

**NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
HIGH ROCK HOMES LLC MEETING**

August 19, 2021

MINUTES

ROLL CALL TO CONVENE THE MEETINGS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chair Reg Foster
Vice Chair Eleanor Evans
Treasurer Ed Scheideler
Commissioner Penny Kirk
Commissioner Janice Bennett

NHA STAFF PRESENT:

Gary Kuphal, Facilities Manager

GUESTS: Margaret Moran & Nathalie Janson, Cambridge Housing Authority

The Chair declared a quorum and stated that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the Secretary of the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) by preparing a Public Notice dated August 12, 2021, 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.

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CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chair Foster announced that Ms. Medeiros will not be attending this meeting because she’s on vacation. Gary Kuphal will represent her.

Chair Foster noted that our next meeting is Thursday, September 16, 2021, and we’d previously decided that every 3rd Board meeting (i. e. next month’s) will be held in person. However since that decision, the country and state are going through another pandemic spike due to the Delta variant. Chair Foster polled the Board. After discussion, the Board decided that the September 16, 2021 meeting should be by Zoom only.

AGENDA

1. Status Update & Approval-- Modernization/Redevelopment Initiative (MRI):
 - Introductions to CHA Project Leadership

Chair Foster introduced Margaret Moran and Nathalie Janson of the Cambridge Housing Authority. For the MRI engagement, Margaret will be the Principal in Charge and Nathalie will be the Project Manager.

Ms. Moran opened by saying she's honored to be working with NHA again as she worked with NHA during the mid 2000's during the 2006-2009 redevelopment at High Rock Homes.

Nathalie Janson is a graduate of Harvard University's Graduate School of Design with over 5 years of experience working in affordable housing. Her last most recent assignment has been as project manager for the CHA engagement with the Medford Housing Authority. She will be involved in all stages of of the MRI development projects from pre-development through construction closing.

Ms. Moran and Ms. Jansen then delivered a Powerpoint presentation which is attached to these minutes.

- Q & A with Board

Commissioner Bennett asked what happens to the Federal and State 5 year capital plan funding the Board approved earlier this year. Ms. Moran said that that the capital plan funding requirements get folded into the financials of each new project we undertake. In essence, instead of making the improvements over a five year period, they are implemented all at the same time.

Commissioner Evans is curious about the role and time commitment required from the Board and NHA staff. Ms. Moran answered that a significant amount of time will be required. The NHA ED and staff will need to do lot of legwork and analysis, and the Board will be approving all major decisions. Ms. Moran went on to provide several examples of the type of decisions which will need to be made. The Board and the ED will need to understand enough about the modernization and redevelopment programs so they feel confident and comfortable making these decisions.

Mrs. Kirk stated that it seems that CHA will be educating the board and staff. We will be able to rely on CHA's experience and expertise. Ms. Moran answered in the affirmative...up to a point. NHA still needs a strong, knowledgeable ED and Board. Plus the CHA can't take on the on day-to-day activities that are needed to support the MRI. That's why she feels NHA is smart to be considering the additional management support position, the new ass't executive director.

Commissioner Scheideler commented that we will also benefit from having Mr. Foster on board, given his previous development experience with the Marion Affordable Housing Trust. He also noted that several of the NHA Board members are retired and will be able to commit significant time to this endeavor.

Following up on the questions from Ms. Evans and Ms. Kirk, Chair Foster said the Commissioners are interested in Ms. Moran's opinion about the type of NHA management support to ensure success with the MRI engagement ahead. What would you do if you were us?

Ms. Moran answered that she'd recommend bringing on board the Ass't ED position now, to perform the day-to-day operational activities, in the form currently proposed. The draft Ass't Executive Director position description looks good. This will free up Ms. Medeiros' time (except for her core responsibilities) to help the Board and the NHA to position itself for the modernization and redevelopment activities. It has to be the Executive Director who does these tasks, because she's the one who has to make the myriad of decisions and changes that will enable the NHA to continue to be the management, maintenance and operators of its housing, rather than outsource

these functions to a private company. As the NHA's leader, the Executive Director has to be the one leading the charge.

- Q & A with Residents

Ross Donald asked about the DHCD Innovations Program at Medford. Ms. Jansen described how the program was being accomplished, and the pros/cons/challenges. Mr. Donald continued with a question about zero energy housing and, more generally about quality of life for residents. Ms. Jansen responded on how these issues are handled by the CHA during the MRI process. Chair Foster noted that resident input will be solicited along the way, and that tonight won't be the last opportunity to ask questions and provide input.

Jessica Reese, president of the Cooks Bridge Association asked if a copy of the CHA slides could be made available.

David Shubow asked about (1) accessibility and (2) how the projects will be financed...where will the money come from. Ms. Jansen answered all modernization and redevelopment projects will have the requirements of the ADA and Mass. MAAB. Chair Foster added that the 2019 Facilities Management Plan Section 8 has a "readers digest" description of available funding sources.

Chair Foster announced that the NHA will be taking advantage of upcoming public education opportunities. Coming up in the next few months are:

- Press Release announcing CHA
- EJM Needham Channel program on NHA and the MRI
- LWV Housing Forum October 28, 2021

RESIDENT/TENANT INPUT:

Chair Foster asked if there was any other resident comments before we moved on to the rest of the agenda.

David Shubow asked whether we'd be building high rise buildings. The answer is "no".

Sue Biasizzo and Ross Donald made the case for providing access to the Board meeting recordings, and making a transcript of the recordings. They pointed out that recently, the Board had taken more than a month to approve past meeting minutes.

Chair Foster noted that this question had been posed to past Boards and the answer had previously been "no", the written minutes of each meeting are the official records. Also the recording files are very large, and we don't have the capacity, with our current server configuration, to store many months of recordings.

The Board discussed their perspectives with respect to Board meeting recordings, eventually deciding on the following approach. ED Medeiros would be asked if access to a meeting recording could be provided for a temporary period, until the official written meeting minutes are approved, usually at the next monthly Board meeting. That would provide interim information to our residents, but get around the problem of acquiring huge additional storage capacity.

2. Discussion & Approval: New Assistant Executive Director Position

Chair Foster opened this agenda item by recapping the Board's discussions at previous meetings. We have gathered about as much additional information as possible over the past couple of months. A motion to approve the new assistant director position has been considered and discussed at each Board meeting since June 24. A funding proposal has been presented and discussed. The Board has received Ms. Moran's recommendations and also those of Rich Leco, our executive recruiter. Chair Foster thinks that we're at point where we're ready to vote on the proposal, and asked if there're any additional comments from Board members.

Commissioner Scheideler said that, listening to Margaret Moran's and Karen Sunnarborg's recommendations, he heard them saying that the NHA could make do with a half-time Ass't Executive Director. While he acknowledges that executive recruiter Rick Leco's opinion that it'd be near-impossible to find a qualified part-time candidate, Mr. Scheideler disagrees. His observation is that because the Town of Needham is a very affluent community, and there are a lot of intelligent, college educated young mothers that would love to find a part-time job with "mother's hours", while her children are in school. They might find an NHA ass't executive director position much more enjoyable and rewarding job than lesser opportunities that are available to them, such as a retail sales job. Mr. Scheideler thinks we should be exploring whether any well-educated young mothers would be interested in the ass't executive director's position on a part-time basis.

In response to Mr. Scheideler's comments Commissioner Evans noted that, however intelligent, a candidate would need a background and specific experience in public housing as laid out in the job description. Commissioner Scheideler responded by stating he disagreed: that no prior experience is needed. He thought the day-to-day activities of an executive director could be taught to an intelligent person who would pick them up quickly.

Chair Foster then asked if Commissioners Bennett or Kirk had any comments. Ms. Kirk had nothing further. Ms. Bennett stated that she mostly concurred with Commissioner Scheideler, that a part-timer looking for "mother's hours" could be found...someone who might be able to expand to full-time hours in a couple of years, when needed. She also was concerned about the expense of bringing on a full-time person now, given that the exact source of funding in future years wasn't completely certain. Regarding whether prior experience was necessary, she thought candidates should have some background in public housing. In her opinion there'd be a number of NHA tenants who'd have sufficient experience to do the job, who might be interested in applying for the position.. Ms. Bennett also noted that we had the CHA backing up the NHA. If we didn't have enough management capacity, the CHA could help us. Ms. Bennett had been very impressed with Margaret Moran's commitment to the NHA.

Chair Foster offered his comments. He noted that the NHA had reached out to our executive Rich Leco on the likelihood of finding qualified part-time candidate, he thought we'd be unlikely to succeed. Mr. Foster is opposed to looking for a "fast-learner" candidate with no background in public housing. In his view, several of years of training and expertise is required to apply the complex federal/state guidelines..., requiring experienced decision making. We don't want a green ass't ED learning on the job. Plus, if we relied on Ms. Medeiros to train an inexperienced recruit, we haven't really offloaded her.

