

NEWTON HOUSING AUTHORITY
32 LIBERTY STREET
NEWTON, NEW JERSEY 07860

JANUARY 12, 2026

(This is a condensed version of the
Regular Scheduled Meeting of the
Board of Commissioners)

Chairman Richard Bitondo called the meeting to order at 5:22 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman Rick Bitondo
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas
Commissioner MaryAnn Carlson
Commissioner Karen Crossley
Commissioner Mark Fedorczyk
Also Present: Executive Director William Snyder

FLAG SALUTE

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the filing of an Annual Meeting Notice with the Municipal Clerk, posting on the official bulletin board and delivery of same to the New Jersey Herald & Star Ledger on December 10, 2024. The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advanced notice and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Newton Housing Authority has caused notice of the 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 Newton Housing Authority to comment during the public comments 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 portion of the meeting and general subjects of interest during the public comments General Items of the portion.

All questions and comments from the public will be directed to the Chairperson. When addressing the Board of Commissioners, please give your name and address. All members of the public should be cognizant of the right or rights and feelings of any

individuals they feel compelled to discuss at an open public meeting. General comments and statements should be made in a common and civil manner. Comments that violate the rights of employees, residents and members of the public can 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.

REORGANIZATION OF OFFICERS – ED W. SNYDER

Nomination for Chairman to be Rick Bitondo made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson. There were no other nominations. Nominations closed.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Nomination for Vice-Chairman to be Karen Crossley made by Commissioner Vandermaas; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson. There were no other nominations. Nominations closed.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

All new Officers were congratulated.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – ED-W. SNYDER

At end of January letters will go to all residents, starting with 2nd floor, for annual recertifications of income. Karen Collelo has retired; new employee Heather Johnson has been in training for a few weeks; also training her in recertifications.

Vacancies – as of January 7th, there is one move-out, #3F, and a transfer of one resident on transfer list – going from studio to 1-bedroom.

Cable company, Optimum, reached out to me, want list of apartments in our building. Most residents have Optimum. Local cable company has never followed through in terms of rewiring the building. They wanted a lot of money to do that. Optimum is interested in rewiring the building; send us an agreement, which I will send out to everyone. I'm looking for comments on it. Many aren't happy with their service, but if they're going to rewire the building and we're not locked into anything – cable service has been terrible – Optimum wants to rewire building. I'm waiting for an agreement.

Air handler on the roof – it was giving us trouble; at one point blowing in 90-degree air/other times freezing cold. We checked with them today, Wilco – same company doing air-conditioning in elevator. They said part is 15 days away.

Automatic door installation is taking longer than expected. Our staff, Tom Jurawitz, dug the hole, poured concrete in the Sono tube, has it all hooked up. On January 19th,

hopefully, they will come and install the automatic doors. That was one of the RAD Program requirements that we get that work done.

Elevators are both up and running; NHA has temporary CO. Final item is heating and air-conditioning in the "room." Wilco will be here tomorrow to do installation. Electrical work has been completed, they just need to install the unit. I asked for 60 days instead of 30 days before the next inspection – final item and elevators approved.

Plumbing – much work has been done in apartments, including one inspection item from HUD was that relief valves on hot water heaters, there is a discharge line coming down to the floor. We were cited that it was higher than 6" from the floor (7"). We had plumber come in, adapt it so it's no more than 6" from floor.

There was a major backup in the building's main sewer line to the street. With that it backed up to the apartments. Sewerage was in some tenants' apartments. We offered those tenants to have a cleaning company come in; they all said they wanted to do it themselves.

On Agenda tonight is a Request for Proposals to bring a drain cleaning company in to do all the lines from roof down and out to the street and then I'm proposing is that we do it every year. The last time was 2022. A lot of the sewage backed up onto the porch. Our staff has power washed that. Now we are having someone come in with chemical cleaners to clean everything. It was horrendous for the residents that it affected.

RAD Program is in a stall. I got an email today from Chris Wolverton where he apologizes, but he's been sick over the holidays not able to do anything. This has been going on for over a year. (To be discussed in Old Business.)

Activities: Heather is getting information about what's going on. County of Sussex has Move & Groove Classes all through the year; there is also Walk with Ease on Mondays and Thursdays being scheduled. Coffee with a Cop, supposedly we'll get a date for that. Newton Recreation Department is still providing tech support, with more coming to be dispensed to our residents.

