

**NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS,  
HIGH ROCK HOMES, LLC BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Thursday, October 20, 2022**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

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

**NHA STAFF PRESENT:**

Steve Merritt, Interim Executive Director  
& Secretary  
Cheryl Gosmon, Assistant Executive  
Director  
Gary Kuphal, Director of Facilities &  
Maintenance  
Nayda Sanchez, Director of Leasing &  
Occupancy

This is a Hybrid meeting. Chair Foster called the Monthly Meeting to order at 7:30 pm. He called the roll of Commissioners with all reporting present on Thursday, October 20, 2022, for the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) and High Rock Homes (HRH) LLC Regular Board meeting. He stated that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the Secretary of the NHA by preparing a Public Notice dated October 14, 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. Chair Foster noted that the meeting is being recorded.

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**Announcements from the Chair:**

Chair Foster began the meeting with three announcements. The first was an announcement that Margaret Moran and Natalie Jansen of Cambridge Housing Authority will be presenting a recommendation from the Local Designer Selection Committee for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) services for the redevelopment of NHA properties at Linden and Chambers Streets. Chair Foster noted that this conversation is scheduled for 8:15 pm.

The second was an announcement that the NHA has been subject to a 2/3-year Human Resources lawsuit that was recently settled in a settlement agreement for \$50K. Commissioner Evans noted that the Department of Housing and Community Development, (DHCD covered a portion of this settlement. Chair Foster noted that DHCD has agreed to cover \$35,000.

The third announcement was that Chair Foster has been invited to join the Net Buildings Working Group, a subcommittee of the Climate Action Plan Committee (CAPC). Chair Foster stated that CAPC was established by the Select Board a year ago to guide the Town in developing a plan that meets or exceeds the State’s climate mitigation and resilience goals. The Committee will make recommendations to the Select Board on a Climate Action Plan (CAP) and

may be asked to continue to serve as an advisory committee to oversee the implementation of the CAP.

**Resident/Community Input:**

Jessica Reese, president of the Cook's Bridge Tenants Association (CBTA) expressed her appreciation to Steve Merritt and the Maintenance Department for the installation of a Stop Sign at the end of Seabeds Way and for fixing the exterior lights at Seabeds Way and Captain Robert Cook Drive.

Ms. Reese noted that members of the CBTA and several residents will attend the Massachusetts Union of Public Housing Tenants Fall Convention this weekend. She stated that there will be workshops on Lease Issues and Rent Calculations. Ms. Reese also stated that residents have expressed an appreciation for Laurie Blake, Resident Service Coordinator. She stated that Ms. Blake has been introducing herself to residents and talking with them about their concerns and needs. Ms. Reese stated that residents have expressed to her that they are very grateful that Laurie is here.

Sue Biasizzo said she is glad to hear that there will be a resident meeting in early November about the bird feeder issue. She also stated that she is glad that residents will be notified of this event.

**A. Review & Approval:**

1. NHA Bill/Check Warrant

**Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the check register listed on the Warrant dated October 20, 2022, in the amount of \$243,995.77.

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

Commissioner Evans votes, aye; Commissioner Kirk votes, aye; Commissioner Bennett votes, aye; Commissioner Scheideler votes, aye; and Commissioner Foster 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 Evans to approve the High Rock Homes, LLC check register listed on the Warrant dated October 20, 2022, in the amount of \$43,560.74.

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

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

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

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

8/30/2022 NHA, Special Board Meeting

9/15/2022 NHA & HRH, LLC Regular Board Meeting

**Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the Minutes of August 30, 2022, NHA Special Board Meeting and NHA & HRH LLC Regular Board meetings as amended. (Commissioner Bennett was present at the August 30, 2022, Special Board Meeting, and Commissioner Evans was remote at both the August 30, 2022, Special Board Meeting, and the NHA & HRH LLC Regular Board Meeting.)

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

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

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

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

#### 1. Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Merritt presented the monthly reports from August 31, 2022.

Commissioner Foster commented that he noticed that the NHA's overall cash balance was down a couple of hundred thousand, which is a significant downward trend. Chair Foster stated that there were some unusually high expenses this reporting period: a \$50K lawsuit settlement and several CHA invoices.

