

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

May 12, 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 Karen Crossley
Commissioner Mark Fiedorczyk – via phone
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas – via phone

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 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 an 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 of 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 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

Now in the middle of annual recertification. Fifth floor letters went out in April/early May; about 65% complete now.

Water utility bill arrived after last Commissioners' meeting, which was then held next month. Check was mailed out and paid in time, but was cashed 2 days late, sent us 2% penalty which is over \$1,000. I appealed it; they rejected by letter. Subsequently, reached out to Tom Russo and woman who works for water/sewer authority is now supposedly working on it. I've appealed it, which will go to Mayor & Council. We'll see what happens. It is a little bit much.

The damaged wall outside has been prepared finally. Commissioner Crossley and I walked our property a while back; noticed that our neighbor to one side was placing debris and items on the fence. Karen has reached out to Cary Brown from the Town. So far nothing has been done and we're waiting to hear back from them. Multiply people do know about it.

There is only one vacancy – Apartment 2A; we're working on filling that right now.

We did an RFP for plumbing and heating and rejected them last month. We reached out now to TGM to encourage them to submit a bit this time, which is due May 28th.

Maintenance has cleaned all dryer vents in laundry. Normally we pay someone to do it, but Ed took it upon himself.

Landscaping – there is a new planter outside the window, which Ed just built, moving it closer to our building.

Concrete pad in back of building, which if you walk the grounds and look at grass, you can spot it, it's a different color. Ed will take all the grass covering it and power wash to see if it will work as a patio. Little table and chairs out there would be moved to it.

Elevators were a calamity in and of itself. We approved the \$150,000 last month. I reached out to them immediately, but man went to vendor, and now price is \$189,000. I've spoken with you. People are raising their prices because of tariff. I called him next day stating Board approved of it. He gets back to me and says it's now \$189,900. I told him to order it. We do have a plan in place in the event elevator goes down to run elevator ourselves.

Contractor doing the parking lot will be here May 27th to renumber and restripe the parking lot. Notice will go out to all residents asking them to move their cars. Arrangements made with Pastor Scott's church, and he's agreed to allow people to

park there. Maybe contractor can work around cars and will be a 1-day thing; tenants did ask for renumbering and restriping.

Garden is up and running; people are working it. Karen brought rocks in and will paint numbers on the rocks and put in each planter so everyone knows where their planter is. Signs were getting blown around.

RAD Program – I'm working diligently to have everything up to date so we can move this program as quickly as possible. It's about all entered except for financial data. I cannot enter that until we have the Capital Needs Assessment completed. Rick and I met with the architect last week and once we get that, we'll go over and it will tell us all the items over the next 20 years, what needs to be repaired. As a result of that, I calculated what the rents will be on RAD Program. For your edification, if you look at sheet I just did today, you'll see it says **Public Housing Program**. If you look to the right, that's current funding we get from HUD, which is comprised of 3 sources: One is Operating Fund from HUD that we get to subsidize units here. The Capital Fund allocation of \$145,000 was one of the highest we ever got last year. With current administration, we don't know what it will be. We are about \$835,000 in tenants' rents and HUD subsidies right now. Looking below that: Section 8 Project Based Voucher Program, I calculated rents and tenants still pay same amount towards their rent. Difference between what they pay and rent that HUD sets up is paid through the subsidy, through Section 8 Program. If you look at difference to right, difference in funding would be \$576,000 more. We're going from \$835,000 to \$1,411,000.

Looking at the bottom, I did a quick calculation, which is hard to say where it will really be at. I used a 6% interest rate. Most loans for these programs are only 15 year terms. Banks won't go out longer than that. Looking at it, we could borrow about 5-1/2 million. Attached to that is the preliminary sheet I handed out last month that we got from architect. I totaled it all up. If you look at what he came up with work items that we really want to do, at the end you'll see a total of \$5.8 million. We're very close. I saw on the sheet **replace windows**, which are hundreds of thousands of dollars. We're not doing that because most of the windows are in good shape because we repaired all of them.