Future Business Leaders of America, Newton High School, are going to be facilitating "adopting a grandparent visit" starting on January 21st, which is something new going on.

For tenants' edification: NHA has 2 new employees – Ed, no longer here. John Szabi has good work ethic and self-motivated. John also has taken on, when units are turned over, he is painting the apartment. In most places, maintenance men don't do that. John has good repair skills also. Heather is a good addition. I give them a 3-month probation period.

MONTHLY BILL LIST FOR JANUARY

Chairman Bitondo noted amount is \$81,586.53. There were no questions or comments on bill list or drain cleaning proposal.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2025

Motion to approve minutes of 12/8/2025 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

OLD BUSINESS

Capital Needs Assessment & Termination with HQW & Proposal to Consider from AEI

ED W. SNYDER: When we started out, NHA was streamline voluntary conversion. Capital Needs Assessment is not a requirement of that program in detail or in format that HUD requires. NHA contracted with HQW to get a list of items - expected expenses of this we would want to proceed with. We got that and then HUD dumped Streamline Voluntary Conversion Program; we had to switch into new Rental Assistance Demonstration Program, which requires that that tool be very specific. A lot of work goes into it: measuring linear feet, square feet, everything that is in the building, which HQW previously did. We decided at my recommendation, let's approve a Change Order to them in amount of \$7,500 to take what they previously did, put it in proper format, uploaded to portal, and give us a report. Unfortunately, HQW struggled with this as they'd never done it before. AEI, I've worked with before, which they do all over the U.S.; one of their specialties. If we had to go out again and bring someone in to do the tool from the beginning, it would be 40-\$50,000. Since I've worked with AEI at other projects (I think they are the best), I reached out to them and we've already approved a contract with AEI to do energy audit, because HQW doesn't do energy audits. It is already in the format we need for this program in HUD portal. I told them we had Capital Needs Assessment done. If I give that to you, would you be willing to complete it in your usual report format and upload it to the portal, so it's acceptable by HUD. AEI got back to me, gave me the price - as you saw in the proposal, which is \$4,450.

Our contract for the Change Order to do the CNA with HQW was \$7,500. We've paid them \$6,875 - \$625 remaining on that. Essentially, they've completed it, but now you have to make adjustments to it to get it to work for us; that just isn't happening. You all will ultimately make the decision. I will reach out to HQW saying, look, we're complete to this point. You don't seem to be getting me any further. I think we can part ways amicably, shake hands, saying I need you to work with AEI; give them what they need and let them finish the report; we can get what we need. That is my recommendation. You have to decide.

My concern is this has been going on for so long, I'm concerned HUD will come back and say, all of these meetings you had, all the stuff you did, it's all obsolete now; you need to start over again. We'd be back to square 1.

Chairman Bitondo: We are looking to add a Resolution 2026-1.3 to award a contract to AEI to complete the CNA* for RAD; no formal action required in terms of HQW. ED Snyder: For \$4,450. The project will be completed within 20 days of receiving the signed authorization. I received an email; it may be a little bit longer.

Chairman Bitondo: We will add Resolution 2026-1-3 to approve the proposal and award a contract to AEI for the completion of the Capital Needs Assessment and the cost to us of \$4,450. Resolutions will be renumbered: 2026-1-1; 2026-1-2 and 2026-1-3.

ED Snyder: I'm renumbering Resolutions – 2026 – 1 will be the Month; next number the resolution.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Crossley: Newton Chamber of Commerce approached me regarding them having their meetings here, there are 6-8 members on the Board. They are non-profit. I think it might be advantageous as they would bring another dynamic of information going to residents, doing soup to nuts; a lot of events and hoping to do more; reorganizing right now. It is a great opportunity to bring another facet of "marketing." Would anyone be opposed to it, then a fee/not a fee – determining right now. They have insurance through the town. Chairman Bitondo: Do we have a policy and a fee schedule for outside use of our facility? ED Snyder: You don't need a decision tonight? Commissioner Crossley: I am meeting with them tomorrow. ED Snyder: I will look at the policy and get back to you for next month. Chairman Bitondo: They could use the conference room or the Community Room if they're hosting a luncheon or a small event. Commissioner Crossley: All meetings are open to the public. They're not asking so much about having events here, but they do have these events including meet & greet, which might be an opportunity for our relationship. Chairman Bitondo: We think this would be a better site than where they're currently meeting. ED Snyder: Let me look at the policy and have whoever is in charge there, have them send a letter to the Board and make a formal request, then discuss it. Then we might lean on them to do some things for the residents. The Board would have to be prepared if The Rotary or Knights of Columbus want to come in. It is something to think about.

