



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

SEPTEMBER MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 16, 2024
Approved on October 21, 2024

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, September 16, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.
Upon Roll Call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT: Chairperson Carney; Vice-Chairperson Richards; Commissioner Brooks & Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

ABSENT: Commissioner Cancel and Commissioner Jones

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Leiper; Sharon Kimble; Attorney Tom O'Connor; Keith Walsh; Danielle McColgan; Jose Cruz; Deb Walker; Sydney Fahey & Jerry Halberstadt.

TENANT / PUBLIC COMMENT

SALVO RESIDENT –LTO president – disappointed in the letter that was passed out to residents regarding the Northampton Housing LTO. Salvo is going to stay with their own LTO. We are more than happy to direct them to Mass Union who will come up and help them set it up. We need more cooperation with NHA. Waiting for a copy of the mold report and the rugs being cleaned. It is not working very well in giving us things we ask for. Mold report is long overdue and I would like a copy of it this week, please.

SALVO RESIDENT – regarding the cleanup in the back of Salvo and the Cahill apartments. At the last meeting I talked about trash in the parking lot and the woods but I haven't heard back.

WARD 1A RESIDENT – Regarding Cara's conversation about the citywide LTO and that she has Ben Stone's blessing on this project. Would like a copy of EOHLC's letter informing Executive Directors they can form their own initiative, to form their own LTO's and hand pick the tenants. If she can make that public that would be great.

SALVO RESIDENT – I did not get my packet until 3:00 p.m. today. I read the comments about someone who liked the fact that we had separated tenants, residents and staff and they were going to adopt that. I just learned as a tenant that we have board minutes' agenda on our NHA website. I never saw it in the newsletter or got a robo call that this is something that is available. I wish we could upload the meetings too; more people would frequent the NHA website. Disappointed that we don't have our labor appointed commissioner. I did get a letter on my door about an agency wide LTO. It looked like a meeting had already happened and this was a second meeting that was sent out to everyone. Who got to know about it? I was at McDonald House and I saw there was a meeting and they said didn't you know about this, it is a tenant meeting. It feels union busting because the LTO is tenant lead, they have Mass Union and all the training. I don't get the letter and if you can come with me to see what is going on because I am confused about it. I don't know why NHA is a part of it. Administration and tenants should be separated. LTO's have growing pains, we are working on stuff together. There is a lot of new cars and trucks coming around here, I don't remember seeing anything about it. Our rugs need to be cleaned, we need to pay attention to that. The picnic area is there; I am grateful for it. We need mediation, a collaborative

49 Old South Street, Suite 1 • Northampton, MA • 01060

T 413-584-4030 • F 413-582-1350 • TDD 711 • 

resourceful group as an avenue for people to bridge through these differences. I think about racial issues that go on. I have been begging for this on the Board and I don't think we have dealt with this effectively. We have diversity but not equity and inclusion. Ten years ago Mel King came and did training on racism, never did I get anything from Housing. "Those who can't control or manipulate you will try to control how others view you." Keep up the good work.

MCDONALD RESIDENT – on the letter Cara sent out – I did attend Mel King training and also trainings with Grow Food on racism. I suggest everyone try that – there are grumblings among tenants on racism here. Not against me, I am a white woman but I do see it against others. If you don't see it consider attending some of these trainings and then you might see too much of it. I understand Cara wanting to get this LTO going but I think it might behoove us if you explain why you want to get them moving. How is it going to benefit her, you, me, all of us? Maybe a mini training it is important- people are fearful and shy when they hear the word union or training. Please consider the message that was sent, ask our advice, we are glad to give it. How long do I have to ask about my reasonable request?

FLORENCE HEIGHTS RESIDENT – I am happy to see progress on the LTO at NHA. There are a number of properties that don't have an LTO. We are excited to learn the State allows for an agency wide LTO. 760 CMR6.09 - we discovered the State not only allows that but also encourages Housing to aid in the formation of an LTO that represents all residents in a LHA, open aided public housing, city wide, town wide, neighborhood wide or program wide, all of which might include tenants in federal subsidized housing. Some of us from different properties want to be able to advocate together on all issues that affect us. Be on the lookout for opportunities to meet up and join our efforts whether there is an LTO at your property or not. I have been a NHA resident for 14 years, I am Puerto Rican, I don't have an experience of racism by this administration, maybe in the past but not this one. Let's work together and get a better quality of life.

