

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

**Thursday, April 20, 2023**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

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

**NHA STAFF PRESENT:**

Cheryl Gosmon, Exec. Director  
Stephen Merritt, Consultant  
Nayda Sanchez, Leasing & Occupancy

**ABSENT:** Eleanor Evans, Vice-Chair

**GUEST:** Dan Chen, Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc. (BH+A)

This is a Hybrid meeting. Chairman Foster called the meeting to order at 7:45 pm. He called the roll of Commissioners with all reporting present on Thursday, April 20, 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 April 14, 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 people requesting it.

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**Announcements from the Chairman:**

Chair Foster Announced that Vice-Chair Eleanor Evans is absent from this meeting. She is home recovering from pneumonia.

Chair Foster also announced that Dan Chen from BH+A will present a draft Conceptual Design of the redevelopment of the Linden and Chambers properties. This agenda item, although listed as agenda item F, will be taken out of order. The consensus of the Board was to allow Mr. Chen to present his presentation for the Board's consideration.

**Resident/Community Input:**

Sue Biasizzo stated that Commissioner Bennett will attend the Mass Union of Public Housing Tenant Spring Convention in May. Sue Biasizzo also stated that Boston Mayor Michelle Wu has implemented free college tuition for Boston residents only at six community colleges. She noted that she contacted Governor Healey's office to advocate for state-wide free college tuition and was told that the Governor has plans to make college tuition free for Massachusetts adults ages 25 and older.

Chairman Foster thanked Sue Biasizzo for her comments. Chairman Foster mentioned that Mel King, longtime community advocate, state legislator, and Boston's first Black mayoral candidate, passed away on March 28, 2023, at age 94. Chair Foster noted that the Mel King

Institute was formed in 2009, which brings leadership training to community organizers. He also noted that Commissioner Bennett has attended training at the Mel King Institute.

Ross Donald expressed that he has corresponded with the new Executive Director on the following topics: policies and practices to put in place for landscaping, property maintenance, gardens, opening 164 Linden Street as a community design center, organizing a local tenant's organization, and the formation of a surety group.

**A. Review & Approval:**

1. NHA Bill/Check Warrant

**Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Bennett and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve the check register listed on the Warrant dated April 20, 2023, in the amount of \$541,268.77.

Discussion: None.

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

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.**

2. HRH LLC Bill/Check Warrant

**Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Bennett and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve the High Rock Homes, LLC check register listed on the Warrant dated April 20, 2023, in the amount of \$61,407.97.

Discussion: None

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

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.**

**B. Review & Approval -- Board Minutes**

1. **Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Kirk and seconded by Commissioner Scheideler to approve the 2/11/2023 NHA Special Board Meeting, 3/16/2023 NHA & HRH LLC Regular Board meetings, and 3/21/2023 Special Board Meeting as amended.

Discussion: Commissioner Kirk noted corrections to the March 16, 2023, meeting minutes on p.21 #7 add the words, "to execute the contract," and on p. 22, #13 add the words per hour. Ms. Gosmon will make the corrections as noted.

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

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.**

**C. Review and Approval – Change Order**

Ms. Gosmon noted that this item is in reference to the Intercom Panel Replacement Project at the Chambers Street apartments. There are two change order requests. Change order #1: to increase the number of units to be worked on. Change order #2 replace the defective main entry intercom communicators in all 5 buildings. A general discussion ensued on the amount of the increase. Ms. Gosmon will reach out to the engineer for more clarity and report back to the Board.

The conversation veered to comments from the Chair on agenda items F2, F3 and F5. Chair Foster noted that the Board had not received the information in time. He suggested having a Special Board meeting to discuss these items once the Board has had a chance to review them.

**Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve the change order with the expectation that the Board would receive a written explanation via email for the significant costs increase.

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

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.**

**D. Information & Discussion: Executive Director’s Report**

1. Monthly Financial Report

Ms. Gosmon presented the Monthly Management Report. She referred to balance sheets as of March 31, 2023. She noted that the NHA maintains a healthy reserve for the federal program.

2. Monthly Management Report

Ms. Gosmon presented the Monthly Management Report. A brief discussion followed on the Public Housing Account Aging Report.

3. Public Participation at Board Meetings Policy – Board Vote

The Board engaged in a brief discussion on this item and made the following suggested changes:

- include the comment, three minutes per person,
- include the phrase, “The Chair, in his or her discretion may grant additional time to the individual to complete their comments. p.1”
- include the phrase, “It is strongly suggested to inform the Chair in advance, p.1.”
- include the phrase, “unless required by the applicable state or federal regulations. p.1.”
- Insert the word, “Ideally,” p.2 #6.,
- Include the phrase, “In advance of the Board meeting.”

**Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Scheideler and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve the NHA Public Participation at Board Meetings Policy with changes as noted.

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

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.**

4. Approval of ARPA Grant Agreement Submission

Ms. Gosmon recapped the conversation from the March 16, 2023, Board meeting regarding the use of the ARPA Contract for Financial Assistance (CFA) funds in the amount of \$372,075. Ms. Gosmon stated that she is waiting for a call back from the Capital Financial Manager for DHCD to clarify the use of this funding.

**Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve the Chairman to sign the ARPA Contract for Financial Assistance for \$372,075 subject to the rules and regulations of the program.

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

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.**

5. Director of Maintenance and Modernization Position – Update

Ms. Gosmon reported that she received three applications for this position: one in-house and two external candidates. She stated that the candidates did not have the experience as advertised. She also stated that she is going to reorganize the position description and repost it.

6. Federal Capital Fund 5-year Plan Approved

Ms. Gosmon stated that the NHA Capital Fund Action 5-year plan was approved by HUD. She referred to the work activity in the plan noting that some of the work activity covers the activity for federal repositioning.

7. Needham Housing Authority 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Ms. Gosmon noted that the Needham Housing Authority will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a Public Housing Agency in Needham. She stated she is forming a committee to plan a celebration in September 2023.

8. Memorandum of Understanding between the NHA & Needham Police Department

Chair Foster shared background information on the formation of the MOU between the Needham Police Department and the Needham Housing Authority.

9. Staff Update

Ms. Gosmon shared an update on the accomplishments of the NHA staff. Ms. Gosmon shared that she has an amazing staff, and she is thrilled to be working with them.

10. Executive Director Goals Statement

Ms. Gosmon stated that she is preparing her goal statement and would have it available for the Board's consideration at the May Board meeting.

11. Any Other Issues/Updates of the NHA

**E. Resident Service Coordinator Report – January-April 2023**

Ms. Gosmon noted that Laurie Blake is doing a great job at providing great programming for residents and ensuring that they receive services that would be beneficial to them. She continues to be committed to the Cooks Afterschool Program, providing an opportunity for children to continue to receive homework support.

**F. Status Updates and Approvals – Preservation & Redevelopment Initiatives (PRI)**

1. Linden/Chambers Conceptual Design

Chair Foster opened this item for discussion and welcomed Dan Chen and invited him to present the draft Conceptual Design for the Linden and Chambers Street properties.

Mr. Chen presented the layout of the design. He described the floor plans and amenity space. He described the proposed development in two phases. He stated that Phase 1A and 1B would include 150 units and Phase 2 would be 100 units. The units would be 1-bedroom units, with 600 square feet of living space. Mr. Chen noted that a feasibility study would be presented with the cost plan. Mr. Chen summarized the overall schedule. A comprehensive discussion followed.

2. Authorization to submit a Blended RAD/Section 18 Application for Repositioning  
This item was deferred to the May 18, 2023, NHA Board meeting.

3. Request for Proposals – A/E Designer Services for the Modernization of Captain Robert Cook Drive and Seabeds Way.  
This item was deferred to the May 18, 2023, NHA Board meeting.

4. Contract to Engage Attorney Robert Smart for Zoning Research.  
Chair Foster shared an update on this item. He talked about Bob Smart's experience in Needham. He noted that Attorney is well-known in town government on zoning matters.

**Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Kirk and seconded by Commissioner Scheideler to approve Bob Smart's contract.

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

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.**

5. PRI Budget Update – Sources & Uses of Funds  
This item was deferred to the May 18, 2023, NHA Board meeting.

6. CHA Monthly Report – Questions?

The CHA monthly report was submitted to the Board for their consideration. There were no comments or questions.

**G. Status Update – Internal Initiatives:**

1. Roof Replacement Project at Cook’s Bridge – Preconstruction Meeting to be scheduled.

Ms. Gosmon stated that a pre-construction meeting for the roof replacement project at Captain Robert Cook Drive is scheduled for April 24, 2023. The Architect, the contractor and NHA staff will meet to discuss the logistics of the project and issue a Notice to Proceed.

2. Paving Project – Design of Seabeds Way and CRCDC

Ms. Gosmon reported that she is seeking proposals for this project and will report back to the Board on her progress.

3. Cook’s Afterschool Program - Update

The Cook’s Afterschool Program continues to support the children at the Captain Robert Cook Drive properties.

**H. New Business**

1. Contract to Engage Cynthia Howe

Chair Foster summarized the purpose of the contract to engage Cynthia Howe.

**Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to adopt the contract to engage Cynthia Howe, as an independent contractor, to provide support as needed to the new Executive Director.

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

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.**

2. Contract to Engage Steve Merritt

Chair Foster began his comments by thanking Steve Merritt for his year of service to the authority while the housing authority searched for a new and permanent Executive Director.

**Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to adopt the contract to engage Steve Merritt as an independent contractor to support the PRI, and to provide support as needed to the new Executive Director.

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

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.**

3. Community Room Use and Share Spaces Policy

This item would be brought back for further discussion at a future meeting.

A general discussion ensued on scheduling a Special Board Meeting to discuss the following:

- Authorization to Submit a Blended RAD/Section 18 Application for Repositioning
- Request for Proposals -- A/E Designer Services for the Modernization of Capt. Robert Cook & Seabeds Way
- PRI Budget Update - Sources & Uses of Funds

The Board agreed to convene a NHA Special Meeting, time and location TBD.

## **H. Adjournment**

### **Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Kirk and seconded by Commissioner Scheideler to adjourn the NHA and HRH LLC April 20, 2023, Board meeting at 10:00 pm.

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

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 4-0**

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Cheryl Gosmon  
April 20, 2023