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

April 14, 2025

(Condensed taped minutes of Regularly Scheduled Monthly Meeting of  
Newton Housing Authority - Commencing at 5:20 P.M.)

**ROLL CALL:**

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

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

Absent: Commissioner Karen Crossley  
Commissioner Joseph Ricciardo

**FLAG SALUTE**

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the filing of a Annual Meeting Notice with Municipal Clerk, posting on the official bulletin board and delivery of same to New Jersey Herald & Star Ledger on December 10th, 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 welcomed and encouraged by the Newton Housing Authority to comment during the public comment portions of the meeting. There will be two public comment sections for the meeting. Residents can address the Board of Commissioners on Agenda items during the public comment 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. When addressing the Board of Commissioners, please provide your name and address. All members of the public should be cognizant to 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 WILLIAM SNYDER

Recertification letter for 5<sup>th</sup> floor went out today.

Ed, Maintenance, said contractor will call him by end of the week to schedule repair of wall. Commissioner Crossley and I went around property today looking at some issues, as she lives next door, both agreeing about what should be done. NHA kept \$5,000; if contractor doesn't do the repair, NHA is still ahead of the game.

There are no vacancies. An applicant was selected. Her income has been certified, and she has accepted the apartment.

Plumbing – There are two proposals and a resolution to reject those: reason being that our current vendor, TGM, does not submit bids. What they do is send us an email saying their contract price will stay the same, here's our hourly amounts. Two bids came in and are substantially higher than TGM cost -- \$40/hour more. TGM does not always charge for a helper; other firms always charge for helper and plumber – over \$200/hour. NHA will reject those bids and see if TGM will submit. If they don't submit a bid, and the 2nd time around, it's over the budget, we can negotiate. So, I'd come back to TGM, negotiate with them, and award the contract that way. They handle it on a case-by-case basis now. They comply with everything, contract, insurance, etc.

Parking Lot – Last month residents brought up they'd like to see parking lot restriped, and numbers put on parking spots. I did a tour of it myself. You could barely read numbers, lines are hard to see. We have got several prices, now clarifying them, because it is under 15% of the bid limit. We have a price from G-Force of \$2,100 which is restriping all of the spaces. I did a site plan, which I sent to them for the back, numbering all spaces now so every tenant will have a numbered space. Hopefully by next month, we'll have prices and a contract award on the agenda for parking lot. One man submitted a price of \$8,900, which might have included seal-coating parking lot. If we're going to do an entire parking lot, no sense in spending money we don't have to spend.

Stairwells – Ed painted all stairwells and finished them March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Heat – It will be shut down by law on May 1<sup>st</sup>. People are already complaining it's too hot. Ed will replace valves that are deteriorating in Mechanical Room.

Elevator – Memo sent to Building & Grounds Committee – today when I came in, both elevators were down – working, but not working – not coming to 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Elevator Maintenance Company called. The fellow said that our elevators have 2 controllers, one for each car; one micro-processor, which is like a computer. The micro-processor is the brains of operation, so when someone hits a button, the micro-processor says somebody on 4<sup>th</sup> floor, hit button, send car, pick them up and take down when they hit button to go down. It controls everything going on. We did get it up and running, but he is concerned it is going down. If that happens, we would be without elevators, a major problem in a building like this.

What we must do, even pass muster with Fire Sub Code Official, is bring someone in to operate those elevators manually 24/7, which I figured out, it will take a few months to get and have them installed costing 20-\$25,000 as an expense for someone to run those cars. I'm suggesting that we authorize this as an emergency, because of the nature of population needing elevators. There could be an official that says you have to vacate the building, if we have no elevators. I put a Resolution on tonight's Agenda, which denotes this as an emergency. State Law allows it



