

## MINUTES

**NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY and the WELLESLEY HOUSING AUTHORITY  
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING  
THURSDAY DECEMBER 13, 2018 5:30 P.M.  
5 CHAMBERS STREET, NEEDHAM - COMMUNITY ROOM**

### **ROLL CALL TO CONVENE THE SPECIAL MEETING**

#### **NEEDHAM HA COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Chairman Scott Brightman  
Treasurer Reg Foster  
Commissioner Peter Pingitore  
Commissioner Penelope Kirk

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Bernhard Kirstein, Int Executive Director  
Needham/Wellesley Housing Authorities

#### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

Commissioner Karen Hughey

#### **WELLESLEY HA COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Chairperson Maura Renzella  
Vice Chair Tanya Morel  
Treasurer Kathy Egan  
Commissioner Don Kelley  
Commissioner Michelle Chalmers

**DHCD STAFF PRESENT:** Amy Stitley, Associate Director Division of Public Housing; Laura Taylor, Director of Housing Management; Mirna DeRodriguez, Assistant Director of Housing Management

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Helen Giragosian, Brian Drainville, Sandra Amour, Kalpana Shah, Renee Spencer, Stephen Lavoie, Viviana Veira, Jacqueline Sullivan, Bob Anderson, Sue Biasizzo, Judith Canney, Anne Weinstein (Office of State Rep. Denise Garlick), and Ilene Hoffman

#### **RESIDENTS:**

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the Secretary of the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) and the Secretary of the Wellesley Housing Authority (WHA) by preparing a Public Notice dated December 10, 2018 setting forth the date, time and place of this meeting. Said notice was filed with the Clerk of the Town of Needham and the Clerk of the Town of Wellesley and provided to persons requesting it.

### **DISCLOSURE WITH RESPECT TO RESIDENT COMMISSIONER:**

### **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- Update on the Department of Housing and Community Development audits and or review of the Needham Housing Authority. DHCD reported that they received information about file mismanagement at the NHA. They responded with a limited scope visit and compliance check to both facilities. During this

time, Mirna and 3 Housing Management Specialists spent two days and looked at 14 files and confirmed their suspicions. They found many issues on the federal side; units occupied and showing as vacant, records not kept properly, tenant files missing, verification missing for CORI and background checks, rent misinformation, zero rents with no information to back them up. A recommendation was sent to HUD to investigate these findings.

- Update on the Department of Housing and Community Development audits and or review of the Wellesley Housing Authority.

The team proceeded to WHA where they followed up on a recent audit report with an appliance inventory as well as file mismanagement. They pulled 58 files and had similar findings. Facilities Management Specialists visited every unit in WHA to check refrigerators against inventory lists and couldn't track some.

As a corrective measure and a way to move forward, DHCD recommends that the housing authorities go into every state added unit and if there is no lease, execute one. Regarding inventory, verify/create accurate inventory. A list of findings was sent to both HA's. The Interim E.D. replied that both HA's are making progress.

- The Management Agreement between the Needham and Wellesley Housing Authorities Following the recent audit report, DHCD reported concern, that they had no comfort approving the management agreement. They recommended that the agreement end by December 1. It is now December 13. Their recommendation is to endorse a month to month agreement, since no Executive Director has been hired at WHA. They will not endorse the current fee which does not comply. Their recommendation is \$9,391.77/mo, \$112,701.25 annually. A timeline was set out for corrective actions and DHCD checkups. Chair Renzella requested that DHCD assist in helping the staff and was assured that they would.

Commissioner Pingitore asked how, if they question the audits and the auditors, this could go on and not be found out. DHCD responded that it could be the sample size of the auditors, that DHCD spent a long time with their audit. In cost and time, it is not conceivable that every HA in the state be audited in that manner. They recommended that the NHA reach out to HUD.

Commissioner Foster asked what could have been done by the Board to see this? The responses ranged from Be on top of the E.D., Watch the procurements, and Board trainings. Mr. Foster replied that he feels like we have let down the tenants, he's looking for more than we should have gone to more trainings. Ms. Stitley responded that tenants brought issues to DHCD two years ago. We informed you.

Commissioner Egan asked when was that? A concern has never been brought to the Board in all of our Board meetings. I have felt that DHCD moves in secret directions. Ms. Taylor responded that this was reported to the Boards two years ago. Also, that DHCD deals directly with E.D.'s, not with Board members.

It was agreed that it was time to move forward with public housing.

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Needham /Wellesley Housing Authority  
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**RESIDENT/PUBLIC INPUT:** Sue Biasizzo, NHA resident asked about eligibility compliance in her complex and DHCD responded that they could not respond regarding a federal property. Renee Spencer, WHA resident, asked who do you call? The E.D. responded that if it is a grievable offense, there is a grievance protocol. Otherwise, report to the Property Manager. Helen Giragosian, LTO president, NHA, said there is a chain of command. The LTO has committees for tenants to join and to learn. Also that commissioners do not know until they are told. Kalpana Shah, NHA, said the tenants are not always notified about meetings since not everyone has internet access and that transportation is a big issue.

The Boards thanked DHCD for coming out and Chair Renzella said we would like to move forward. With staff being trained, who do they go through at DHCD to get support? The response is slow. The response was to contact Bob Pelletier, your Housing Management Specialist. Also to cc Laura and Mirna. We care about you.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN THE NHA / WHA SPECIAL MEETING:**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Pingitore and seconded by Commissioner Foster, the motion to adjourn was approved by the NHA by the following vote: 4-0, with Commissioner Hughey absent

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Chalmers and seconded by Commissioner Kelley, the motion to approve was approved by WHA by the following vote: 5-0