STAFF COMMENTS

NONE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Cara read the report with updates. Also showed pictures of the block parties held at Hampshire Heights and Florence Heights.

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 2024 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Vice-Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Brooks.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield put forth a motion to table the approval of the August meeting minutes until October.

There was no second, therefore, the motion failed. Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield will send it to the Attorney General as a report.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Carney; Vice-Chairperson Richards & Commissioner Brooks.

VOTING NAY: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield

Therefore Chairperson Carney approved the August 2024 minutes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION

STATUS OF FY2023 AUP ACTION PLAN

Chairperson Carney explained why it appears on the agenda. It is required by the State for six months. At this time there is no update on this item.

MOTION

ADOPT REVISED BYLAWS UPON POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION OF GOVERNANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Vice-Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Brooks.

Chairperson Carney put forth a motion to table the adoption of the bylaws until the October Board meeting, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Richards.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Carney; Vice-Chairperson Richards & Commissioner Brooks.

VOTING NAY: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Motion to table.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – it is ironic you have something on the agenda you want tabled because someone isn't here to give sufficient information; I didn't get a second on my motion, I didn't get enough stuff, that is not an issue and it goes right through. Why doesn't that extend to everyone as far as equality here? Let's be fair and civil. On the other hand, there wasn't even a second, why should we do this on something that is important to you? It is important to get full information for this and that was all I was asking.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVE CHANGE ORDER FOR FISH # 214121 FOR \$93,971.79 FOR ELECTRIC STOVE REPLACEMENT AT SALVO.

Commissioner Brooks put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Richards.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Carney; Vice-Chairperson Richards & Commissioner Brooks.

VOTING NAY: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Motion.

Note – FISH – stands for - financial information systems for housing.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – it is not clear to me if this is a new budget item. There was something with the manufacturer that some of the stoves did not work. I would like clarity on this. I am confused by this.

Cara Leiper – there were 90 stoves that were originally replaced in phase two of the stove replacement project that did not work. It is a State project so it is their money, they were trying to get the manufacturer to replace, when they would not it was the State who replaced the 90 stoves. Even though it is the State's \$93,000 they require Board approval because it is done on our property. This is the replacement of the stoves that did not work, the contractor now needs to be paid for the work. EOHLC is asking us to approve to pay the contractor with EOHLC's money.

Chairperson Carney also gave further information on the change order.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I would like more information – who is the contractor? I want to see the letters that went out and their response to that. These rookie mistakes – I don't understand how this keeps happening?

Cara Leiper – the architect is Tighe and Bond, the contractor is Summer Electric who were both chosen by the State. Cara then read what the State asked her to say to the Board –

“The NHA Board of Commissioners approve the change order for the FISH #214121 and the change order is in accordance with article 8 of the general conditions of their contract change proposal 214121 cp 0001 to provide and install 90 premier 24” model ECKLOHOP electric ranges and that it be resolved that the Board of Commissioners of the Northampton Housing Authority hereby authorizes the Executive Director to take all action necessary and proper in accordance with EOHLIC’s contract with respect to the change order.”

Chairperson Carney – you have not heard of any problems with those that have been installed from residents at Salvo with these new stoves?

Cara Leiper – I have heard nothing but praise and happiness and thankfulness that they are working wonderfully and they are performing well.

Chairperson Carney – can you please tell us what is the implication if we choose not to approve this change order as requested by the State?

Cara Leiper – the contractor will not get paid for work that was already done.

Chairperson Carney – what is the implication for this agency?

Cara Leiper – the State will probably pull funding for all of our projects, if you are not going to pay your contractor. This is their money anyway.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – ever since I got the new stove I have started having electrical outs, I have to keep turning the voltage thing back on at least once a month. I never had to do that before I got the new stove. It was horrible for a couple of months, residents complained they couldn’t even boil water and the residents were quite upset about it.

Chairperson Carney – the Executive Director will investigate why Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield once a month has to flip the breaker related to her stove. It could be something not related to the stove but we will investigate.

Commissioner Brooks put forth the motion to adjourn the September 16th meeting at 6:28 p.m. seconded by Vice-Chairperson Richards.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Carney; Vice-Chairperson Richards & Commissioner Brooks.

VOTING NAY: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Motion.