

NEWTON HOUSING AUTHORITY  
32 LIBERTY STREET  
NEWTON, NEW JERSEY 07860

JUNE 8, 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 5:25 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman Rick Bitondo  
Commissioner Karen Crossley  
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas  
Commissioner MaryAnn Carlson  
Commissioner Mark Fiedorczyk  
Commissioner Melissa Helmer

Also Present: Executive Director William Snyder

OATH OF OFFICE: Chairman Bitondo with Melissa Helmer

"I, MELISSA HELMER, DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR THAT I WILL FAITHFULLY, IMPARTIALLY AND JUSTLY PERFORM ALL THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF THE NEWTON HOUSING AUTHORITY TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY AND THAT I WILL SUPPORT THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY AND THAT I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE SAME AND TO THE GOVERNMENTS ESTABLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES AND THIS STATE UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PEOPLE SO HELP ME GOD."

(Welcome and applause.) (Chairman Bitondo requested each Commissioner give a short, detailed description of their background.)

FLAG SALUTE

(Chairman Bitondo announced the passing of Albert Melhis on May 26, 2026; originally from North Bergen; owner/operator of Albie's Auto Body in North Bergen; came to Newton Housing Authority in 2023. He had a passion for duck hunting and raising Chesapeake Bay Retrievers; survived by his wife, Jacqueline and his son, Frank. Moment of silence to honor life of Albie Melhis.)

## OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT

Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975, Adequate Notice as defined by Section 3D of Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, has been provided by the filing of an annual meeting notice. Such notice being submitted on December 3, 2025 from the Newton Housing Authority located at 32 Liberty Street, Newton, New Jersey to the following: New Jersey Herald and Star Ledger. It is also posted on the Newton Housing Authority website and bulletin board maintained in the Newton Housing Authority Building for public announcements.

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 damage resulting from their statements.

At this time, please mute all electronic devices.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – ED WILLIAM SNYDER

Recertifications went smoothly with the help of Heather; all done this year.

Vacancies: Heather has filled them with exception of #4D, only vacant at end of May and someone is coming in.

Waiting to hear from Optimum about schedule for rewiring building for cable TV. I will meet with them before they do any work, as sometimes it becomes a disaster running wire everywhere. I have certain standards: to be in wire mold so it's hidden away, not an eyesore you see all over the place. I'll keep you updated.

We had blockage in our plumbing system. A large piece of plastic broke off somewhere in plumbing system, went out to the street and blocking everything up. Roto-rooter came, kept working on it -- \$1450 -- they finally got it out and avoided having a major problem.

Once a year we do annual inspections of apartments; that has been completed. Forms will be printed shortly going to Heather and me; any units that did not pass, we follow up for various reasons as there may be issues in the apartment. Things that are broken will get repaired.

RAD Program – It is frustrating dealing with Federal Government. I've been communicating with my contact regularly. Here's where we're at: We got the Part 58,

Environmental Assessment, which HUD wanted updated. That was \$3,000/now updated. I sent it to City Manager Tom Russo today; he will get Mayor to sign, which is called Responsible Entity. It has environmental assessment for oil, different damages and hazards. How far are you from an airport; any excessive noise; is building next to a railroad – that went out as we did it once before. HUD is asking for updated letter of support from Newton, Mayor specifically, saying that they're aware of what's going on; they support transaction. I sent application again with a listing of work items which are in your Agenda tonight.

Notice will go out to residents about another meeting, which is required before we have next call with HUD, to fill them in on where we're at and go over work items, explain it all.

We went out for proposals for banks: got 2 proposals back. One formal proposal and one in form of an email and in communication with them today as we have to have a minimum of 2. I asked them to put on proposed term sheet and more formalize it. Then I will evaluate them; go to N.J. Local Finance Board, part of DCA. Before it comes to you for approval, it has to be approved by them. There will be a hearing. We hired a special attorney who handles these transactions. DeCotiis, FitzPatrick, Cole & Giblin, once I get this formal proposal and set that up.

In communication with HUD, I'm trying to get it all together by end of July with expectation of closing – regular real estate closing by end of 2026, which will allow us to start work in 2027. After summer, with your approval, I'll go out to get architectural services to prepare bidding documents to do all the work that we're proposing. There are probably some other items that aren't on here as these items are the priorities, which doesn't mean we can't do more items later on, but don't want to turn the building upside down. For example, air-conditioning, PETAC units in apartments – discussing first should it have heat/not have heat, can we control that? B&G Committee gets copies of this as well.

With the financing, you'll see I have about \$4.4 million in actual financing, actual construction work, only estimates. There's another \$620,000 that will be borrowed going into Reserve for Repair & Replacement. Every year we'll deposit \$40K more. The Capital Needs Assessment tells NHA what we need to do right now and for next 20 years. Purpose of R&R Account is to ensure NHA has the money in there. So 7 years from now, if we need to replace something, it's going to be there and we'll have money to cover it. HUD wants to see that and it's part of the assessment in the Financing Plan, which is next step. We're going to submitting bank approval, etc. We already uploaded sources and uses of pro forma. We're in good shape.

Activities: Sussex County has 26 trips planned: June 15 – Pizza with a Cop and much already set up: Walk with Ease (2 days a week – Monday/Thursday); Newton Recreation still doing tech workshops; there is maj jong every Tuesday 1-3 PM; Chair

Yoga on Thursday – 10 AM. Senior Socials at Liberty Towers Meet & Mingle – June 4<sup>th</sup>. Medicare events have scheduled 4 of them. Newton Middle School Future Business Leaders of America have adopted grandparents visit – June 2<sup>nd</sup>. I wish more people would participate. (Discussion amongst Commissioner Carlson and others regarding that subject.) It is part of their Community Service.

In Rental Assistance Demonstration Program, they're now doing new inspection system – before it was UPCS – Uniform Physical Condition Standards -- now it is Inspire National System for Physical Inspections. Inspection was done, they wanted some things done, which I've already done and certified. Prior it was: outside of building, windows, doors, common areas, mechanical systems. Now they've switched it to inside apartments – focused more on that and looking for health and safety issues. In some places where I go, people disconnect smoke alarms – a major failure or sometimes apartments on first floor that have egress windows. You can't block them because in a fire they want you going out the window. Commissioner Vandermaas: Do they have a check list when they go to apartments? ED Snyder: The day they come, they do a sample of 20 apartments – 20% or 20 units. Here it's 20 units. They'll tell Heather, here is where we're going. We have to notify everybody they're coming around. John goes with them; go in apartments and they have a tablet. They put score on a tablet, it goes into a system and HUD reaches out to NHA, we respond with whatever repairs have to be made.

Commissioner Fiedorczyk noted all activities here were noted in municipal building, which was great. Commissioner Crossley: Maj jong has really taken off and we're trying to do night game/early evening 6 PM for people who work and want to play. Open to everybody. It will be here. They're also doing crafts at Senior Socials. August is quiet. They also made wreaths and Lisa should be leading the class. It is a filled room.

Chairman Bitondo: Greater Newton Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to be able to have their meetings here. An upgrade from their last meeting place.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – AGENDA – nothing at this time.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 2026 MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes of April made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Fiedorczyk.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

OLD BUSINESS – nothing at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION #2026-6-5 – CHANGE STARTING TIME OF MONTHLY MEETINGS TO 5:30 P.M.

Motion to adjust meeting time from 5:15 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. making it easier for those coming from work made by Commissioner Vandermaas; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Fiedorczyk. (ED Snyder will notify publications in that regard.)

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Chairman Bitondo and ED Snyder spoke about sprucing up front of building with some plantings. ED Snyder spoke with Heather and hope to get a volunteer from Garden Club to do waterings.

## RESOLUTIONS

### 1. RESOLUTION #2026-6-1 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR MAY 2026 MEETING

Motion to approve list for May 2026 in amount of \$57,494.40 made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Crossley.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

### 2. RESOLUTION #2026-6-2 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR JUNE 2026 MEETING

Motion to approve list in amount of \$67,633.90 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson. (Chairman Bitondo noted he reviewed Execu-Tech invoice and found it in order.)

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

### 3. RESOLUTION #2026-6-3 – AUTHORIZATION TO SOLICIT PROPOSALS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING SERVICES TO COMPLETE RAD WORK ITEMS

Motion to approve this resolution made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Carlson. (Chairman Bitondo asked ED Snyder what his expectation is regarding responses on this Resolution. ED Snyder thought it would be good. HQW did roof and do this type of bidding work, plus a few others that may submit.)

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

### 4. RESOLUTION #2026-6-4 – CONTRACT AWARD TO EXECU-TECH IN AMOUNT OF \$305,191 FOR ADMINISTRATIVE & MAINTENANCE SERVICES

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

Chairman Bitondo noted contract is about 25% higher than last year (\$256,658). Part is ED Snyder's increased time on premises talked about a few months ago. Minimum of 8 hours is now minimum of 12 hours per week. Has contract been forwarded to NHA attorney? ED Snyder: Yes. Chairman Bitondo: Any communication from Risk Management Consultant? ED Snyder: Yes, he gave suggested insurance and got the quote on insurance that was requested. It is almost \$6K. Chairman Bitondo: Bringing coverage to the limit? ED Snyder: No, it's a million. Employment Practices Liability Insurance – discrimination; wrongful termination, etc. It was \$6,000 additional. Commissioner Fiedorczyk: Was that on costs or Execu-Tech? ED Snyder: That's on you. You wanted to increase the limits. Commissioner Fiedorczyk: That wasn't my understanding of how that was supposed to work, but maybe I'm not just --- ED Snyder: It is in the contract; it stipulates that whatever the cost is, is borne by (inaudible). Chairman Bitondo: But insurance is protecting you. ED Snyder: I already have insurance protecting me. You didn't like the limits of the insurance. Chairman Bitondo: I agree with Mark, it should have been incorporated into the contract, even if it increased the cost of the contract. ED Snyder: But it is in the contract. We didn't know at the time of proposal, what the cost was. I just got the cost. Chairman Bitondo: It should be part of the overall cost of contract, built into contract. ED Snyder: Within the price that's here? Chairman Bitondo: Not necessarily. If you originally submitted a proposal based upon X-number of dollars of coverage and we're increasing it to 2 times X, then that amount should be reflected in cost of contract. ED Snyder: I think we're agreeing on that. Point is: when I submitted the proposal, it didn't have the amount, so it just says on the bottom, the cost to be reimbursed. I can change the numbers up to include cost of what's in the quote.

Chairman Bitondo: I think we should have another clause in resolution that reflects that. Mark, do you follow me? Commissioner Fiedorczyk: I am, but I'm having problems approving something without seeing that part of the contract. Chairman Bitondo: If we put it in the resolution, we can build it back into the contract. Commissioner Fiedorczyk: I would be comfortable with that. Chairman Bitondo: What I would propose then is – where it says **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Housing Authority's insurance agent must review the vendor Certificate of Insurance in conjunction with the Housing Authority's insurance to deem if the vendor's insurance coverage and limits are sufficient;** so we've already done that, would change that to the cost of the insurance "now be incorporated into Execu-Tech's contract to be paid on a monthly basis along with all other expenses."

It's really your insurance, so NHA shouldn't be paying for it even though directly we are. ED Snyder: Exactly, we're saying the same thing, but in a different way. Commissioner Fiedorczyk: I'm trying to picture what's going on, but if it's added on to the Execu-Tech contract, then we are in fact still paying for it. Chairman Bitondo: But it's not our insurance, but we're also paying for Debbie and Heather indirectly, but it's under the auspices of Execu-Tech and Bill Snyder and that's where it should be. Right? Commissioner Fiedorczyk: I understand that, but it's not my recollection of the original

discussions. I'm going to vote yes, but it's not really what we had talked about. Commissioner Crossley: Are you saying it shouldn't be included? That they – Commissioner Fiedorczyk: No, it's just that the original discussion was that more insurance was required that covered the Director, the Director should pay for that. But I guess you could (inaudible) into the contract – I'm fine. Chairman Bitondo: It's semantics, but from a technical and legal perspective, it belongs in the contract. (Commissioners agreed.) Chairman Bitondo: So resolution as it appears and as we discussed it with just the addition that the cost of the contract – so what's that going to increase the amount to, Bill? From 305,191 – was it exactly 6K? ED Snyder: No, it's \$5,542. Chairman Bitondo: It's 305,191 plus 5,542. Contract will now be in amount of \$310,733, which also includes increased cost of EPLI. Let's revisit resolution from scratch.

(Commissioners requested copies of contract so they could follow along at this point in the meeting.) ED Snyder's contract has expired as of this date. Commissioner Fiedorczyk wants sufficient time to review it and time to vote. Commissioner Crossley: Other than the increase in hours, which was at our request, and the increase of the insurance was at our request, nothing has changed from the previous one. Chairman Bitondo: It's basically the – 2 changes are number of hours that ED Snyder's on premises and EPLI – 2 changes from what it's been. Commissioner Vandermaas: What was insurance before? Chairman Bitondo: It was 25K – the coverage limit was 25,000. ED Snyder: It was coverage for just overheads, percentage overhead. Commissioner Vandermaas: It went up by \$5,542? ED Snyder: You went from a limit of 25K to a million. (Discussion amongst Commissioners – pay now or pay later.)

Chairman Bitondo: Only change in 2026-6-4 – we'll call it 2026-6-4 AMENDED is the contract amount is 310,733 that reflects the incorporation of premium associated with increased coverage for EPLI and NHA no longer including follow-up by insurance agent. It's already been done. Commissioner Vandermaas: We're approving the contract that we don't have copies of? It went up by what you're saying. Chairman Bitondo: I thought it was attached, but there was none in our packet, but I didn't pick it up until today that there was no attachment. Commissioner Fiedorczyk: I'm leaning towards abstaining as I'm not comfortable voting on such a huge amount. Commissioner Crossley: You have the old one, correct? Then we can send you the new one so you can do the comparison; otherwise, you have nothing to compare, as that's what I did. Commissioner Fiedorczyk: I'm not comfortable to do that. Commissioner Crossley: If we get a copy now, we could do it in Executive Session, taking 15-20 minutes to read, it's an easy read through. Nothing has changed except that. Chairman Bitondo: We will recess; take some time so individuals can review it rather than calling a special meeting and have to come back. (Commissioners agreed.) We need copy of new contract and old contract. After Executive Session, we'll come back and address this resolution.

(At this point in the meeting, ED Snyder and Heather left and went to the Office.)

(Discussion followed between Commissioners at this point. Commissioner Crossley: The one where we had the Executive Meeting; we had the old contract. That's where we saw the 25,000; I'm considering that the old contract. Commissioner Vandermaas: What did it go up between – Chairman Bitondo: That wasn't itemized before, so we don't know. Commissioner Crossley: Because it was only 25,000. Chairman Bitondo: It went from 256,581 to 310,733. Commissioner Crossley: The insurance, the increase in – there was also the increase for clerical and maintenance. Chairman Bitondo: This was scheduled for discussion in May; we're up against the clock now. No meeting in May. When Bill returns, we'll open it up again to the public. Commissioner Vandermaas: It's just the 305 vs 310; we're not seeing the 256 vs 310? Chairman Bitondo: I have my copy of it, yes.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

PHYLLIS - #5M – Last year it was discussed paving the driveway. Right now we have pot holes in the middle and they're pretty bad, can they fix the holes? Chairman Bitondo: I'll be happy to bring that to Bill's attention for.

LISA - #4K – What is the official protocol for smoke alarms, if fire alarms go off in apartments. Are we supposed to stay in there or evacuate? Use the elevator? Chairman Bitondo: Evacuate the building. Commissioner Crossley: No elevator. Commissioner Carlson: I was told to stay in the apartment with door closed. I've been here 20 years. Chairman Bitondo: We have an emergency prepared management plan and I think it calls for evacuation from the building. If there was a lock-down for like a shooter, that's a different story. I will ask Bill to clarify that in a memo to our residents.

PHYLLIS - #5M – Fire Chief told me if you can go down stairs safely, go for it and out back door. A lot of people can't, so maybe we could get a red bandana and hang it on your door knob on the way out so firemen know who is where. Commissioner Crossley: A very good idea.

BEVERLY - #3W – Periodic drills with the fire department. Chairman Bitondo: We spent time on that 1-2 years ago, and it's all spelled out. If there needs to be revisions, then we'll do them. The plan has to be followed. We had Emergency Management involved in the planning. Commissioner Crossley: Put a copy of the policies and plans in Community Room so people can look through it.

MARILYN - #4L – So there are so many new tenants, maybe we should have a review at the next Residents' Meeting.

(A tenant said there were drills with the Fire Department and not had one in many years now, there are many new tenants that have no idea what to do.)

(At this point in the meeting, ED Snyder and Heather came back into the Community Room. Chairman Bitondo: Can we review that at the next Residents' Meeting, Emergency Plans. Question arose: what happens if fire alarm goes off and folks are under the impression that they are to stay in their rooms, as opposed to evacuating building. Commissioner Crossley: Make posters and put in elevators. Chairman Bitondo: We need a meeting and incorporate that into our Tenant Orientation so new folks what to do with standard emergencies. Also some concern for pot holes in parking lot – some patching is needed.)

ANN - #5N – Someone fell in the bathroom twice. There are no grab bars, only towel racks. My granddaughter got me something that hooks onto the tub, you grab that to get in and out. There were no bells, bars or anything. If it's slippery when you try to get out, you fall. Chairman Bitondo: Is that not covered in the inspections? The handicap accessibility? ED Snyder: No. You have to take tub out to install grab bars. You could purchase things that go on side of the tub. You can't put them on the wall, take tile down, take sheetrock off and put blocking behind it. If we do bathrooms, that is something to be considered. No plans for bathrooms right now. You can buy those at these medical supply places that go right on the tub; get a prescription from your doctor and not have to pay for it. There are chairs you can get and sit on, grab bar that gets you in/out of tub. Chairman Bitondo: In order to put in the handicap accessible hardware, you need a complete renovation of bathrooms. We might consider later as we have an elderly population. (Many tenants answered they have something in/on their tub.) Commissioner Carlson: I bought a grab bar and maintenance came in and installed it on the wall, so I could grab onto it. ED Snyder: I'll take a look at their bathrooms and see what he did in MaryAnn's apartment. Chairman Bitondo: It should be standard in all apartments as we have an elderly population. If there's a way we can enhance the safety, that's great.

Chairman Bitondo: I'm asking for a resolution to go into **special session** to discuss matters of litigation.

Motion to adjourn public meeting to go into closed session made by Commissioner Vandermaas; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Fiedorczyk.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Meeting adjourned at this point to enter closed session. Meeting will continue afterwards to address Execu-Tech contract and other matters needing to be addressed after closed session.

### **(AFTER THE EXECUTIVE SESSION)**

Chairman Bitondo opened Public Meeting at 7:05 P.M. Resolution #2026-6-4 AMENDED from original Agenda.

Amount listed in Resolution #2026-6-4 will be AMENDED to \$310,733 in body of contract.

Second Resolution will be to authorize Attorney for Newton Housing Authority to proceed with mediation with the legal case. Motion needed for Resolution #2026-6-4 with revised amount and excludes the one statement regarding involvement of Risk Management Consultant.

5. RESOLUTION #2026-6-4 **AMENDED**

Motion to approve Resolution #2026-6-4 AMENDED Contract Award for Executive Director Management Services in amount of \$310,733; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Vandermaas.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

|                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Mark Fiedorczyk  | Yes |
| Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas | Yes |
| Chairman Rick Bitondo         | Yes |
| Commissioner Karen Crossley   | Yes |
| Commissioner Melissa Helmer   | Yes |
| Commissioner MaryAnn Carlson  | Yes |

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

6. RESOLUTION #2026-6-5 – AGREEMENT TO AUTHORIZE ATTORNEYS TO ENGAGE IN MEDIATION IN THE LA ROSE LAW SUIT

Motion to authorize the attorneys to engage in mediation in regards to the LaRose Case made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Commissioner Fiedorczyk; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez  
Secretary/Transcriber