Chair Foster also disagreed that Margaret Moran recommended a part-time hire, rather than a full time person. Rather he heard her recommending us to go forward with the proposal for a full time ass't ED hire. In addition he heard Ms. Moran emphasize the complexity and workload involved with proceeding with the Modernization and Redevelopment Initiative, necessitating a significant time commitment from the Executive Director and the Board. The only way to be successful is for the ED to have the band-width to support the MRI effort and support the Board's decision-making. In Mr.

Foster's opinion, Ms. Moran praised our wisdom and foresight for on-boarding the assistant executive director position now, so that person can get up-to-speed over the next few months and offload most day-to-day management responsibilities from Ms. Medeiros (except for her core responsibilities.)

To move forward, Chair Foster proposed supporting a resolution that acknowledges the interest of some of the Board members in the Ass't ED starting on a part-time basis. Chair Foster made the following motion (with clarifying assistance by other Commissioners), which was seconded by Commissioner Kirk.

RESOLUTION #2021-175

To approve the position description and funding plan for a new Assistant Executive Director position and authorize the Executive Director to commence recruiting for this position, hopefully on a part-time basis to begin with, and growing into a full-time position as the workload demands.

Chair Foster asked if there was any further discussion. Commissioner Bennett asked: is the growth from part-time to full-time "automatic". Also she opined that notwithstanding adding this position, the Board needs to be very involved in detailed oversight of modernization and redevelopment activities.

Commissioner Evans wondered whether it might be important that the position provide benefits to attract a good recruit. More than half-time hours might be necessary to qualify. Chair Foster acknowledged that might be true, but Board needs to rely on the Executive Director and the recruiter to make this sort of determination during the recruiting process.

Mr. Scheideler noted that the Board hires the Executive Director. Since the Assistant Executive Director is also a management position, does this mean that the Board will be involved in the recruiting process for this position. Chair Foster answered "no", unless invited by the executive director. The Board's only hiring responsibility is for the executive director position. The hiring of all other NHA personnel is the sole responsibility of the Executive Director, including for an assistant executive director position.

(Penny had a star next to this, not sure if that means to take out whole paragraph or not).

Commissioner Bennett then stated that, speaking for herself, she'd like to amend the resolution to require Board approval if the position is expanded from half time to full time. She thought this was the sense of the Board discussions the past couple of months. Chair Foster said he was not comfortable with this idea and would like to "stand pat" on the resolution as currently worded.

Commissioner Kirk returned to the question of benefits, asking hypothetically: so the position might be more than a half-time position if that's what's required for benefits, right? Mr. Foster responded in the affirmative, if that's what's needed to hire a qualified person. Commissioner Scheideler then added: if we're fortunate enough to find one of our well educated young mothers here in Needham, then her husband is likely to have very good benefits, so she won't need them from the NHA. As Chair Foster was responding that Mr. Scheideler's remarks were "totally speculative", Ms. Evans interjected, and objecting to Mr. Scheideler's remarks as "outdated". Chair Foster agreed, ending the discussion and calling for a vote.

The rollcall vote in favor was: Commissioners Foster, Evans, Scheideler and Kirk in favor.

Opposed was: Commissioner Bennett.

The motion carries 4-1

3. Discussion: Board Training – Scheduled for August 22, 2021

The training session is scheduled from 9AM-12PM at the Needham Sheraton. Chair Foster touched base with the trainer and he has received everyone's questions.

4. Discussion & Approval: Minutes of NHA Board Meetings:

Chair Foster apologized for the tardiness of the draft May 20 and June 24 meeting minutes. Commissioner Scheideler felt strongly that we should recommit ourselves to the goal of getting the draft minutes out in more timely fashion, perhaps one week after the meeting takes place. The other Commissioners agreed. Chair Foster said maybe we'd should shoot for 2 weeks, then work ourself down to 1 week.

Ms. Kirk said she had some minor typos and thoughts to fix in the draft minutes. She'll forward them to Ms. Medeiros and Mr. Foster.

RESOLUTION #2021-176

To approve Minutes of the following Board Meetings:

- May 20, 2021, Executive Session Minutes
- June 24, 2021, Special Meeting Minutes
- July 15, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes.

Upon a motion duly made by Chair Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett, after fixing grammatical errors it was approved unanimously by a vote of 5-0 in favor.

5. Status Update & Discussion:

- 2020 High Rock Homes LLC Audit

The Audit was missing from the Board Packet, and will be considered next month.

- Needham Community Preservation Plan Update; NHA designated representative to the CPC
Chair Foster noted that the Town is updating the 2014 Needham Community Preservation Plan and will be looking to the NHA for input.

Chair Foster recapped that Mrs. Kirk has previously stated that she'd like to step down as NHA's Community Preservation Committee representative, but no other board members have showed interest in taking over the position. He noted that it's especially important that we have a commissioner filling our CPC seat, since we expect the MRI to lead to more applications for money in the upcoming funding cycle. Accordingly he is willing to take over from Ms. Kirk, if no one else is available.

Chair Foster then made a motion to appoint himself as the NHA representative to the Community Preservation Committee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Scheideler. There being no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously 5-0.

- Security Cams Initiative

Mr. Kuphal stated that there was no new news. Equipment has been delayed due to pandemic disruptions to the supply chain. The design has been done, so a kick-off date will be set after the components arrive.

- After School Program Reboot

Mr. Kuphal stated the parent meeting had been scheduled two weeks ago to receive their input, but only Ms. Bennett and the NPS assistant principal showed up along with Deb Tambeau.

Ms. Bennett offered her opinions about why parents didn't show up, and Mr. Kuphal offered his opinions. Ms. Bennett concluded that Covid wrecked the old program, and she is very sad this happened. She'd very much like to get back to the DD Program. Maybe we'd be more successful soliciting parent input if the meeting was sponsored by the tenants' association.

Chair Foster mentioned that there is already an after school program in Needham that's been in place since the 1980s -- Needham Extended Day Program (<https://www.nedpkids.com>). Maybe we should check with them to see if they can help us. Ms. Kirk said that she thought this might be worth looking into if this is what the parents want and scholarship funds could be found.

Commissioner Scheideler suggested that we have a special board meeting on just the after school program. He thinks that the whole subject is a matter of NHA policy, and the Board should receive a detailed presentation and get deeply involved in the details of rebooting the program. Ms. Bennett agreed, but thought the agenda should also include use of the facility as a community room as well.

Mrs. Evans likes the idea of the tenants association trying to organize a meeting with the parents, because an impetus for rebooting the after school program (or doing something else) should come from the parents. This should happen before we schedule a special board meeting.

Chair Foster asked Jessica Reese if this is something that the TA would be willing to take on, and she said "yes"...she thinks this is a good idea. He then summarized the discussion as follows.

- The Cooks Bridge Tenants Association will try to organize a parents meeting to find out what they want. They are willing to invite the High Rock parents as well.
- We will try to find out more about other available alternatives, like NEDP.
- Once we have more information, we can consider a special board meeting.

Ms. Kirk added that a key question for the parents is: do they want their own program, or would they prefer their kids to be part of a Needham-wide program, like NEDP?

6. Information & Discussion: Executive Director's Report, Financial Report, Vacancy Report, Workorder Report.

Commissioner Scheideler asked for an explanation for why Linden/Chambers still has 26 vacant units, when he was led to believe that , once the state hold was lifted, we'd have all the units rented by the end of May. Mr. Kuphal outlined the process as he understood it, but agreed to forward the question to Ms. Medeiros to address when she gets back from vacation.

7. Approval: NHA Bill/Check Warrant

Chair Foster informed the Board that our new bookkeeper quit unexpectedly without notice. Carol Capone has come off retirement to help us out temporarily, and Ms. Medeiros is looking for a replacement. Ms. Kirk wondered why the position description included HR responsibilities. Mr. Kuphal answered that in years past, Mrs. Capone had handled HR, and this was probably the answer. He will forward the question to Ms. Medeiros.

RESOLUTION #2021-177

To approve payment of the bill roll/check roll listed on the Warrant dated August 19, 2021, in the amount of \$228,687.83 as follows:

Section 8: 113 vouchers	\$136,078.00
Payroll checks (7/14/2021) #502256-502267	\$9,911.81
Payroll checks (6/23/2021) #502268-502279	\$10,047.62
Payroll checks (6/30/2021) #502280-502292	\$9,940.05
Payroll checks (7/7/2021) #502293-502305	\$9,504.96
A/P Checks 1 st batch (7/28/2021) #33575-#33612	\$143,198.24
A/P Checks 2 nd batch (8/12/2021) #33613-#33634	\$85,489.59

Upon a motion duly made by Chair Foster and seconded by Commissioner Evans, it was approved unanimously by a vote of 5-0 in favor.

8. Approval: HRH LLC Bill/Check Warrant

RESOLUTION #HRH2021-37

To approve payment of the bill roll/check roll listed on the Warrant dated August 19,2021, in the amount of \$51,783.44 as follows:

A/P Checks (8/12/2021) #3161-3171..... \$51,783.44

Upon a motion duly made by Chair Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett, it was approved unanimously by a vote of 5-0 in favor.

9. Upon a motion duly made to adjourn the meeting by Chair Foster and seconded by Commissioner Kirk, it was approved unanimously by a vote of 5-0 in favor.