

**NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY
HIGH ROCK HOMES, LLC
BOARD MEETINGS
MINUTES**

Thursday, March 16, 2023

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Reginald C. Foster, Chair (remote)
Eleanor Evans, Vice-Chair (remote)
Ed Scheideler, Treasurer
Janice Bennett, Commissioner (remote)
Penny Kirk, Commissioner

NHA STAFF PRESENT:

Cheryl Gosmon, Acting Exec. Director
Stephen Merritt, Interim Exec. Director
Nayda Sanchez, Leasing & Occupancy
Coordinator

This is a Hybrid meeting. Chair Foster called the meeting to order at 7:36 pm. He called the roll of Commissioners with all reporting present on Thursday, March 16, 2023, for the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) and High Rock Homes (HRH) LLC Regular Board meeting. He noted that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the Secretary of the NHA by preparing a Public Notice dated March 10, 2023, 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.

Announcements from the Chair:

Regarding Board members continuing to meet on a remote basis, Chair Foster noted that the Board would discuss what is going to happen at the next meeting barring any changes from the general court.

Chair Foster shared why he is participating remotely. He stated that family members who arrived home from a trip last Saturday have tested positive for COVID. He added that although he has been quarantined, he has not tested positive for COVID and is following CDC guidelines.

Chair Foster noted that attendees are Ross Donald, Richard Dey, and Paula Berry.

Resident/Community Input:

There was no Resident/Community Input.

A. Review & Approval:

1. NHA Bill/Check Warrant

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve the check register listed on the Warrant dated March 16, 2023, in the amount of \$353,548.27.

Discussion: None.

Chair Foster called the roll of Commissioners in favor of this motion:

Commissioner Foster votes aye; Commissioner Bennett votes aye; Commissioner Evans votes aye; Commissioner Scheideler votes aye; and Commissioner Kirk votes aye.

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

2. HRH LLC Bill/Check Warrant

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve the High Rock Homes, LLC check register listed on the Warrant dated March 16, 2023, in the amount of \$27,293.40.

Discussion: None

Chair Foster called the roll of Commissioners in favor of this motion:

Commissioner Foster votes aye; Commissioner Bennett votes aye; Commissioner Evans votes aye; Commissioner Scheideler votes aye; and Commissioner Kirk votes aye.

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

B. Review & Approval -- Board Minutes:

1. 2/11/2023 NHA, Special Board Meeting – Retreat

There was no action taken on the February 11, 2023, meeting minutes. This item would come before the Board for discussion and vote on April 20, 2023, meeting.

2. 2/16/2023 NHA/HRH LLC Regular Board Meeting

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Scheideler to approve the Minutes of February 16, 2023, NHA & HRH LLC Regular Board meetings which also served at the interview meeting for our new Acting Executive Director, Cheryl Gosmon.

Discussion:

Chair Foster thanked Commissioner Kirk for taking the meeting minutes and also the lengthy addendum to the minutes that serves as a record that was sent to DHCD.

Commissioner Evans noted a correction in the meeting minutes. She offered the following change: residents and others participating in the Cheryl Gosmon interview.

Chair Foster called the roll of Commissioners in favor of this motion with the correction noted:

Commissioner Foster votes aye; Commissioner Bennett votes aye; Commissioner Evans votes aye; Commissioner Scheideler votes aye; and Commissioner Kirk votes aye.

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

C. **Information & Discussion: Interim Executive Director's Report**

Steve Merritt thanked the Board for their support and well wishes over the last month. He stated that he is back on a very part-time basis and is on the mend.

1. Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Merritt presented the Monthly Management Report, which outlines the first month of the NHA's fiscal year. He noted that the NHA is in great financial shape.

2. Monthly Management Report

Mr. Merritt sent out a corrected Monthly Management Report for the Board's review. Commissioner Scheideler presented a question on work orders. He pointed out that there are zero open orders noted on the work orders report. He stated that if there was a work order that came in the last few days of the month it would carry over and would show as open. Mr. Merritt replied that most of the work orders are completed the day they come in. He noted that this report was printed after the end of the month.

Commissioner Kirk asked about the status of the Linden and Chambers cameras. Mr. Merritt responded that the camera project had not been completed. He added that there are some issues that the contractor is still working on. Commissioner expressed her disappointment that the cameras are still not up and running.

Ms. Gosmon stated that she would contact the contractor and give Commissioner Kirk an update on the status of the project.

3. Certification of 2022 year-end reports to DHCD

Mr. Merritt provided a status report on this item. He stated that there are three reports that will need to be uploaded to the DHCD accounting portal. He stated that the Fiscal Year End Certifications include Financial Statements, Top 5 Compensation, and Lead Paint. He noted that the document requires signatures from all Board members. Mr. Merritt noted that the reports are due the second month after the start of the fiscal year. A brief discussion followed.

