – AUTHORIZATION TO SOLICIT PROPOSALS FOR SPECIAL LEGAL SERVICE

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

7. RESOLUTION #2024-40 – APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR LEGAL SERVICES

Motion made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk to table Resolution #2024-40 regarding \$1,000/month; \$12,000 annually. Is \$1,000 a retainer fee? ED Snyder said Breslin & Breslin, Hackensack, N.J. was only one to put in a bid and asked them for an hourly rate, as RAD is very involved. I'll report at January's meeting after I speak with them. Discussion about hourly rate, retainer and yearly amount followed. Breslin in middle of 2 Fair Housing Complaints he's handling, that would be included in \$1,000 plus tenant actions are included. \$175 fee comes in if there is a special service above and beyond what's included in retainer. Contract would be detailed. Karen can scan in contract and send to all Commissioners so they can see it. He'll work on hourly rate until we work it out. \$175 is standard now, but many up to \$225/hour on public work. We will have to quantify "all" as it is all-encompassing word. I will get his proposal and request he be more specific as to what's included in that retainer.

Motion to table Resolution #2024-40 Approval of Contract for Legal Services pending further information about retainer agreement made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2ND by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

PUBLIC COMMENTS – GENERAL ITEMS

CELESTE - #4J – Thank you for all you've done in the building, making it safe for the seniors living here.

MARILYN MILLER - #4L – Concerned regarding RAD and all the newer plans, will they be for the entire future or until project is done? Chairman Bitondo: Our new status as Assistance Demonstration Program? Is there an ending date to that, or is that a forever thing? ED Snyder: When I meet with everyone – you're converting one program to another. We're converting from Public Housing to Section 8. Once you convert, you're converted. That's it! The architect and attorney fees are one-time deal regarding RAD.

Chairman Bitondo: CHAP is **Commitment to Enter into Housing Assistance Payments**. This comes from Office of Public & Indian Housing.

KATHLEEN - #2L – Would it be possible to put a brick or two into 2 trash cans so they don't roll out into the cars and parking lot. I've picked up trash can 4 times. We just need bricks or something to keep them in place. Commissioner Carlson: Trash cans are light plastic out by the parking lots. When wind blows, they move all over the place – cars, parking lot. They can't be tied down as they stand by themselves on the grass; nothing to tie them to. Chairman Bitondo: Bricks might be a liability. We'll come up with something so they're not flying around.

Chairman Bitondo wished all those present a very **Merry Christmas**.

ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber