

**NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

MINUTES

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

ROLL CALL BY CHAIR FOSTER TO CONVENE THE REGULAR MEETINGS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

NHA STAFF PRESENT:

Angie Medeiros, Executive Director
Gary Kuphal, Director of

Chair Foster called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM and roll-called Commissioners present at the February 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 February 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:

Chair Foster announced that he is a brand new granddaddy, a baby girl. He stated that the mother and granddaughter are well and resting comfortably. He also stated that he has not had the pleasure of meeting the new addition to his family, but that he hopes to rectify that tomorrow. The Board congratulated Commissioner Foster on the birth of his granddaughter.

RESIDENTS IN ATTENDANCE/RESIDENT INPUT:

Chair Foster stated that residents in attendance are Ross Donald, Sue Biasizzo, Kalpana Shaw, Richard Dey, and a guest, from State Representative Denise Garlick's office, Maureen Callahan.

Ross Donald thanked Chair Foster for the roster of the attendees. He stated that it is important, and it helps to know who is attending the meeting. Mr. Donald expressed appreciation to Cheryl Gosmon for doing an excellent job on the minutes. Mr. Donald stated that he would still like to see an audio record of the meetings. Mr. Donald referred to the Executive Director's Report and the discussion of the Community room at Seabeds Way. He stated that he would like to see programming at the Linden Chambers Community Room. He also referred to the Executive Director's goals and noted that the discussion on this was left out of the meeting minutes. He stated that he would like to offer resident input on the Executive Director's goals. Chair Foster noted that the Executive Director's goals are on the agenda and would be discussed later in the meeting.

Sue Biasizzo stated that she watched the recording of the NHA Special Meeting and was upset to hear the lack of decorum and disagreements on everything. She stated it was a waste of time. She stated that many of the agenda items were tabled because the meeting time was running out. She stated that we as residents are given 3 minutes to talk and we have to listen to all the disagreements all the sniping that occurs. She stated that she cannot demand this but is strongly encouraging mediation for everyone. She added that it is good that the meetings are not televised like other Needham Board meetings. She stated that the Board would be hearing a lot of negative comments from Needham residents on the way the Board behaves at the meetings. She stated she feels very strongly that mediation should be considered.

Kalpana Shaw referred to CPA funding and asked what are the NHA's plans for that funding. Ms. Shaw asked about the status of the After School Program and suggested that the program start again in the fall. Chair Foster expressed appreciation to Ms. Shaw for her questions and stated that the Board would be talking about those topics later in the meeting.

AGENDA AND DISCUSSION

A. Approval: NHA Bill/Check Warrant

RESOLUTION #2022-208

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 February 17, 2022, in the amount of \$282,564.47.

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

B. Approval: HRH LLC Bill/Check Warrant

RESOLUTION #HRH2022-43

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve payment of the HRH LLC bill/check roll listed on the Warrant dated February 17, 2022, in the amount of \$44,303.12

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

C. Review & Approval

1. 1/20/2022 Minutes of NHA & HRH LLC Regular Board Meeting

RESOLUTION #2022-209

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the minutes of the 1/20/2022 NHA and HRH LLC Regular Board Meetings as submitted.

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

2. 2/2/2022 Minutes of NHA Special Board Meeting

RESOLUTION #2022-210

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Evans to approve the minutes of the 2/2/2022 NHA Special Board Meeting as submitted.

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

D. Status Update:

1. Housing Plan Working Group

Commissioner Scheideler reported that Karen Sonnenberg has been working on the Housing Needs Assessment and she anticipates having that ready by the end of February. He stated that Lee Newman has been working on Community Housing and there will be a discussion workshop on March 10th on how to plan the workshop, then a workshop on March 24th, and debriefing back to the working group on April 14th to prepare next steps.

