

**NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

ROLL CALL BY CHAIR FOSTER TO CONVENE THE SPECIAL MEETING

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chair Reginald Foster
Vice-Chair Eleanor Evans
Treasurer Ed Scheideler
Commissioner Janice Bennett
Commissioner Penny Kirk

NHA STAFF PRESENT:

Angie Medeiros, Executive Director
Cheryl Gosmon, Ass't Executive Director

Chair Foster called the meeting to order at 4:04pm and roll called Commissioners present at the March 9, 2022, NHA Special Board meeting. Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the Secretary of the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) by preparing a Public Notice dated March 7, 2022, setting forth the date, time, and place of this meeting. Said notice was filed with the Clerk of the Town of Needham and provided to persons requesting it.

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MINUTES

NHA SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

A. Chair's Announcements (matters that could not be reasonably anticipated in advance of the meeting)

Chair Foster referred to the March 7, 2022, letter received by the CPC Chair from the Charles River Center (CRC), see attached. The letter concerned the NHA's funding application to the CPC for \$1.8M in funding to purchase the E. Militia Heights Drive property. Briefing the Board on the implications of the CRC letter has been added to agenda later tonight.

B. Resignation of Executive Director Angie Medeiros – Discussion and Next Steps

Chair Foster started by acknowledging that the Board had received Executive Director Medeiros' resignation letter on March 4, 2022. She will be complying with her two months' notice commitment, so her last day will be May 6, 2022. The primary purpose of this special board meeting is to discuss the implications of Angie's resignation and plan the next steps that we need to take to find a new executive director.

1. Interim Executive Director

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Chair Foster began given past experience, it takes 6-9 months to recruit and on-board a new, permanent executive director. So, the Board's first most urgent task is to hire a qualified, interim executive director. We need to recognize that two months goes by very quickly, and there may not be very many qualified candidates willing to take the IED job. Plus, ideally, a new IED should have at least two weeks overlap with Angie before she leaves.

Chair Foster stated that he reached out to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) regarding the guidelines for hiring an Interim Executive Director. DHCD provided the latest guidance for (PHN 2020-40 which was distributed to the Board under separate cover.) To find IED candidates, Chair Foster proposed that all commissioners contact various networking sources looking for persons that would be interested and qualified for the position. Chair Foster noted that he'd accumulated a significant rolodex of contacts in the LHA "industry" over the past 15 years, and he's already reaching out for possible IED candidates and referrals. Another approach that could be used is to engage search consultant (see next agenda item.)

After discussion, the Board concurred with this overall approach.

2. Permanent New Executive Director

Chair Foster stated: our next most immediate task is to engage a qualified executive search consultant and get them working as soon as possible. This was the approach used by the NHA Board for the last three ED searches. Chair Foster called DHCD earlier this week. They recommended two search consultants as having consistently done an excellent job: Patricia Grace and Rick Leco, D&V Mainsail.

The Board authorized the Mr. Foster and Ms. Medeiros to solicit proposals for finding a new permanent ED, then schedule Ms. Grace and Mr. Leco for interviews with the Board ASAP. The Chair should also ask them if they could help source IED candidates as well.

3. Process and Timeframe

Referring to various sections of PHN 2020-40, Chair Foster walked the Board through DHCD's guidelines for the job description, qualifications, compensation, and employment agreement. Chair Foster highlighted DHCD's new emphasis on recruiting and hiring candidates of color. An ED Search Committee will need to be formed to work with the consultant.

Because of the lead time requirements for posting and advertising for candidates, the inherent delays from candidate screening, reference checking, scheduling preliminary/final interviews, signing the new ED contract, etc., 6-9 months elapsed time is typically needed between receiving an ED letter or resignation and the new ED's first day of work. For NHA this would be sometime in the Fall 2022.

4. Formation of a Search Committee

Chair Foster recounted NHA's past practice for Search Committee membership. The five member SC would typically consist of:

- Not more than two commissioners,
- A Cooks Bridge LTO-designated representative,
- A Linden/Chambers/High Rock representative,
- The Interim IED (if he or she is on board)

Commissioners Scheideler and Bennett expressed an interest in serving on the Selection Committee. The Board concurred with the overall composition of the Search Committee and asked the Chair to follow up with potential candidates.

Referring again to PHN 2020-40, Chair Foster went on to discuss additional aspects of the hiring process. The SC works with the search consultant during the initial process screening candidates and vetting references. The Search Committee's top-ranked candidate(s) then must be presented to and interviewed by the Board in a posted Open Meeting.

A general discussion followed. Commissioner Kirk asked if the Board would receive copies of resumes and recommendations for the candidates. Chair Foster stated that the Board would have access to the information given to the Search Committee.

Commissioner Scheideler suggested that the Board submit recommended questions that could be posed by the SC to the candidates.

5. Impact on day-to-day operations

Chair Foster repeated that ED Medeiros has been gracious enough to honor her two months' notice commitment which means that her last day is May 6, 2022. So, there isn't an immediate crisis. Chair Foster, on behalf of the Board, expressed his appreciation to Executive Director Medeiros for providing this transition time to the NHA.