in terms of safety, health, welfare – clearly, we have all those issues here. This allows us to inform our current elevator contractor to do this immediately; go get the parts and fix it. We scheduled things with the RAD conversion. We're doing it now, so we won't do it later. It will be pretty much all new components. Two tanks holding hydraulic fluid – one was replaced last time we did it. The other one doesn't need to be replaced. With that a lot of internal components have to be changed: door guides on doors that open/close – stop when you put your hand in front of it; all buttons in elevator, those on outside also. They have to be connected to new controllers and be compatible with it. The contractor said we're talking upwards of \$150,000. I checked our cash flow as of March 31<sup>st</sup>; NHA has approximately \$700,000 in bank. Keep in mind, our bills are higher this month because we have \$50K in insurance payments this month. I believe we should do it in interest of being proactive and avoiding that circumstance. If you have any questions or suggestions, let me know. The contractor said there is a possibility we could rebuild, but didn't know if it could be done. Current micro-processor, you have to send it out – 25 to \$30,000 just for that part; obsolete anyway. We have to replace when we do elevators in any event. It's in NHA's interest to do upgrade now.

CHAIRMAN BITONDO: I agree. I have 2 concerns: #1 with the work being done, is that worth and still salvageable in terms of whatever we do down the road with elevator project?

ED SNYDER: This is an upgrade, absolutely. Further upgrades would be Car #1. One car we did, if you remember, we replaced the cylinder because it was leaking. That could go. So, we do a major upgrade, replacing other cylinder. What they do now with these hydraulic cylinders, if you think about it, it's a piston – the motors pump hydraulic fluid into bottom, pushes piston up and then when someone wants to come down, hydraulic fluids release from that. Old way of doing it was a single wall cylinder, which leaked, and is what we had. You're losing hydraulic pressure, elevator becomes unstable. As part of new upgrade, we would do that. I would suggest doing a total elevator in terms of modernizing the cars, etc. Equipment is definitely compatible and that's fine.

CHAIRMAN BITONDO: Other concern: if it takes 2 months and in the interim breaks down and we have no elevators, what's our plan? Worse case scenario, it could go down tomorrow, and we're 2 months before repaired. I think we need to have plan in place; to find personnel. Is there licensing required?

ED SNYDER: Plan is we have to bring someone in. ED SNYDER: If someone wants a part-time job? No licensing required. It's the old way of running elevator. We'd give operator cell phone, notify residents that if you need to leave building – these potential looms, if it does happen – notice goes personally to everybody's apartment: call this number if you need to go/down. I'd get on elevator company's back, having encountered this problem before, having chairs where people were carried up/down when they had to. We have 2 elevators, but that process controls both. You can operate them, but it has to be done manually.

COMMISSIONER CARLSON: My question: Will they do one elevator at a time? ED SNYDER: Yes, I've already sequenced that with him. Process is: only one control panel. Leave that alone, it will keep running. He'll take the other panel out, taking about 2 weeks. When I worked with them in the past with only 1 elevator in a building, they tell you as much as 6 months to replace elevator. We got them to do it in 8 weeks. I know this company and they are very good, even if they have to work around the clock to do as quickly as possible. I will tell him to order parts immediately.

I'm open to suggestions, short of advertising, for someone to run the elevator. We need more than 1 person if it's going to be 24/7. Perhaps through Tenant Association we have some residents that might want to do it. 24/7 for emergency purposes. 3-5 people at least every day.

CHAIRMAN BITONDO: I would think minimum wage – it is \$15.49/hour. ED SNYDER: We'd try to structure it so it doesn't affect your rent. COMMISSIONER CARLSON: If it's an emergency, are fire and police able to come in immediately? ED SNYDER: Yes, we have an emergency response plan that would dictate that, put into motion whoever is going to be operating it. (Discussion about schedule for operators.)

Rental Assistance Demonstration Program – Program we are using to do rehab, just now architect sent me draft while I was sitting here. Tomorrow A.M. I will send out to B&G Committee. I gave them a list of things we wanted, and want Committee to double-check on it. What I want to see if we can close this program without having to worry about Capital Needs Assessment and work we're doing. When out of the program, NHA goes and gets prices from banks, do our own financing without HUD involved; much easier. I'm checking now with HUD, as we are a small housing authority, thus eliminating some bureaucracy.