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Scheideler and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to authorize the Board to sign the Fiscal Year End Certifications.

Discussion: None

Chair Foster called the roll of Commissioners in favor of this motion:

Commissioner Foster votes aye; Commissioner Bennett votes aye; Commissioner Evans votes aye; Commissioner Scheideler votes aye; and Commissioner Kirk votes aye.

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

4. Remote Participation Information

Chair Foster provided background information on this item. He stated that the State has provided flexibilities under the Open Meeting Law, which has allowed the public and members of Boards and Committees to participate in public meetings remotely. Chair Foster noted that these flexibilities are set to expire on March 31, 2023. He stated that if there are no changes in state law that extends the flexibilities, then as of March 31, 2023: all public meetings must have an in-person option for the public to attend, Board and Committee members can only participate remotely if approved by their Board or Committee Chair, subject to the Select Board's new Member Remote Participation in Public Meeting Policy, and Public meetings can no longer be entirely remote (Zoom-only). Chair Foster referred to the Member Remote Participation in Public Meeting

Policy and pointed out that a quorum of the body shall be physically present at the meeting location, as required by M.G.L c.30A, Sec.20(d). He summarized Section 4, Permissible Reasons for Remote Participation and Section 6, Procedures. Chair Foster suggested that the NHA Board of Commissioners do their best to comply with the Board of Selectmen guidelines. A general discussion followed.

5. Public Participation at Board Meeting Policy

The Board discussed the Draft Public Participation at a Board Meeting Policy and made some suggestions. Mr. Merritt stated that the corrections will be incorporated and suggested that the policy come before the Board for a vote at the next Board meeting.

6. Charles River Center Purchase Press Release

Mr. Merritt stated that the Charles River Center purchased land formerly owned by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, a 3.5-acre property that sits on East Militia Heights Drive. He added that the Charles River Center completed its purchase of the land in early March and is proposing supportive housing designed for adults with disabilities, which would be a permanent addition to Needham's low-income housing. Chair Foster noted that at one point, the NHA considered partnering with the Charles River Center after they acquired the property, and the NHA would rent the space from them for a long period of time, but there has been no interest in doing that on the part of the Charles River Center.

7. Approval of the ARPA Grant Agreement

Mr. Merritt stated that the ARPA Contract for Financial Assistance in the amount of \$372,075 is requiring that the Board Chair. Commissioner Evans expressed that she is confused as to what the different amount is. After a brief discussion, it was determined that the Board needs more clarification on this item. This item would be brought back to the next Board meeting for the Board's consideration and vote.

8. Director of Maintenance and Modernization Advertisement Job Description

Mr. Merritt stated that this advertisement for the Director of Maintenance and Modernization is posted. He has several applications. The deadline to apply ends next week.

9. Federal Capital Fund 5-year Plan Approval

Mr. Merritt noted that this is the end of the 45-day comment period for the Capital Fund Five-Year Action Plan. Mr. Merritt described changes to the 2020 Capital Fund Action Plan. A brief discussion followed.

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to authorize the NHA Executive staff to significantly amend the 2020 Capital Fund Grant for the purposes of supporting the preservation and redevelopment of Captain Robert Cook Drive and Seabeds Way.

Discussion: None

Chair Foster called the roll of Commissioners in favor of this motion:

Commissioner Foster votes aye; Commissioner Evans votes aye; Commissioner Bennett votes aye; Commissioner Scheideler votes aye; and Commissioner Kirk votes aye.

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

Mr. Merritt presented the 2022-2026 Capital Fund Five-Year Action Plan for the Board's consideration and vote. A brief discussion followed.

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the 2022-2026 Capital Fund Five-year Action Plan.

Discussion: None

Chair Foster called the roll of Commissioners in favor of this motion:

Commissioner Foster votes aye; Commissioner Evans votes aye; Commissioner Bennett votes aye; Commissioner Scheideler votes aye; and Commissioner Kirk votes aye.

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

10. **Bank Issues**

There was no discussion on this item.

11. **High Rock Homes**

Mr. Merritt noted that the auditor is completing their audit of High Rock Homes. He also noted that the trustees are meeting on Sunday to consider increasing their condo fees.

12. **Needham Housing Authority 75th Anniversary**

Ms. Gosmon noted that the Needham Housing Authority will celebrate its 75th year as a Public Housing Agency in Needham. She stated that she would like to convene a committee to plan a celebration in September 2023. It was the consensus of the Board that Ms. Gosmon would move full speed ahead with this plan.