Elevator repairs – we will still have some work but won't be to extent that we needed because we're already replacing the controllers. We will be well within the realm of doing the things we really want to do in terms of landscaping, parking lots, new air-conditioning being installed in all apartments. That's basically where we're at.

Now it's a matter of capital needs assessment, finalizing numbers and many forms that have to be filled out, financial pro forma. We'll do that; we'll upload that. Our current schedule calls for a concept call with HUD, they're all around July. I'm trying to expedite that sooner to get it in. Our potential closing date is September, trying to move that up also, although HUD people like to go on vacation in the summer. Hopefully, we'll be closed out by the end of the year. Next year we'll start moving ahead on renovation work.

Resident Association is very active. Bingo on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Next meeting is May 15th. Vending machine is installed and making all kinds of money. Resident Association is rich.

Resident Advisory Services Committee is meeting after this meeting.

Activities – Sussex County Division of Senior Social Services has a game social. Gardening presentation; Move and Groove Class every Monday which started on May 5th. Walk with Ease Class is Mondays and Thursdays from May 19th to August 7th.

We had Keller Williams Realty here, thanks to Karen Crossley and her daughter, in bringing that here. Great reviews as they did planting; had food and a lot more. Commissioner Crossley: They will continue the program every year and helping in the future. Lunch to go, dinner and gift bags, donating to vending machine which helped Resident Association. They'll keep in touch with Ann and when the machine needs supplies, they'll help. Forty-eight people signed up for dinner; many volunteers also were here. A tattoo artist (not permanent ones) was in-house, and many got them including Jenny.

The Recreation Department is doing tech support Mondays 3-4 PM in the Community Room. Next visit is May 19th.

Coffee with a Cop is scheduled for May 22nd at 4 PM, which is always great, sharing security measures for residents – don't let people in our building that you don't know, etc.

Jenny's 108th birthday will be celebrated here on May 17th. Her son is throwing the party. Staff and Board members are invited to that. She is one of the oldest in New Jersey.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – nothing at this time

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 14, 2025

Motion to approve April 14th minutes made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

OLD BUSINESS – nothing at this time

NEW BUSINESS

Q1 Financial Report – 3/31/2025 budget to actual. NHA revenue is under what was projected. Note: We didn't collect during this period, not charging tenants for their excess utility charge – about \$20,000 budgeted. \$5,000 for this period – nothing collected. By now we've collected most of that money.

Operating Subsidy – HUD only allocates a certain amount in first quarter, which isn't enough. It's picked up in 2nd quarter – under what we projected also. We're due that amount, but we're \$10,000 under. That will trend itself out in the next quarter and we'll be on budget or over.

Expense side – Executech contract is up slightly, but some of that was bills being slightly higher. That will trend itself out; at the end of year, we are usually under the budget.

Gas & electric bill was up quite a bit, having to do with gas being used more 1st quarter of the year – colder months; it should trend itself out. Over-budgeted by almost \$50,000, but I anticipate as time goes on, this will trend out. We've run a surplus almost every single year.

Chairman Bitondo: Has our architect given any consideration or any discussion regarding solar panels on our roof? ED Snyder: The way public housing works, there is really no benefit to put solar panels on there. They average your utilities over 3-year rolling base, then pay you, which is subtracted from your subsidy. Good news is when you convert to RAD program, every dollar you save goes right into your pocket. State of N.J. has a program to benefit low-income renters, to the extent here, we pay electric bills, etc. it can benefit the Authority, also benefit residents. They don't even put solar panels here, they put on commercial facilities, and we get that benefit. The utility company get credits for SRACKS – all renewal energy credits. I've spoken to people about it, because once we convert, then we'll hit the road running with that. I'll ask them to come in and do a presentation so residents will see it.

RESOLUTIONS #2025-17 THROUGH #2025-21

1. RESOLUTION #2025-17 – ACCEPTANCE OF J. RICCIARDO RESIGNATION

Motion made by Commissioner Crossley that the resignation of J. Ricciardo be accepted in the form of a Resolution, 2nd by Commissioner Carlson, which was read into the Record.