Resident Association – They are having bingo, which is successful. Residents are having a "red day". Keller Williams is having an event here on May 8<sup>th</sup> – lunch, flower planting and birthday celebrations. I gave Commissioner Crossley today a donation letter for Lowe's & Home Depot, hoping letter will suffice they'll make donations to NHA, thinking they'll donate flowers/plants. Keller Williams will do planting with residents in "garden club" so they don't have to purchase their own. This will be impetus for donations, etc.

Vending Machine – Residents are happy about that. Machine was in-house. Ed cleaned up. NHA paid for first bath of goodies in there. Tenants put soda, water and found out at today's meeting machine is doing very well. It does make change. Candy bars are \$1.25, everything else is \$1.00. We turned administration of it over to Tenant Association. They're buying their own things. Ann Wills has key to get in/out. There is accounting program, which tells you how much money you made. They're using money to purchase other things and will fund their association a little bit. No complaints of malfunctions either. **Thank you from audience members to Board.**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA ITEMS**

ANN MARIE MILLS - #5N – Re: elevator, how would you know people want to go up/down? If I ran the elevator, how would I know who wants to go up/down? CHAIRMAN BITONDO: You're going to be riding it, sitting in it all day. ED SNYDER: You could probably sit in Lobby with a phone. You'll be on the 1st floor controlling it. You get a phone call: I'm in 5N. You'd go up to get them; bring them down. Possibly keep a clipboard with details of their coming/going. Every tenant will have a notice put in their mailbox – call Office if you have any further questions. I could look at a temporary audio system, to see how expensive. Maybe add to upgrade. CHAIRMAN BITONDO: Alarm systems are less expensive now. Could we get some audio equipment on a temporary basis on each floor at each elevator that would notify us downstairs?

PHYLLIS - #5M – Are you going to do large elevator first - #2 or #1? Large elevator is one stretcher fits in. The other one is more difficult. CHAIRMAN BITONDO: It will be left up to elevator company in terms of what will work best for them. It would be our preference, but there might be a technicality as to which one is done first. ED SNYDER: One with microprocessor has to be done first, as one with microprocessor will continue to work.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 17, 2025**



Motion to approve minutes of March 17, 2025 made by Commissioner Carlson; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

**OLD BUSINESS – nothing at this time**

**NEW BUSINESS**

Reminder that Annual Disclosure Forms are due by April 30, 2025. Don't be concerned about email Katherine Ellicott sent as there's no changes, very straight-forward.

**RESOLUTIONS #2025-13 THROUGH #2025-16**

1. RESOLUTION #2025-13 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR APRIL 2025 MEETING

Motion to approve #2025-13 in amount of \$127,561.95 made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

Chairman Bitondo reviewed EXECUTECH's invoice and approves payment.

2. RESOLUTION #2025-14 – INDEMNIFICATION POLICY

This Resolution indemnifies employees and Board members from financial liability arising from civil suits or criminal charges or investigations. This memorializes the aforementioned policy.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

3. RESOLUTION #2025-15 – REJECTION OF HVAC/PLUMBING BIDS

Motion to approve rejection of HVAC/Plumbing bids made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

4. RESOLUTION #2025-16 – ELEVATOR REPAIR – EMERGENCY CONTRACT AWARD WITH  
ADDED CLAUSE – NOT TO EXCEED \$150,000

**(Added clause: BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE REPAIRS ARE NOT TO EXCEED \$150,000. AMOUNTS IN EXCESS OF \$150,000 MUST BE APPROVED AS A CHANGE ORDER BY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS.)**

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Vandermaas.

AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – GENERAL ITEMS**

MARILYN MILLER - #4L – Any update on air-conditioning units? CHAIRMAN BITONDO: No, we've had internal discussion about taking project down a notch; not going to complexity of having to replace electrical panels in every apartment, which is expensive. We'll look at alternatives with architect and engineer. ED SNYDER: As we'd be considering bigger BTU units, you need 220 volts. Building only has 110 now. New a/c would require more volts.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Crossley/Ricciardo

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez  
Secretary/Transcriber