13. **Acting Maintenance Foreman Differential**

Mr. Merritt proposed that Greg Gillis, who is currently a member of the maintenance staff, be promoted to Maintenance Foreman, which would include a \$2.00 increase in his salary.

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Kirk and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the pay differential for Maintenance Foreman.

Discussion: None

Chair Foster called the roll of Commissioners in favor of this motion:

Commissioner Foster votes aye; Commissioner Evans votes aye; Commissioner Bennett votes aye; Commissioner Scheideler votes aye; and Commissioner Kirk votes aye.

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

14. **Any Other Issues/Updates of the NHA**

Commissioner Kirk noted that the Director of the Afterschool Program has resigned, and that Ms. Gosmon is working on finding a resolution to this matter

D. Status Update -- New ED Search

Chair Foster noted that at the February 16, 2023, NHA Board meeting, Ms. Gosmon, after being interviewed, was appointed by the Board as the new Executive Director of the Needham Housing Authority. He stated that DHCD has received a packet of information with a request that they approve this appointment at their earliest convenience. He thanked Commissioners Scheideler and Kirk for their help with certain elements of the document submission packet. Chair Foster stated he received an e-mail from our DHCD Housing Management Specialist Bob Pelletier with a request to make a minor change in one of the addendums in Ms. Gosmon's package, which states that she would be eligible for up to five percent COLA each year but that it could not be more than a certain amount tied to the increase in the NHA's annual. Chair Foster stated that this has been sent to our in-house counsel for further review and advice.

E. Status Updates – External Initiatives

1. Preservation & Redevelopment Initiative (PRI)

Chair Foster stated that as a result of the February 11th decision to adopt Strategy 1 RAD/Section 18 Blend Cambridge Housing Authority is proceeding full speed ahead with this task.

2. CHA Monthly Report

There was no discussion on this report.

3. CPA Funding Applications

Chair Foster reported on the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Public Hearing that took place on Wednesday, March 15th. He stated that in general the NHA received a great deal of support for the Linden and Chambers Redevelopment Project. Chair Foster also reported that there is a lot of concern and push back on approving the Linden and Chambers Street CPA funding application for \$1.165M. To gain better understanding of the CPC's concerns, he encouraged everyone to watch the CPC meeting of March 8 which is available via YouTube. Chair Foster stated that it is the CPC's opinion that the funding proposal is being submitted too early for CPC consideration, because the schematic design and zoning approvals had not yet been accomplished. The CPC thought it more appropriate to apply for additional CPA funding via Fall Town Meeting approval. After a general discussion it was the consensus of the Board to convene a Special Board Meeting for Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 1 pm to consider pulling the application for CPA funding until the fall Town Meeting.

With respect to the \$241K CPA funding proposal for Seabeds/Cook pre-development expenses, Chair Foster reported strong CPC member support.

F. Status Update – Internal Initiatives:

1. Roofing at Cook's Bridge – Preconstruction Meeting to be scheduled.

Mr. Merritt provided a brief update on this item. The NHA staff are working with the Architect to schedule a preconstruction meeting.

2. Paving Project – Design of Seabeds Way and CRCD.

Mr. Merritt provided a brief update on this item. He stated that he hopes to be able to put this item out to bid within the next week or so.

3. Linden Chambers Camera Issue Update. No new news to report.
4. Seabeds Way/ CRCDD CCTV System – HUD Grant Extension Approved
5. Resident Surveys NHA Annual and BH+A Status Update -- .No update

G. New Business

1. Community Room Hours and Security Policy -- deferred for discussion for Discussion at April Board Meeting
2. Pay & Compensation: What you need to know – National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO).
Mr. Merritt reported that this is a proposal from NAHRO to perform a pay and compensation study for the NHA in the amount of \$3995.00. A brief discussion followed.

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Kirk and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to authorize payment for this expense.

Discussion: None

Chair Foster called the roll of Commissioners in favor of this motion:

Commissioner Foster votes aye; Commissioner Evans votes aye; Commissioner Bennett votes aye; Commissioner Scheideler votes aye; and Commissioner Kirk votes aye.

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

H. Adjournment

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Kirk and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to adjourn the NHA and HRH LLC March 16, 2023, Board meeting at 10:18 pm.

Chair Foster called the roll of Commissioners in favor of this motion:

Commissioner Foster votes aye; Commissioner Evans votes aye; Commissioner Bennett votes aye; Commissioner Scheideler votes aye; and Commissioner Kirk votes aye.

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

Respectfully Submitted by: _____

Cheryl Gosmon

March 16, 2023