2. Community Preservation Committee

Commissioner Foster stated that there are twelve CPA applications, four of which are the NHA's. He stated that the NHA has not done anything additionally for the CPC since the initial presentation at the meeting of January 12th. Out of that meeting came several follow-up actions items which are nearing completion and will be reviewed by the CPS at the next CPC meeting, on Wednesday, February 23rd, at 7:00 PM. He stated that the NHA was asked to update its five-year projection of CPA funds needed for the Modernization and Redevelopment Initiative. He stated that the CPC is also requesting Gantt Chart Timelines for each of the projects and that he and Executive Director Medeiros have been working on this. The CPC is asking the NHA to fine-tune its funding requests based on their analysis and input and that the to prepare a draft Town Meeting handout for the annual Town Meeting in May. Chair Foster stated that he will submit a draft of all this work to the Board as soon as possible. Chair Foster stated that there will be a final CPC meeting on March 2nd, a meeting on March 8th with the Select Board. On March 16th is the Public Hearing. Chair Foster stated that the CPC will meet with the Finance Committee on March 23rd, and do the final vote on the CPA funding requests on March 30th.

3. Modernization & Redevelopment Initiative Update

Chair Foster stated that there is a monthly status report in the Board Packet. He presented information on the formation of the Local Designer Selection Committee. He referred to the state laws that govern this process. He stated that DHCD has a list of approved firms that can develop a schematic design for the Linden/Chamber Project. Chair Foster described the makeup of the Designer Selection Committee, which would include an architect or engineer, Cambridge Housing, an NHA senior staff member, and an NHA resident, and a member of the public. He noted that NHA Commissioners can not be a member of the Designer Selection Committee. Chair Foster stated that he will reach out to the PPBC and other architects in town for recommendations. He added that he would like to have a slate of attendees on lined by the March meeting, for approval by the Board.

E. Status Update and Discussion:

1. NHA Office Relocation Plan and Costs – to 21 Highland Circle

Executive Director Medeiros provided an update on 21 Highland Circle. She noted that the lease as been reviewed by legal counsel and is included in the Board Packet for Board approval.

2. After School Program Reopening Plan and Budget

Executive Director Medeiros noted that the Omicron wave is receding, and she plans to re-open the After School Program the first week of March. She stated that she has prepared a budget which is also in the Board Packet and once it is approved, she will send it to the Fee Account.

3. Plan to Return Cooks Bridge Unit 42 to Service

Executive Director Medeiros stated that the plan is to use 42 Captain Robert Cook Drive to house the After School Program until the end of the school year in June. Thereafter, it will be restored to service as a 4 bedroom unit of deeply affordable housing.

4. Plan to Restore 28 Captain Robert Cook Drive to a Community Center

Executive Director Medeiros stated that there is not a plan in place yet to restore 28 Captain Robert Cook Drive to a Community Center. She added that the plan would be to come up with a design and a budget. She noted that there are a lot of moving parts and that the process would begin soon.

Discussion on the Above

Executive Director Medeiros responded to Commissioner Kirk's questions and stated that she has not received the sign-up form from students to date. She noted that the budget was prepared based on historical practice and would present a more granular budget for the Board's consideration at the next Board meeting.

Commissioner Bennett suggested that children come to the Community Room in person to sign-up for the program. Commissioner Bennett also suggested that the After School Program begin again in September.

Commissioner Evans referred to the After School Program Director compensation. She urged Executive Director Medeiros to consult with legal counsel on whether this position would qualify as an independent contractor under M.G.L. or an employee of the NHA.

F. Review and Approval:

1. Lease and relocation budget for the New NHA Office at 21 Highland Circle

Chair Foster opened this item for discussion. He described the process the staff would engage in during the relocation of the NHA Admin Office. Executive Director Medeiros noted that the staff will do the packing in preparation for the movers on Saturday and on Monday staff would begin to unpack. She added that Comcast and the NHA IT person would set up the computers and phones on Monday. The move is scheduled for the weekend of March 4-7. Gary Kuphal, Director of Maintenance shared a few brief comments on preliminary plans for restoring 28 Captain Robert Cook Drive (CRCD) to a community room.

Discussion on the Above Four Reports

Commissioner Evans asked why the move was not happening on March 1st. Executive Director Medeiros stated that the owner of the building allowed NHA access to the building to accommodate the move.

Commissioner Kirk asked if the Commissioners could have input on the design restoration for the community room at 28 CRCD and that she would like to see a small kitchen added. Executive Director Medeiros stated that she would engage the Tenant Association in this planning as well.

The conversation veered to a discussion on safety and liability in a functioning kitchen at 28 CRCD. Chair Foster suggested checking back in with the Department of Early

Education and Care (EEC) to be sure that the NHA is following any rules and regulations that might be in place to ensure the safety of young children.

Commissioner Scheideler stated that there was a slight change in the price of the lease, but based on the original proposal, a seven-year lease with annual escalations would cost \$558,194 as well as approximately \$21,000 for moving costs and remodeling expenses are higher than originally estimated and it puts the total cost in the neighborhood of approximately \$600,000 for this move. He stated that the NHA is aggressively seeking money for a new initiative and while a new expanded office is going to be a very nice environment for all of the people working in the office, it seems that \$600,000 could be better spent. He stated that the Board should consider maintaining the status quo until it has a new building over at Linden and Chambers.

After some discussion Chair Foster noted that Commissioner Scheideler's numbers were somewhat incorrect. He stated that the overall cost is approximately \$542,000 over the seven years. He noted that the NHA is not committing to the entire \$542,000, just committing to \$70,000 for the first year's rent and \$72,000 for the second year's rent, etc. He reminded everyone that to calculate the net cost of this initiative, you need to back out the additional revenue from HUD when Unit 42 is placed back in service. This revenue amount is approximately \$213,000 or more, making the net cost of the 7 year office lease \$529,000. He stated that the NHA had an early termination option to give a one-year notice and to get out of the lease at any time. He noted that Commissioner Scheideler was correct in noting the huge expense, but it is being spent to accomplish many benefits. Commissioner Kirk asked if the lease agreement be amended to include the NHA leaving as soon as possible and returning to the NHA campus. Chair Foster noted that NHA would know well in advance of the completion date for a new on-campus office, so the one year advance notice is adequate.

RESOLUTION #2022-214

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the lease and relocation budget for the new NHA office at 21 Highland Circle, Needham, MA 02494

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Kirk, aye; Commissioner Bennett, aye; Commissioner Evans, aye; Commissioner Scheideler, no; and Commissioner Foster, aye.

The motion carried. The vote was 4-1 in favor.

2. Ancillary Program Budgets

2022 After School Program Budget

RESOLUTION #2022-215

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Evans to approve the 2022 Afterschool Program Budget.

Discussion

Commissioner Scheideler asked if any additional contributions have been raised. Executive Director Medeiros responded that she does not have the exact information but would get it to him. Commissioner Scheideler asked if tutors have been lined up for the program. Executive Director Medeiros responded that tutors have not been lined up yet.

After some discussion between the Commissioners on the pros/cons of reopening the afterschool program on March 7 vs. waiting until the beginning of the Fall school year, Chair Foster summarized that it is the consensus of the Board that the Afterschool Program should not open until Fall, 2022.

Vote

The Board did not vote on this resolution. Staff were request to resubmit a new budget for consideration not later than the June, 2022 Board meeting.

2022 Modernization & Redevelopment Initiative Budget

RESOLUTION #2022-216

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to approve the 2022 Modernization and Redevelopment Initiative budget as submitted.

Discussion

Chair Foster asked if there were any questions re: the proposed 2022 MRI Budget. There were none.

Roll call vote:

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

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

G. Discussion and Approval: Executive Director 2022 Annual Salary Review

Chair Foster opened this item for discussion. He referred to the regulation for setting the maximum salaries for executive directors. He described the formula DHCD uses in calculating salaries. Chair Foster stated that the Board, following past practices, would look at the salary review for the executive director in two components: one is the cost of living adjustment component (COLA), and the other a merit increase. The latter is a combination of how Executive Director Medeiros did on her 2021 goals and her 2021 performance evaluation.

Chair Foster provided US and Mass. data that to keep even with inflation, Ms. And proposed that Medeiros would need an increase of somewhere between 6.3% and 7% to maintain the purchasing power of her current salary from Jan 2021 – Jan 2022. He stated that he would like the Board to talk about the COLA component first.

Commissioner Kirk asked what the COLA component is in our current union agreement. Chair Foster replied that he thought is was around 3%. *[Correction after the meeting: the COLA amount for administrative personnel is 2.5% and the COLA for maintenance personnel is fixed pursuant to MGL Chapter 121B, Section 29.]* Commissioner Scheideler, Kirk, Bennett, and Evans then expressed their opinions on Chair Foster’s COLA proposal for Executive Director Medeiros. They also expressed their opinions regarding whether Ms. Medeiros should receive a merit increase. The collective opinion expressed in these discussions is Ms. Medeiros should not receive a COLA increase, and should not receive a merit increase.

Commissioner Evans presented rationale and arguments making the case that Ms. Medeiros should receive a COLA increase and also a merit increase.

At the conclusion of the Board discussion, Chair Foster presented the vote in two parts. The first is a vote on the COLA for Executive Director Medeiros.

RESOLUTION #2022-211

Commissioner Foster moved and Commissioner Evans seconded the motion to approve an increase to the Executive Director's annual salary by 6.3% to keep her even with the cost of living that has risen year over year in this region.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Foster, yes; Commissioner Evans, yes; Commissioner Bennett, no; Commissioner Kirk, no; and Commissioner Scheideler, no.

The motion failed. The vote was 2 yes and 3 no.

RESOLUTION #2022-211-2

Commissioner Foster moved and Commissioner Evans seconded the motion to approve a 4.5% merit increase to the Executive Director's annual salary because of her growth, skills, and abilities as an employee.

Additional Discussion

Commissioner Scheideler stated that what the Driscoll's said to him was that he should be using the numeric reports that the Board receives every month to assess the progress or performance of the Executive Director and that he shouldn't be looking for oversight and any oversight that might be granted should be an oversight on these reports. He stated that the numeric reports are not favorable at all.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Scheideler, no; Commissioner Bennett, no; Commissioner Kirk, no; Commissioner Evans, yes; and Commissioner Foster, yes.

The motion failed. The vote was 2 yes and 3 no.

H. Discussion and Approval: Executive Director 2022 Goals

Chair Foster opened this item for discussion. Commissioner Kirk stated that in terms to follow up on the After School Program job description is not included in the Executive Director 2022 Goals. Commissioner Kirk stated that she would add, "Improve relations with residents."

Commissioner Kirk ask what the policy is for sending a "Notice to Quit" to residents. She asked if there is a meeting with residents ahead of sending out this information. Chair Foster stated that this level does not go into goals nor does the job description for an Afterschool Director.

RESOLUTION #2022-212

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Foster and seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the Executive Director's 2022 Goals as submitted.

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

I. Information and Discussion:

1. Executive Director's Report, Financial Report, Vacancy Report, Work Order Report.
Commissioner Kirk commented that the idea of adding carpeting on the second floor is wonderful.

Commissioner Bennett referred to the picture of washers and dryers in the Board Packet. She stated that some of the residents had asked that the washer and dryers be placed on a platform. Commission Bennett asked why this was not done. Gary Kuphal responded that putting those appliances on a platform could create a liability for the Housing Authority. He noted that putting the washer and dryers on platforms or pedestals is not an ADA-compliant practice.

2. Ideas for improvements or additional reports

Executive Director Medeiros provided a brief update on the Assistant Executive Director search. She stated that she has an interview set up with the Tenant Association. She stated that she has someone in mind and will follow up on that and report back to the Board next month.

J. Discussion & Approval: Board Procedure Improvements

1. Rules of Procedure – 2022-1-14 Draft

Chair Foster stated that Commissioner Scheideler and Commissioner Evans worked on this report. Commissioner Scheideler stated that Commissioner Evans did an outstanding job, and he accepts everything Commissioner Evans wrote.

Chair Foster stated that he is having second thoughts on the draft. He stated that Commissioner Scheideler sent out ten emails Board of Commissioners in the last couple of weeks or so. He stated that Commissioner Scheideler has not been following the rules and procedures of Roberts' Rules of Order. He added that the Board is not quite where it needs to be. After a lengthy discussion Chair Foster stated that he would seek another opinion from the Attorney General's office as to whether or not the NHA Board has been violating the Open Meeting Law.

2. Adoption of Roberts Rules of Order

RESOLUTION #2022-217

Upon a motion duly made by Commissioner Scheideler and seconded by Commissioner Kirk to adopt the Roberts Rules of Order (newly revised) 12th Edition as the NHA parliamentary procedure.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion carried 4-0-1. The vote was four yes and one abstention.

K. Next Steps -- 2022 Resident Survey

There was no discussion on this item. This item would be brought back for discussion at a further meeting.

L. 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