#### 2. Monthly Management report

Mr. Merritt stated that the Monthly Management Report outlines the NHA's vacant units through the end of September. He stated that there are two vacant units systemwide. He reiterated the great work that Nayda Sanchez, Gary Kuphal, and their teams doing to reduce vacancies.

#### 3. State Annual Plan Approval

Mr. Merritt stated that comments from the Public Hearing on the NHA 2023 Annual Plan for State-Aided Public Housing have been added to the document. He stated that there were no new capital items added to the plan and once the Board votes on the Plan he would upload it to the State website. A brief discussion followed.

#### **Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to NHA Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2022 for State-Aided Public Housing.

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

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

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

#### 4. Federal Capital Fund update

This item was deferred to be included in the PRI discussion later in the meeting.

#### 5. Bird Feeder Policy – Resident Meeting scheduled for early November

Mr. Merritt stated that he does not have a policy for the Board to approve at this point. He stated that he has scheduled a resident meeting for the two different sites for the first week of November. He stated that there will be a public meeting on parking issues at Linden and Chambers and a public meeting on the Bird Feeder Policy at Seabeds Way.

#### 6. RFP for Fee Accounting Services

Mr. Merritt stated that RFP for Fee Accounting Services is almost completed and that he will be mailing this out in the next few days. Mr. Merritt also stated that he is in the process of putting the High Rock Homes' financials on the PHA-Web Management Computer System. He stated that Nayda Sanchez, Director of Leasing and Occupancy,

and Salim Pillai, Financial/HR Specialist have met with a representative to make this happen.

7. NHA Audit Update

Mr. Merritt stated that the NHA does not have a final Audit update yet. He stated that the NHA will have a finding in the audit on how payments are processed. He stated payments were not distributed properly within our programs. Mr. Merritt stated that systems are already in place as recommended by the auditor to mitigate this. He stated that the full auditor's report should be available by the next Board meeting.

8. Bank Issues

Mr. Merritt distributed copies of his proposal to establish a procedure for electronic check signatures. Mr. Merritt stated that the NHA does not have a policy on how bills are paid and that the proposed procedure would streamline the process and provide the verification that the Board has asked about. Mr. Merritt outlined the eight-step process for issuing payments and the process for the electronic signature. He stated that disputed payments would be held until the next Board meeting and payments would be mailed to vendors the next business day. A brief discussion followed. Chair Foster stated that because Commissioners Evans and Kirk do not have a copy of the document this item would be postponed until the next Board.

Mr. Merritt reported on his conversation with Needham Bank and noted that Needham Bank is preparing a proposal for the NHA's consideration. He stated that he spoke with Needham Bank about their potential involvement in the Preservation and Redevelopment Initiative and that a meeting has been scheduled to talk more about this with the Board Chair. A brief discussion followed.

#### **D. Quarterly Report of the Resident Service Coordinator**

1. Laurie Blake – Memo

Mr. Merritt stated that Ms. Blake has been extremely busy even though she has not been here for a full quarter. He stated that her report outlines her activities to date. Mr. Merritt stated that Ms. Blake is working is doing a great job getting to know our residents in both developments. He stated that she has been very positive and very helpful.

2. State RSC NOFA Application Approval

Mr. Merritt stated that the NHA receives funding through a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). He stated that this year the NHA is required to reapply for an allotment and potential increase. Mr. Merritt stated that the NHA would need to reapply online by November 18, 2022.

#### **Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Bennett and seconded by Commissioner Scheideler that the Needham Housing Authority Board approves and endorses an application of renewal for the Resident Services Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Community Development.

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

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

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

## **E. Search Committee Status Update**

Commissioner Bennett, Chair of the Executive Director Search Committee provided a status update on this item. She reported that committee member Karen Hughey has resigned from the committee due to family obligations. She stated that James Burke has expressed an interest in serving on this committee and she would like to recommend him to replace Ms. Hughey. Ms. Bennett reported that she has received a small batch of resumes from Rich Leco, Executive Search Committee Consultant and that the resumes will be reviewed by the Executive Director Search Committee.

Commissioner Scheideler stated that he spoke with Mr. Burke as well. He stated that Mr. Burke is an excellent replacement for Ms. Hughey. Commissioner Scheideler stated that Mr. Burke is very enthusiastic about being nominated to be part of the Executive Director Search Committee.

Commissioner Kirk stated that she supports the choice of James Burke to the Executive Director Search Committee. She stated that she has known him for 15 years and he is steady, very smart, and will be a great contribution to the committee.

### **Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Bennett and seconded by Commissioner Scheideler to appoint James Burke to the Executive Director Search Committee replacing Karen Hughey.

Discussion: Chair Foster asked if Commissioner Bennett has checked with Mr. Burke and if he is able to commit his time to the task. Commissioner Bennett stated that Mr. Burke is up to the task.

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

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

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

## **F. Status Updates – External Initiatives:**

1. Housing Plan Working Group  
There was no discussion on this item.

2. Preservation & Redevelopment Initiative (PRI)

- Linden/Chambers A/E Designer Recommendation by Local Designer Selection Committee

Chair Foster provided background information on this item. Chair Foster stated that the Cambridge Housing Authority Development Consultants Margaret Moran and Nathalie Janson will present the Local Designer Selection Committee's recommendations for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) services for the redevelopment of the Linden and Chambers Street properties.

Ms. Janson provided a memorandum to the NHA Board regarding the recommendation of the A/E firm from the Local Designer Selection Committee. She stated that the Local Designer Selection Committee members are Karen Hughey, Helen Gregory, Chad Reilly, Nathalie Jansen, and Steve Merritt. Ms. Janson provided

a summary of the Local Designer Selection Committee's discussion. She stated that the firms were evaluated based on their written proposals, presentations, and responses to questions asked by the Local Designer Selection Committee.

Ms. Janson stated that the design fee for basic services, excluding reimbursables, shall not exceed \$2,274,250 for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project as stipulated in the Request for Services (RFS). Ms. Janson stated that the fee for Phase 1 of the project, developing a schematic design and site design for the full potential 220-unit redevelopment only is \$1,406,250. She added that the fee for Phase 2, which includes preparing construction drawings and providing construction administration for a \$16M construction project, is \$868,000.

Ms. Janson stated that the NHA has received \$1.25M in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and \$1,386,000 from the Community Preservation Act funding. She stated that these funds will allow NHA to complete the design of Phase 1 and Phase 2 as described above. Ms. Janson stated that these funding sources will support A/E services through zoning approval and schematic design and additional anticipated funding using the low-income housing tax credit and soft debt will support the project through construction closing and completion. Ms. Janson pointed out that the NHA reserves the right to suspend the project pending receipt of needed financing to move forward.

Ms. Janson stated that Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc. was ranked first by the Local Designer Selection Committee for the Linden and Chambers redevelopment project. She added that the Local Designer Selection Committee believes that the firm has the ability and experience to successfully complete the two phases outlined in the RFS, which include master planning and receiving zoning approval for the entire site and proceeding with construction drawings and construction administration on a first construction phase. Ms. Janson stated that Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc., has positive references and is comfortable committing to the schedule outlined in the RFS. A brief discussion followed. Chair Foster noted a typo in the memorandum document under reference #3 Hank Hill. Chair Foster pointed out that this is Hank Haff, Director of Design and Construction, Needham MA.

#### **Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett that the Interim Executive Director of the Needham Housing Authority, or his designee, is hereby authorized to enter into an Architectural/Engineering Contract for the Redevelopment at Linden Street and Chambers Street Elderly Development with Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc., of Boston Massachusetts in the amount of \$2,274,250, pursuant to the October 13, 2022 memorandum as corrected from Nathalie Janson to Stephen Merritt.

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

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

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

- Cambridge Housing Authority Status Update Report  
There was no additional discussion on the enclosed CHA Report.
- Repositioning Options  
This item was discussed along with Timing Issues.
- Timing Issues – Obligation Deadlines FY19, FY20, FY21 Capital Fund Program  
Mr. Merritt reported on Timing Issues ahead of Repositioning Options. He referred to the NHA Capital Fund Program for FY19, FY20, and FY21. He stated that each funding year has an obligation start deadline and an obligation end deadline. He summarized the work activity for each grant award. He explained the significance of meeting obligation start deadlines and obligation end deadlines and how the timing of this ties into the repositioning strategies for CRCD and SBW. He pointed out that FY21 Capital Fund Grant Award has a work activity for roofs at CRCD in the amount of \$285K with an obligation end deadline of February 22, 2023, and that the NHA would need to procure those services ASAP, which would affect the repositioning strategy for this property. He noted that the NHA has a significant amount of money for capital projects coupled with a significant amount of immediate need. Margaret Moran noted that completion of the capital fund projects would affect the calculation and choices for the NHA's repositioning strategies. A general discussion followed. Mr. Merritt stated that CRCD could benefit immensely from the Capital Fund Grant Awards for FY19, FY20, and FY21. He suggested that the NHA do a Streamline Voluntary Conversion, which would increase the amount of income that comes in. A general discussion followed on Faircloth Authority and the impact on redevelopment at Linden and Chambers and High Rock Estates.
- Quarterly Financial Report  
Chair Foster stated that the PRI Financial Report is not ready for discussion.
- FY24 CPA Funding Application  
Chair Foster stated that the FY2024 CPA applications are due December 1, 2022. He stated that three applications for funding were considered but that two will be submitted and that the applications are being drafted and reviewed by the CHA. He added that the final draft for application funding would come before the Board for approval at the November meeting for submission to the CPC by the application date deadline of December 1, 2022.
- Legal Services RFS – status update  
Chair Foster stated that a Request for Services (RFS) was issued on September 1<sup>st</sup> and one response was received. He stated that given the lack of competitiveness the RFS would be re-issued in January 2023.

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

1. Certificate of Substantial Completion - \$79,888.00  
Mr. Merritt stated that this is the completion of the vinyl siding replacement project at 28 Captain Robert Cook Drive. Mr. Merritt stated that Board approval for this would allow the NHA to draw down that money from the FY2018 Capital Fund Award and partially from the 2019 Capital Fund Award to pay the final bill for this project.
- Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Scheideler and seconded by Commissioner Kirk that the Board approve the final completion of this project in the amount of \$79,888.

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

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

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

2. After School Program – Fall 2022 Reopening Report  
Mr. Merritt stated that the After School Program report is included in the Board Packet. He stated that the program is up and running and doing well. He stated that he has met a few of the Babson College tutors and staff from the John Eliot School.
3. Plan to return Unit 42 CRCD to service - **In Process**  
Mr. Merritt stated that this item is still in process. He stated that Gary Kuphal and the maintenance staff continue to work on this unit.
4. Paving Project – Seabeds Way and CRCD.  
Mr. Merritt stated that he and Mr. Kuphal are in conversation about this project. He stated that Mr. Kuphal has contacted a firm that would design the project.
5. Linden Chambers Camera issues update  
Gary Kuphal reported on this item. He stated that he has met with the President of the company came who presented solutions to replace antennas and adding DVR boxes throughout the site.
6. Seabeds Way/CRCD CCTV System Begins Spring/Fall of 2022  
Mr. Merritt stated that the NHA is working with a company that will design the system. A general discussion followed on including resident input on the project.
7. Resident Survey – final version – sent out 10/17/22  
Mr. Merritt stated that the Resident Survey has been mailed and residents have been asked to return the survey by November 4, 2022. A general discussion followed. The conversation veered to comments from Commissioner Kirk involving grants. Commissioner Kirk stated that because the NHA had not had a Resident Service Coordinator to write grants for the grant opportunities that were coming up she took it upon herself to write the grants for the Needham Council for Arts and Culture grant program, as well as a larger grant she intends to see to completion and that after that she intends to hand over grant writing opportunities to Laurie Blake, NHA Resident Service Coordinator. Commissioner Kirk stated that she would be more than happy to help Laurie with any grant writing opportunities that she may encounter. Commissioner added that she had planned to not continue to write grants for the duration of her term.



## **H. New Business:**

### 1. Acceptance of Donation of Van from the Town of Needham

Mr. Merritt stated that the van from the Town is in good working order and ready to go. He stated that it is a 12-passenger van which would keep it under a regular driver's license rather than a CDL license. A general conversation ensued on the logistics of van use.

#### **Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Scheideler to that the Needham Housing Authority, with gratitude to the Town of Needham, accepts the donation of the 2021 Ford E-350 Van from the Health and Human Services Department as previously approved by the Needham Select Board.

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

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

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

### 2. Member Items, (if any)

## **I. Adjournment**

### **Motion and Vote**

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Bennett and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to adjourn the NHA and HRH LLC Board meeting at 9:01 pm.

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

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

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

**Next NHA & HRH LLC Board Meeting: November 17, 2022, at 7:30 PM**

### **Minutes Prepared by**

*Cheryl Gosmon*