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Housing & Redevelopment Law provides that every Housing Authority has a seven (7) member Board of Commissioners that serve a term of five (5) years; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Newton appointed Joseph Ricciardo to serve as a Commissioner in accordance with the requirements as stipulated in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Ricciardo submitted a letter of resignation on April 16th, 2025, indicating that he was unable to continue as a commissioner due to other obligations; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Ricciardo has diligently served in his capacity as a Commissioner with honor and dignity; and

WHEREAS, the Newton Housing Authority would like to recognize Joseph Ricciardo's resignation and support his decision to prioritize his obligations; **NOW THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Newton Housing Authority that Joseph Ricciardo's letter of resignation is hereby accepted with regret and with best wishes in all future endeavors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Director is authorized to notify Joseph Ricciardo as to the acceptance of his resignation.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

2. RESOLUTION #2025-18 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR MAY 2025 MEETING

Motion to approve bill list in amount of \$96,616.64 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

3. RESOLUTION #2025-19 – RENEWAL OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONTRACT

Motion to approve renewal contract of Executive Director in amount of \$256,581 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

Chairman Bitondo: Amount is the same as last year, and our staffing needs have been adequate. ED Snyder: No, it's fine.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Vandermaas	Yes
Commissioner Fiedorczyk	Yes
Commissioner Carlson	Yes
Commissioner Crossley	Yes
Chairman Bitondo	Yes

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

4. RESOLUTION #2025-20 – ELEVATOR REPAIR – EMERGENCY

Chairman Bitondo: Last month resolution approved elevator repairs up to \$150,000; estimate increased to an amount of \$189,900, thus a new resolution.

Motion to approve Resolution #2025-20 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

5. RESOLUTION #2025-21 – ESTABLISHMENT OF ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER PROCEDURES

Motion to approve Resolution #2025-21 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

ED Snyder: State of New Jersey allows you to use ACH payments. Most people in government have it, allowing us to set up our vendors as opposed to paying them by check, an "automatic electronic transfer" providing that they sign up for that. It will say ACH or check on bill list. The major reason is because of fraud in regard to checks. Most entities have gone to "positive pay". NHA doesn't have **positive pay** here. I do the accounting for Joint Insurance Fund, millions of dollars in checks to fill out. When I do bank reconciliation, I'll see a check and check is out of sequence. Someone gets your check, goes to Staples, and has a whole batch of checks made. They don't ask a question. They falsify the signature and cash the checks and a lot go through. With positive pay, the list goes to someone ahead of time, authorizing the payments before checks are actually issued. Most ACH payments, we have our meeting, I would call my account and authorize payments. Next day, he hit a button to make the payment and it gets automatically paid.

VOTE: Ayes/All Present Commissioners (5)

PUBLIC COMMENTS – GENERAL

PHYLLIS – #5M – When it gets to 5th floor, it makes screeching sound, like a train coming over the tracks. People are afraid because it sounds so bad. I know they've worked on it a few times. It's the little one on the left. Chairman Bitondo: With something like that, please let us know immediately. Don't wait for a monthly meeting to raise something like that. It could be a safety concern.

ANN - #5N – Are you putting air-conditioners in each apartment? Chairman Bitondo: When we do our major renovations? Ann: ED Snyder said we wouldn't have to pay \$35, right. Why do we have to pay now and don't have to in the future? Chairman Bitondo: Right now, they own the a/c units. When we go through the HVAC renovations, they will be property of NHA whether we do with individual units or we go with some other means of air-conditioning the rooms, it will be part of NHA property. ED Snyder: We're currently subsidizing a public housing program. This program requires that tenants pay an "excess utility charge" for any extra utilities – a/c, space heaters, some family units have washers/dryers. They require us to do that. When we convert to Section 8 program, there's no such thing as **excess utility charge** and it goes away. It isn't NHA, it's Federal Government requires that we do.

ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber