

**NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**NHA REGULAR BOARD MEETING,
HIGH ROCK HOMES, LLC BOARD MEETING &
NHA ANNUAL MEETING**

Thursday, May 19, 2022

ROLL CALL BY CHAIR FOSTER TO CONVENE THE REGULAR MEETING

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

NHA STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Merritt, Interim Executive Director
& Secretary
Cheryl Gosmon, Assistant Executive
Director

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Eleanor Evans

This is a Hybrid meeting. Chair Foster called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm and roll called the Commissioners present on May 19, 2022, for the NHA and High Rock Homes Regular Board meetings and the NHA Annual meeting. Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the Secretary of the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) by preparing a Public Notice dated May 13, 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.

Steve Merritt read a statement from Vice-Chair Eleanor Evans who is not able to attend the meeting. Her comments included a statement on her intention, although having been asked, is not willing to serve as Chair of the NHA Board of Commissioners at this time. Her comments also included a statement that she is willing to continue to serve as Vice-Chair.

Chair Foster expressed that the Board understands that Vice-Chair Evans is not able to attend the meeting. On behalf of the Board, he wished her strength and courage during this difficult time.

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AGENDA

NHA BOARD & HIGH ROCK HOMES, LLC BOARD MEETINGS

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR: (matters that could not be reasonably anticipated in advance of the meetings)

Chair Foster noted that this meeting is the first attempt by the NHA to convene a hybrid meeting. He stated that almost all town boards and committees have moved to hybrid meetings. He added that he had not anticipated that the COVID-19 infection rate would double and double again but that this is a good time to test the technology.

RESIDENT/COMMUNITY INPUT:

Chair Foster announced that Jessica Reese, President of the CBTA is in person at this meeting and Ross Donald is also in person as well.

Jessica Reese asked that the Tenant Association (TA) have a placeholder on the agenda going forward for commentary and community information. She also requested that Board consider discussing topics related to residents early in the meeting. Ms. Reese reported that the Needham Community Farm has reached out to her about grants to support planting/gardening at Seabeds Way and CRCD.

The conversation veered to a discussion on robocall announcements. Mr. Merritt noted that he had received several complaints that robocall announcements are too much and that he is working on fine-tuning the process. Commissioner Bennett pointed out that robocalls should continue in terms of the monthly meeting announcements, noting that they are a benefit to the residents.

Ross Donald mentioned that the windows in the Linden Chambers community room had been painted shut and are now opened thanks to the cleaning crew. Mr. Donald stated that it had been an extraordinary past three years and suggested that the Board consider a review of what has happened during that time. Mr. Donald stated that he would like the Board to consider a resident-centered approach, adding that this would help prioritize the needs of the residents. Concerning the grounds, Mr. Donald reported that there seems to be some sensitivity with mowing and pruning. Mr. Donald stated that 164 Linden needs to be opened.

Sue Biasizzo stated that she agrees with Commissioner Bennett's comments on providing robocall meeting reminders. She stated that there is a lot of confusion with the hybrid meeting. She stated that if people knew they could attend the meeting in person more people would have attended the meeting. Ms. Biaizzo reported that she was not able to get a copy of the agenda. She also reported that she and Jessica Reese met during a round table discussion last night and the TA is planning a special meeting to explain to residents what their leases mean. She also stated that there will be an additional planning meeting on policies. Ms. Biaizzo stated that the more informed residents are about their lease and policies the better it is for everyone.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL ITEMS – NHA & HIGH ROCK HOMES LLC:

A. Review & Approval:

1. NHA Bill/Check Warrant
RESOLUTION #2022-34

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve payment of the bill roll/check roll listed on the Warrant date 20, 2022, in the amount of \$360,135.73.

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

Commissioner Kirk, Aye; Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Bennett, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

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

2. HRH LLC Bill/Check Warrant

RESOLUTION #2022-46

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve payment of the bill roll/check roll listed on the Warrant date 19, 2022, in the amount of \$11,648.17

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

Commissioner Kirk, Aye; Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Bennett, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous 4-0

3. Engagement of Jon Wortman for Training

Chair Foster stated that the Board had a second training with Jon Wortman that went very well. Mr. Merritt stated that he has reached out to Mr. Wortman regarding his fee. He stated that his fee is \$1500. Chair Foster stated that he believes Mr.

Wortman's fee is reasonable and that he is benefiting from the training.

Commissioner Bennett asked how long the Board would continue with the training.

Chair Foster replied that it would be on a case-by-case base. Chair Foster stated that the next meeting is Tuesday, June 21st at 10 am.

Chair Foster stated that Mr. Merritt will be signing contracts for the NHA. He stated that under the provisions of the Chapter 30B: Uniform Procurement Act, Mr. Merritt would need to be appointed Chief Procurement Officer for the NHA.

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to appoint Interim Executive Director Steve Merritt as Chief Procurement Officer for the NHA.

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

Commissioner Kirk, Aye; Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Bennett, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous 4-0

B. Review & Approval -- Board Minutes:

1. 3/17/2022 NHA & HRH LLC Regular Board Meeting (corrections noted from the previous meeting).

RESOLUTION #2022-236

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve amended Minutes of March 17, 2022, NHA & HRH LLC Board meetings.

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

Commissioner Kirk, Aye; Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Bennett, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous 4-0

2. 3/17/2022 Executive Session

RESOLUTION #2022-237

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the Minutes of March 17, 2022, NHA Executive Session.

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

Commissioner Kirk, Aye; Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Bennett, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous 4-0

3. 4/21/2022 NHA & HRH LLC Regular Board Meeting

RESOLUTION #2022-238

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the Minutes of April 21, 2022, NHA & HRH LLC Board meetings as amended.

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

Commissioner Bennett, Aye; Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Kirk, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous 4-0

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

1. Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Merritt referred to the Accountant's Compilation Monthly report. He suggested that the Board receive this report one month in arrears to have an informed discussion on the budget.

2. New monthly Management Report

Mr. Merritt stated that this is a new report. He thanked Commissioner Scheideler for his ideas. He stated that he titled it the Monthly Management Report. He stated that it includes the Occupancy Report, the Work Order Report, and the Aging Account Report. He stated that they are internal reports as of April 30th. Commissioner Scheideler stated that the reports are well presented and well done. The Commissioners agreed that the reports are an improvement from previous reports. A brief discussion followed.

3. 2022 Capital Fund – Award

Mr. Merritt stated that the NHA has received notification from HUD on the 2022 Capital Fund Award. He stated that the NHA has been awarded \$416,361.00 in capital funding. Mr. Merritt summarized the procurement process and mentioned the possibility of contracting with the Town under Chapter 90B Program on local public ways. Mr. Merritt stated that he will schedule a resident meeting to explain the capital plan going forward. A general discussion followed. Mr. Merritt stated that he has a contract ready to be signed for the re-siding of 28 Captain Robert Cook Drive. He stated that he has two bids and would like the Board to allot \$34,196.04 from the

2019 capital fund allocation to be included with the \$2018 capital fund allocation to allow for the completion of the re-siding of 28 Captain Robert Cook Drive.

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to utilize \$34,196.04 from the 2019 capital fund allocation to be added to the 2018 allocation for the re-siding project at 28 Captain Robert Cook Drive.

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

Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Kirk, Aye; Commissioner Bennett, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous 4-0

4. Newsletter

Cheryl Gosmon provided a brief report on plans to publish a quarterly newsletter for families and seniors with Illustratus.com. Ms. Gosmon stated that the Board would receive a copy in their June Board Meeting Packet. A general discussion followed.

5. NHA YouTube Channel

Mr. Merritt reported that the NHA now has a YouTube channel. Mr. Merritt provided a brief demonstration for the Board's consideration. The site contains all the videos for the 2022 meetings.

6. Clarification of Assistant Executive Director Position

Mr. Merritt provided a brief report on this item. He stated that the position is fully supported within the NHA budget.

Mr. Merritt reported on other items. He stated that he received a bill from lawyers for the lawsuit of the NHA versus a former employee for approximately \$5K. He stated that there is no action needed, it is just a point of information.

Mr. Merritt also reported that the Mass NAHRO Annual Conference at the Sea Crest Beach Hotel in Falmouth MA begins this weekend. He stated that he and Ms. Gosmon will be there for the full conference and two principal clerks would attend the conference on Monday.

Mr. Merritt stated that on Wednesday, Lisa Vergara, Founder/President of Storytime Crafts, Inc., and Bill Paulson of Keller Williams Realty and Needham Rotary Club member will meet Gary Kuphal to erect two little libraries, one at Captain Robert Cook Drive and one at Linden Street.

Mr. Merritt stated that HUD has published its 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO). He stated that the Resident Opportunity Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) grant, a three-year grant, for approximately \$240K application is available. He stated that this funding could fund a full-time Resident Service Coordinator position for the federal properties. He added that this would be a good fit for the NHA if awarded. He stated that he would like to hire a consultant to help write this grant and that the cost would be \$1750. A general discussion followed.

Motion and Vote

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Bennett and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve Mr. Merritt to hire a consultant to write the ROSS Grant.

Chair Foster called the roll of Commissioners in favor of this motion:
Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Kirk, Aye; Commissioner Bennett, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous 4-0

D. Search Committee Status Update: New Executive Director Search

1. Advertisement

There was no discussion on this item.

E. Status Updates – External Initiatives:

1. Housing Plan Working Group

Commissioner Scheideler provided an update on this item. He stated that the Housing Plan Working Group has sent out a survey to local residents on what their preferences are for housing development in Needham. He stated that the survey has been distributed and findings would be presented at their May 26th meeting.

Chair Foster stated that he was approached by Ed Cosgrove who is on this committee with Commissioner Scheideler. He stated that Mr. Cosgrove serves on a subcommittee of the Housing Plan Working Group and met with him to talk about properties in town for redevelopment.

2. Preservation & Redevelopment Initiative (PRI)

- Name Change

Chair Foster proposed the following name change from the Modernization and Perseveration Initiative to Preservation and Redevelopment Initiative.

- Cambridge Housing Authority Report

Chair Foster provided a brief update on the CHA report which is included in the Board Packet.

- Town Meeting May 2, 2022

Chair Foster reported on the adoption of Town Meeting warrant articles for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding: Article 17 Appropriate for NHA Pre-Development Linden Chambers and Article 18 Appropriate for NHA Property Survey.

- Final Approval: NHA Local Designer Selection Committee Members

Chair Foster reported on the two final members to make up the high-quality five-person Designer Selection Committee. He reiterated that NHA Board members are not allowed to be on this committee. He stated that this would use the \$1.386 million that was awarded from Town Meeting to put out an RFP for an architect engineering firm to do schematic design and analysis for Linden Chambers.

RESOLUTION #2022-40

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to appoint the following persons to the NHA Local Designer Selection Committee: Karen Hughey, Helen Gregory, Haril Pandya, Nathalie Jansen, and Steve Merritt

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

Commissioner Bennett, Aye; Commissioner Kirk, Aye; Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

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

F. Status Update – Internal Initiatives:

1. Report from Steering Committee (Janice Bennett, Penny Kirk, Jessica Reese, Steve Merritt)

Chair Foster took this agenda item out of order at the request of the TA to address resident-related topics early in the meeting. Chair Foster yielded the floor to the Steering Committee for a report on the reopening of the community room and reboot of the After School program. Commissioner Kirk provided a brief report. She reported that she has connected with Babson College, as well as Noble and Greenough School. She also reported that she has reached out to Tom Denton, Director of Guidance and Olin College, and is waiting to hear back from both. Commissioner Kirk also reported on contacting the Needham Community Council for kitchen equipment. She stated that the Steering Committee discussed the Resident Service Coordinator position and Director of the After School Program position. Commissioner Kirk outlined sources of grant funding. Commissioner Kirk stated that the next meeting is on May 26th in the Rosemary Way Community Room. Chair Foster thanked the Steering Committee for their status update.

2. Restoration of Community Center at 28 CRCD - **In Process**

Steve Merritt reported he will follow up with Gary Kuphal, Director of Maintenance on the progress of restoring the Community Center at 28 CRCD.

3. Plan to return Unit 42 CRCD to service - **In Process**

Steve Merritt reported that plans to return Unit 42 CRCD are in progress.

4. After School Program – Fall 2022 Reopening Draft Budget is in progress.

5. Paving Project – Seabeds Way and CRCD are currently being procured as part of the 2022 Annual Plan.

Mr. Merritt reported that partial funding has been set aside for this project. He added that with the new capital fund appropriation he is hoping to expand this project.

6. Seabeds Way/CRCD CCTV System Begins Spring/Fall of 2022

Mr. Merritt reported that he is waiting for the engineering report to come back and will report on this at the next meeting.

G. NHA ANNUAL MEETING:

1. Annual Meeting call to order

Chair Foster called the NHA Annual Meeting to order at 9:37 pm.

2. Election of the 2022 Officers: Chair, Vice-Chair & Treasurer

RESOLUTION #2022-41

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Scheideler and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to elect the following 2022-2023 Officers of the Needham Housing Authority: Chair – Reginald Foster, Vice-Chair – Eleanor Evans, and Treasurer - Ed Scheideler.

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

Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Kirk, Aye; Commissioner Bennett, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

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

3. Approval: Renewal of Tenant-Commissioner Annual Waiver

RESOLUTION #2022-42

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve the submission to DHCD of a one-year waiver affirming Janice Bennett as NHA Tenant Commissioner for the period starting August 10, 2022.

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

Commissioner Kirk, Aye; Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Bennett, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

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

4. Information on NHA Appointees to:

- Community Preservation Committee, Reg Foster
- Council on Aging, Sandra Prim

5. Approval: Resolution authorizing that two Commissioners sign checks

RESOLUTION #2022-43

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Kirk that any two Commissioner are authorized to approve and sign checks issued by the Needham Housing Authority and High Rock Homes LLC.

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

Commissioner Bennett, Aye; Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Kirk, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

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

6. Review: Best starting time for Regular Monthly Board Meetings

A brief discussion on this item took place. The Board determined that no changes are needed for the start of the Regular Monthly Board meetings.

7. Presentation & Discussion: Annual Report by the Executive Director

This item was tabled until the next Board meeting.

Adjournment of the Annual Meeting

H. Adjournment

Vote on the motion

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to adjourn the NHA and HRH LLC Board meeting at 9:54 pm.

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

Commissioner Bennett, Aye; Commissioner Scheideler, Aye; Commissioner Kirk, Aye; and Commissioner Foster, Aye.

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

Minutes Prepared by

Cheryl Gosmon