Ms. Medeiros reported that the NHA affairs are in order and that everything continues to run smoothly. She stated that Angel Rosario's position as Public Safety Officer would end on March 31st, 2022. His work is done, and he won't be replaced. She also reminded the Board that Deb Tambeau, Resident Service Coordinator is retiring; her last day will March 31st as well. Executive Director Medeiros stated that she would continue to oversee day-to-day operations and make sure that everything is running smoothly.

6. Impact on Modernization and Redevelopment Initiative

Chair Foster checked with our CHA consultants on the impact of Ms. Medeiros' resignation. They responded: most of the MRI tasks underway are being done by CHA staff, or by the NHA CPC representative. If an interim executive director could be onboarded in a couple of months, CHA predicted minimal or no impact on the MRI schedule.

7. Resident Input

Chair Foster asked if there was any resident input with respect to the preceding discussion of ED Medeiros' resignation. Kalpana Shaw asked that when the Board received the letter of resignation from Executive Director Medeiros, did the Board immediately accept it. Chair Foster responded that the Board is meeting for the first time this evening regarding the letter of resignation from Executive Director Medeiros. Ms. Medeiros has already signed an employment agreement with her future LHA. Kalpana Shaw strongly suggested that the Board do everything that can to keep Ms. Medeiros because she is an excellent Executive Director.

Sue Biasizzo expressed concern about the vacant Resident Service Coordinator position. In addition to getting an applicant to fill this position that the Board should consider getting an assistant Resident Service Coordinator as well, especially for her community of Seabeds Way. She added that she doesn't know what people are going to do until this position is filled. Chair Foster suggested the possibility of hiring an interim RSC until a permanent one is hired. He stated that the Board could discuss this at their regular NHA Board meeting. Sue Biasizzo also asked when an additional maintenance person would be hired, adding that this position is desperately needed as well. Executive Director Medeiros stated that there is a temporary maintenance person on staff now and that the residents love him. She added that she is planning to hire him as a permanent employee and will hire an additional temporary maintenance staff.

Ross Donald referred to a document on rules and procedures relative to the Open Meeting Law. He expressed disappointment in not hearing about this Special Board Meeting in a timely manner. He stated that he is hopeful that Executive Director Medeiros would take the opportunity before she leaves to meet with the residents and share with them her experiences as Executive Director of Needham Housing Authority over the past three years.

C. 3/7/2022 Charles River Center Letter – Implications for CPA Funding Application 2023-02 – Purchase of East Militia Heights Drive Property.

Chair Foster referred to a 3/7/2022 letter he received from Charles River Center (CRC). It states that that "...the Charles River Center plans to aggressively bid on the subject property..."

Chair Foster recapped the background on the E. Militia Heights property and NHA's interest in it. He summarized his understanding for why CRC might also be interested. He acknowledged that while there've been some brainstorming discussions with CRC, nothing definite has come from them so far.

Chair Foster continued: while it does not make sense for CRC and NHA to be both "aggressively bidding" against each other to buy the property, the Board cannot have a substantive discussion tonight. Why? Because this agenda item was not on the official agenda for this meeting posted with the Town Clerk 48+ hours ago. Under the Open

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Meeting Law, the Board cannot have a substantive discussion of the matter, nor make any final decisions.

After general discussion by the Board, Chair Foster suggested scheduling another special board meeting to discuss this matter in detail, and to make any decisions.

Adjournment

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to adjourn the NHA Special Board meeting of March 9, 2022, at approximately 5:36 pm.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous. 5-0

Minutes Prepared by

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March 7, 2022

Mr. Peter Pingitore

Chair, Town of Needham Community Preservation Committee

RE: East Militia Heights Property

Dear Mr. Pingitore,

I am writing this letter at the request of Mr. Reg Foster, Chair of the Needham Housing Authority, to inform the Community Preservation Committee of Charles River Center's future plans with respect to the pending sale by the Federal Government of the property located on East Militia Heights Drive in Needham.

By way of background, The Charles River Center, with offices and support services at 59 East Militia Heights Drive, is a 501.c.3 organization providing programs and services for approximately 1,000 children and adults with Down syndrome, autism, acquired brain injuries, cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities. We own and manage over 30 group homes in many local communities, including Needham, Wellesley, Natick, Framingham, Newton, Dedham, Sharon, Wayland and Millis. We support many more persons with ID/DD in alternative living arrangements. Most, if not all, of the persons served are considered low-income and qualify for housing supports. Some have achieved their dream of living in the community in which they grew up.

Due to the proximity of the East Militia Heights property to our main offices and existing residential and day programs, the Charles River Center plans to aggressively bid on the subject property, once the Federal Government releases their RFP, with the desire to acquire the property for our future use.

Over the past month, the Charles River Center and the Needham Housing Authority have had ongoing discussions regarding both the near and long term goals of both organizations with respect to the use of the subject property. We expect that these discussions will continue with the result being a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approved by the respective Boards defining a working relationship between the two organizations for the near term use of the property, and the potential for a mutually beneficial longer term relationship between the two organizations.

A representative from our organization would be available for one of your future Committee meetings to discuss this further if you wish. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alice Taylor

Chair, Charles River Center

Copied: Reginald Foster, Chair, Needham Housing Authority

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