

**NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

MINUTES

**NHA REGULAR BOARD MEETING
HIGH ROCK HOMES LLC BOARD MEETING
Thursday, March 17, 2022, 7:30 PM**

ROLL CALL BY CHAIR FOSTER TO CONVENE THE REGULAR MEETINGS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

NHA STAFF PRESENT:

Angie Medeiros, Executive Director
Cheryl Gosmon, Asst. Exec. Director

Chair Foster called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM and roll-called Commissioners present at the March 17, 2022, NHA Regular, and HRH LLC Board meetings. The Secretary of the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) provided adequate notice of this meeting by preparing a Public Notice dated March 14, 2022, setting forth the meeting's date, time, and place. Said notice was filed with the Clerk of the Town of Needham and provided to persons requesting it.

AGENDA – REGULAR NHA BOARD & HRH LLC MEETINGS

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Chair announced that Representative Denise Garlick is in attendance and has volunteered to attend the meeting to speak and discuss mediation which is an item on this agenda. Chair Foster also welcomed newly hired Assistant Executive Director, Cheryl Gosmon.

RESIDENTS IN ATTENDANCE/RESIDENT INPUT:

Chair Foster stated that residents in attendance are Ross Donald, Sue Biasizzo, Kalpana Shaw, Jessica Reese, and Representative Denise Garlick

Sue Biasizzo asked when the new website will be up and running because a lot of folks could not access the agenda or meeting minutes. She stated that because she receives a Board Packet, she was able to send her neighbors the zoom link and the agenda. She noted that the new address and office hours need to be posted on the website. Executive Director Medeiros stated that the office did not have access to the site due to the move but will go in and make the changes. Sue Biasizzo asked if a repair person is scheduled to fix the electric doors because it is very difficult to open the doors from the outside manually. She also asked about the parking lot and the potholes which are horrendous sites. She expressed concern for possible falls and noted that people have fallen. She stated that the neighborhood can't afford to wait three or five years to get the pavement done. Executive Director Medeiros expressed that she has two capital projects in the works: paving and cameras. She added that these items are out to bid, and that work should start soon. She also stated that meanwhile, she will have maintenance fill in the potholes until the paving project begins.

Kalpna Shaw stated that she does not need an immediate response. She asked if a Board member could email her more information about the Linden Chambers CPA Funding request.

Ross Donald expressed his appreciation for receiving a digital Board Packet by email, unsolicited. He stated that this is the first time in three years that this has happened. He remarked about the need for an information clearinghouse for the town government with a reference librarian available to give people

AGENDA AND DISCUSSION

A. Approval: NHA Bill/Check Warrant

RESOLUTION #2022-218

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Evans to approve payment of the NHA bill/check roll listed on the Warrant dated March 17, 2022, in the amount of \$346,700.25.

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

B. Approval: HRH LLC Bill/Check Warrant

RESOLUTION #HRH2022-44

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve payment of the HRH LLC bill/check roll listed on the Warrant dated March 17, 2022, in the amount of \$31,876.06.

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

C. Review & Approval

RESOLUTION #2022-219

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Scheideler to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2022, NHA and HRH LLC Regular Board Meetings as submitted.

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

RESOLUTION #2022-221

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Scheideler to approve the final payment of \$4021.19 for the Exterior Doors Project #203077.

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

D. Status Update, Discussion, and Approval: Executive Director Search Process (Foster)

1. Interim and Permanent Executive Director Search

Chair Foster stated that finding an interim executive director and a new executive director are our most pressing and immediate challenges. He stated that following the March 9 Special Board meeting, he'd reached out to the two DHCD Search Consultants: Patricia Grace and Richard Leco. He added that their proposals are included in the Board Packet. He stated that he has also reached out to his network of contacts, which has not yielded any additional information on potential candidates. Chair Foster referred to the MASS NAHRO as well as the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) for possible referrals. He stated has asked Patricia Grace and Richard Leco if they knew of possible candidates for

Interim Executive Director. Patricia Grace wasn't able to help. Richard Leco recommended Stephen Merritt, retired Executive Director from Norwood Housing Authority, Past President of Mass NAHRO, former Needham Housing Authority Commissioner, and resident of Needham. A general discussion followed.

Commissioner Scheideler stated that he was very impressed with the proposal from Patricia Grace, adding that it was very effective.

Commissioner Evans stated that she was more impressed with Richard Leco's proposal, noting his ability to reach out to a wider range of potential candidates. Commissioner Evans stated that she would like to know what proactive steps Patricia Grace would take to find candidates.

Chair Foster suggested inviting both search consultants, one at a time, to a special board meeting and interviewing them both. The Board gave the green light to schedule the interviews ASAP.

2. Option for Management Services Agreement with CHA

As an alternative to hiring an Interim Executive Director, Chair Foster has had discussions with CHA to provide this service. He and Ms. Medeiros met with CHA's Kevin Braga so that he could understand the scope of the engagement. Executive Director Medeiros added that, in her opinion, CHA has the capacity and expertise to keep NHA running smoothly during the interim period. A general discussion followed, then Chair Foster was authorized to continue exploring this option.

3. Appointing the ED Search Committee

Chair Foster stated that based on input from the Board at our March 9th meeting, he has tentatively put together a slate of five people for the Executive Director Search Committee. He noted that Commissioner Bennett and Scheideler have expressed an interest in serving on the SC. He stated that he has reached out to former NHA Commissioner Karen Hughey who has agreed to serve. He noted that Ms. Hughey would be very valuable because she has served twice before. Chair Foster stated that he has reached out to Jessica Reese, President of the Cook's Bridge Tenants Association (CBTA) and either she or her designee would serve on the search committee. The new interim executive director could be the fifth member of the committee if he or she is on board.

Motion and Vote

Upon motion of the Chair and seconded by Commissioner Bennett that the NHA Board of Commissioners established an Executive Director Search Committee for the permanent Executive Director position consisting of Janice Bennett, Ed Scheideler, Karen Hughey, a person to be designated by the CBTA, and the interim executive director.

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

E. Status Update - MRI:

1. Housing Plan Working Group

Commissioner Scheideler provided a written report under separate cover on the Housing Plan Working Group. Commissioner Scheideler noted that on March 24, 2022, the Housing Plan Working group will hold a Public Workshop requesting the participation of

fresh ideas which would be worked into the draft of the new Housing Plan which is in the process of being prepared. Commissioner Scheideler stated that this will be a Zoom meeting on March 24 at 7:00 pm.

2. Modernization and Redevelopment Initiative Update

- Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Chair Foster reported on the CPC meeting last night and his presentations on the NHA CPA applications. He stated that applications 1,2 and 4 received a great deal of support. He summarized next steps.

- Withdrawal of Application FY2023-03 – Purchase of East Militia Heights Property.

Chair Foster referred to a 3/7/2022 letter he received from the CRC and noted that the Board would discuss this matter in Executive Session.

- Formation of an NHA Designer Selection Committee

Chair Foster described the DHCD-required make-up of this NHA Designer Selection Committee and its purpose. He stated that the committee is typically a five-member committee and that he recommends that three of the five slots be filled by Gary Kuphal, Natalie Jensen our CHA Project Manager, and Karen Hughey. Finding candidates for the two remaining seats is still a work in progress. He added that for the remaining DSC seats, one needs to be a registered architect or engineer, and the other needs to be a Needham citizen of large. Chair Foster noted that commissioners are not allowed serve on this committee.

F. Information and Discussion: Mediation

Chair Foster welcomed State Representative Denise Garlick to the meeting to talk with the Board about mediation.

Representative Garlick graciously greeted everyone and pointed out why she is here and what capacity she is working under. She stated that she is joining the meeting wearing her hat as State Representative because the residents of Needham Housing Authority are her constituents. She noted that NHA is a quasi-state agency and that her commitment to both residents and staff is very important to her. She stated that when Executive Director Medeiros first came to Needham the community came together to introduce themselves and to offer support to her and ways they could partner effectively with the Needham Housing Authority. Representative Garlick added that many of those relationships were very positive relationships and supportive relationships, and Executive Director Medeiros enjoyed the respect of many leaders of organizations and town departments.

Representative Garlick referred to communication concerns and a period where residents were going to community leaders with their concerns. She stated that during that time DHCD, NHA, and her office began to organize solutions around communication concerns. She stated that it worked somewhat but not consistently and needs more work. Representative Garlick talked about ways to move forward. She stated that in her opinion, the Board of Commissioners would benefit greatly from the services of a mediator. She stated that she has taken responsibility for moving forward with what that would look like and getting on a more settled ground. Representative Garlick stated that she contacted Jon Wortmann who has worked with dozens and dozens of municipalities. Representative Garlick stated that Mr. Wortmann is available to meet with the Board in the short term and begin a discussion on shared values. She stated that if the Board is open to this discussion, she would like to be a part of this process and her office

would schedule the meetings. Commissioners Scheideler and Bennett expressed their appreciation to Representative Garlick.

Motion

A motion was made by Commissioner Scheideler moved and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to accept Representative Garlick's ideas for a reset.

Discussion: Commissioner Scheideler stated that Representative Garlick hit the nail on the head. He stated that there are severe difficulties in communication among the Board. He stated that at the last meeting the Board discussed the possibility of mediation and that everyone agreed. He added that if Representative Garlick can lead the Board in an effort that we all agreed to and help us get through it is very generous of her to devote the time to us.

Commissioner Evans thanked Representative Garlick for stepping in and caring about the residents and staff. Commissioner Evans stated that she agrees that mediation would be very helpful and that what Representative Garlick is proposing would be a good way to move forward.

Commissioner Kirk stated that it is a wonderful idea and the fact that the Board had already discussed the idea of mediation amongst us makes Representative Garlick's suggestion even more relevant. Commissioner Kirk asked if staff would be involved in mediation. Representative Garlick responded that it would be a discussion to have with Mr. Wortmann.

Commissioner Bennett stated that as a resident Commissioner she stands with the residents, and she always will. She added that residents need to be heard their voices count.

Representative Garlick stated she believes this is exactly the kind of thing that you want to discuss with Jon Wortmann.

Chair Foster stated that he joins the Board in expressing his gratitude to Representative Garlick for taking the time to come to this meeting.

Representative Garlick stated that her staff person Maureen Callahan would coordinate the schedule with the Board and with Jon Wortmann. Representative Garlick stated that she would cover the cost of the initial meeting.

Chair Foster called for the vote.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous 5-0

G. Status Update, Operations, and Board Matters:

1. Space Redeployment

Executive Director Medeiros stated that the move went very smoothly, and everything is up and running. She invited the Commissioners to stop by anytime and take an impromptu tour. Executive Director Medeiros stated that unit #42 at Captain Robert Cook Drive is being worked on and families on the waiting list are being considered for the unit.

Executive Director Medeiros stated that Gary Kuphal will work over the summer to get the community room ready by the fall for the afterschool program.

Chair Foster stated that Commissioner Scheideler stated that he would like to have Board involvement as well as resident involvement, in the re-design of the community room. Chair Foster noted the time and suggested moving on from this item with the discussion to be continued to the next Board meeting.

Commissioner Bennett stated that she insists that the matter be resolved at this meeting.

Chair Foster respond that he would ask Cheryl Gosmon to work with staff and develop a concrete plan for getting the community room back online. Ms. Gosmon responded that she would work with Executive Director to develop a plan to get the community room back online.

Chair Foster stated that a concrete plan would be put forward involving resident and Board input, ultimately for Board approval.

2. After School Program – Fall 2022 Reopening Plan

Commissioner Scheideler referred to his October 21, 2021, motion regarding the reopening of the Cook’s After School Program. Commissioner Scheideler read aloud the motion. After a brief discussion, the Board decided to continue the discussion on this after they met with Mr. Wortmann.

3. Seabeds/Cook Security System

Executive Director Medeiros stated that she is interviewing consultants for this project. She stated that she reached out to the Tenant Organization to meet with the consultants and has not heard back from them. Chair Foster stated that it is important to obtain resident comment on this matter because he believes that there is mixed support for this project. A general discussion followed on where the cameras would be mounted and who would monitor the system. Executive Director Medeiros asked that Cheryl Gosmon convene a meeting with the community to discuss the plans for the cameras once the proposal and plans become available.

4. New Tenant-Commissioner Guidelines

Chair Foster stated that these guidelines were published by DHCD, PHN 2022-05. Chair Foster stated that he is putting this on the agenda so that Commissioners are aware of them. He added that the regulations only apply to Commissioner Janice Bennett.

5. Return to in-Person Board Meetings

Chair Foster stated that due to public demand for “hybrid” meetings, NHA needs to figure out how to do Board meetings that are both in-person and also simultaneously streamed over Zoom. Additional technology will be needed as well as someone to run the equipment during the meeting. He stated that the Town of Needham is currently using a product made by OWL Labs to do hybrid meetings. Mr. Foster has reached out to the Needham Director of IT for further information and guidance.

6. Board Procedures – Proposing Agenda Items and/or Motions at Board Meetings

Chair Foster stated that the current draft dated 1/14/2022 is in the Board packet. This agenda item was carried over from the February 17, 2022, Board meeting. Chair Foster recapped: Commissioners Scheideler and Evans had developed this document at the end of last year. The goal is to draft some mutually agreeable procedures to address some issues the Board was encountering. Commissioners. Scheideler and Evans reiterated

their recommendation that the full Board adopts these procedures and the reasons why. Further discussion ensued.

Motion and Vote

The following motion was made by Commissioner Evans and seconded by Commissioner Bennett: That the NHA Board adopt the following board procedures: “Proposing Agenda Items and/or Motions at Board Meetings”.

The motion carried unanimously. The vote was 5-0

7. Snow Removal

Commissioner Scheideler shared photos of snow that looked as if the snow had been plowed in a manner that seemed to block the exit of the back patio of a residence at Seabeds Way. He expressed a safety concern that if something happened at the front of this residence and the resident was forced to exit through the back patio they would not be able to do so safely.

Motion and Vote

The following motion was made by Commissioner Scheideler and seconded by Commissioner Kirk: that the Head of Maintenance instructs whoever is plowing the fire lane to move the snow to the left of the shed instead of the right of the shed.

Discussion: Commissioner Bennett stated that she looked at the area and found that both egresses were blocked causing a safety issue for this residence.

Commissioner Evans stated that she is in favor of the idea of plowing to the other side of the shed but that she doesn't think it is an appropriate item to be at the Board level and should be addressed with the staff directly. She stated that she is uncomfortable with getting into this level of detail at a Board meeting.

Commissioner Scheideler stated that he addressed this issue with Executive Director Medeiros who informed him that it was not an exit and that grassy areas are not plowed.

Chair Foster stated that this area of communication would be a good example to bring up with Mr. Wortman. Chair Foster stated that maybe we should rely on our executive leadership to make sure there are exits available whenever snow conditions exist.

On a Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Scheideler – aye
Commissioner Kirk – aye
Commissioner Evans – nay
Commissioner Bennett – aye
Commissioner Foster – abstain

The motion carried. The vote was three yes, one no, and one abstained 3-1-1.

8. Guests at Board Meetings

Motion

The following motion was made by Commissioner Scheideler and seconded by Commissioner Kirk: that any Commissioner and any Executive Director be allowed to invite a guest to a Board meeting only if the guest is not being paid; and that any

paid guest invited to the meeting requires Board approval in advance of the meeting for the payment.

Discussion: Commissioner Scheideler presented his rationale for the motion. A comprehensive discussion followed. After thoughtful consideration of the comments, Commissioner Scheideler withdrew the motion.

H. Standard Monthly Reports

There was no discussion on monthly reports.

I. 3/7/2022 Letter from Charles River Center; Adjournment to Executive Session

At 9:30 pm, Chair Foster stated that the Board is now going to consider its response to the 3/7/2022 letter from Charles River Center stating that CRC is going to bid aggressively to purchase the property at East Militia Heights Drive. The NHA currently has a \$1.8 million CPA funding application before the CPC, to provide the funds for NHA to buy the property.

The Chair and CHA have been in negotiations with CRC concerning an agreement with CRC. The Chair needs to brief the Board in Executive Session as to the terms and conditions being considered, and NHA's negotiating position. Based on the Board's assessment of the situation, the Board may or may not decide to withdraw the NHA CPA funding application or take some other related action. Any such decision would be made after the Board adjourns from Executive Session and reconvenes in Open Meeting.

Motion and Vote

The following motion was made by Chair Foster and seconded by Commissioner Evans: To adjourn into Executive Session for Purpose #6 -- "to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property because the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body". Following the executive session, the Board with reconvene in Open Session.

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

Commissioner Scheideler – aye
Commissioner Kirk – aye
Commissioner Evans – aye
Commissioner Bennett – aye
Commissioner Foster – aye

The motion carried unanimously 5-0, and the commissioners adjourned into executive session.

J. Continuation of the Open Session and Vote on CPA Funding Application CY 2023-03

At 9:51 pm the Board reconvened in Open Session.

Motion

The following motion was made by Chair Foster and seconded by Commissioner Evans: that the NHA withdraw its CPA funding application FY2023-03 for funds to purchase the East Militia Heights Drive Property.

There being no further discussion, Chair Foster called for the vote.

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

K. **Adjournment**

Motion and Vote

At approximately 10:30 PM, Commissioner Foster moved, and Commissioner Evans seconded the motion to adjourn the NHA Board meeting of February 17, 2022.

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

Minutes Prepared by:

Cheryl Gosmon