(Chairman Bitondo and other 4 Commissioners noted they had no objections to this.)
RESOLUTIONS

1. RESOLUTION 2026-1-1 – BILL LIST FOR JANUARY 2026 - \$81,586.53

Motion to approve payment of bill list made by Commissioner Fedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

2. RESOLUTION 2026-1-2 – APPROVAL TO SOLICIT FOR DRAIN CLEANING

Motion for approval to solicit for drain cleaning proposal made by Commissioner Vandermaas; 2nd by Commissioner Fedorczyk.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

3. RESOLUTION 2026-1-3 – APPROVING A CONTRACT WITH AEI TO COMPLETE CAPITAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT - \$4,500

Motion to approve contract with AEI to complete Capital Needs Assessment made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Fedorczyk.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

WENDY - #5R – Has lived at NHA for 4-1/2 years, 3 weeks after ED Snyder became Executive Director. ED Snyder showed her #5R before she moved in; she noticed glue on her floor in a few places. After a year she put in numerous Work Orders requesting glue be removed. October 31st she noticed mold, it couldn't be cleaned up. She has several serious health conditions, finds it difficult to live there. Secretary suggested Wendy contact HUD to have it inspected, which was set for November 11th. No one showed up. She then hired a mold inspector for \$475; she felt mold inspector disrespected her. She also called Health Department, who did not come until there was actual water in her apartment. Water did come into her bathroom during the weekend. Monday someone came as did ED Snyder. New maintenance man John checked the area; wall was dry. Mold inspector said bathroom was dry using after using his meter. Mold sample inspector she hired took sample from under her bed. Wendy does not have a written report from the mold inspector stating the conditions, but has photos, she feels should enable her to move from that apartment and not have to pay \$1,100 for painting and cleaning.

ED Snyder: NHA would never ask someone to pay \$475. If we feel something is not mold, contact the County Board of Health; they will come in and do a review. (Loud discussion followed with Chairman Bitondo, ED Snyder and Commissioners trying to answer Tenant Wendy.)

ED Snyder: We would not ask somebody to pay for their own tests. If there is a thought from any of you, there is mold, you should contact either local or County Department of Health and they should send somebody in. If they don't come, then they're not doing their job. A Petrie dish with something in it, is not verification of mold. We need verification, generally, that would be from the County. Reach out to the County, have them come in and see if they will report what it is. They would have proper tools and not charge anything for that.

Chairman Bitondo asked ED Snyder if he would call the County. Wendy said she already had someone coming. (Loud discussion ensued between Board members and Wendy regarding reaching out to County Health Department staff.)

AMANDA - #5J - (Discussion between Board Members and Amanda but speaking all at once.) Chairman Bitondo: We are directing ED Snyder to take care of it; if it is by calling the County or mold inspection company, he will do what has to be done and report back to us at our next meeting. Commissioner Fedorczyk: She paid the mold company, she should get the report. We have to have something to look at something, not photos. Her problem is with the mold company. We can't move any further without physical evidence, but she's not willing to produce that. Chairman Bitondo: Whether it's through County Department of Health or through mold inspection company, we will proceed with the next step. To bring closure to this, whether it be County Health Department or a mold testing company, even if it is a cost to us, I think we should proceed with some testing and if necessary, some mediation. It's our obligation to check it out.

ANN MARIE - #5N - I had called in for a Work Order that my kitchen light was out. John calls me back, but phone said "Mary Ann" and it was John asking if it was okay to come up and fix kitchen light. Why didn't it say John instead of Mary Ann? Commissioner Crossley: Come to a tech class and we will fix it. Something is overriding the Maintenance number.

KATHLEEN - #5L - Why have the garbage cans outside been removed? ED Snyder will check it out tomorrow.

MARILYN MILLER - #4R - Any update on the heat? It's been extremely cold in apartments and common areas, especially after 4 P.M. ED Snyder: TGM was here and made some adjustments. We send them up every time there is a heat complaint. I was there today and had no complaints that it was cold in any particular apartment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn Regular Meeting made by Commissioner Vandermaas; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Motion to go into Executive Session regarding potential litigation made by Commissioner Fedorczyk; 2nd by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez