

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
NASHUA HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
HELD APRIL 15, 2022**

The Commissioners of the Nashua Housing and Redevelopment Authority (NHRA) held its regular meeting remotely via phone and computer teleconferencing in Nashua, New Hampshire, at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, April 15, 2022. Chairperson Thomas Monahan called the meeting to order, and the Recording Secretary called the roll at approximately 8:32 a.m. with the following responses:

Present

Thomas Monahan (in a room at his home with no others present)

James Tollner (in his home with no others present)

Eric Wilson (in a private office with no others present)

Paul Deschenes (in a private home office with no others present)

Helen Honorow (in a private office with no others present)

Absent

Nashua Housing and Redevelopment Authority is holding this meeting pursuant to RSA 91 which permits state and local government bodies to utilize the emergency meeting provisions of RSA 91-A to conduct meetings through electronic means while preserving to the extent feasible the public's right to notice of such meetings and the ability to observe and listen contemporaneously. Pursuant to Emergency Order #2 issued pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04, gatherings of fifty people or more are prohibited. 3. To implement these orders and recommendations per the requirements of RSA 91-A:2III(B) that a quorum of a public body be physically present unless immediate action is imperative is waived for the duration of the state of emergency declared by Executive Order #2020-04. To further implement these recommendations and requirements in RSA 91-A:2III(C) that each part of a meeting of a public body be audible or otherwise discernible to the public at the location specified in the meeting notice as the location of the meeting is waived for the duration of the state of emergency declared in Executive Order #2020-04 so long as the public body provides; (a) public access to the meeting by telephone, and additional access by video or other electronic means; (b) provides public notice of necessary information for accessing the meeting; (c) provides a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access; (d) adjourns the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.

The following persons were also present: Bob Mack, Welfare Officer, City of Nashua; Lynn Lombardi, Executive Director; Scott Costa, Assistant Executive Director; Lisa Cox, Section 8 Program Manager; Cedric Dancy, Property Manager; David Sanchez, Property Manager; Maureen Killoran, Asset Manager; Sean Fagan, Facilities Manager; James Floras, Modernization Manager, and Andrea Reed-Lenane, Recording Secretary.

MINUTES:

The Chairperson entertained a motion to waive the reading of the Authority's regular meeting minutes and nonpublic meeting minutes dated March 18, 2022, accept them, and place them on file. Mr. Tollner made a motion, and Ms. Honorow seconded the motion. The Chairperson asked if there were any comments, additions/deletions, corrections, or discussion.

There being no further discussion, the Recording Secretary called the roll with the following responses:

AYE

Helen Honorow
Paul Deschenes
Eric Wilson
James Tollner
Thomas Monahan

NAY

Motion passed.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The Chairperson entertained a motion to waive the reading of the Communications, accept them, and place them on file. Mr. Tollner made the motion to accept all Communications. Mr. Wilson seconded. The Communications were as follows: Monthly Operational Reports – March 2022 – consisting of Public Housing and Section 8 Waiting List and Applications Report; Vacancy Report; Vacancy Report Compilation Sheet; Work Order Report; Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) Utilization Report; Rent Collections Report; NHRA Development Sheet dated April 8, 2022.

The Chairperson asked if there were any comments, additions/deletions, corrections, or discussion.

Mr. Deschenes noted some of the rent receivables seemed high, but they look reasonable. He expressed his concern about the few that remain on the higher side. Ms. Lombardi explained that NHRA continues to accept Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) payments from any resident who has applied for them, as well as payments from other agencies such as City Welfare. Ms. Lombardi said we are working with many residents as we do not want to see a mass exodus of residents due to a lack of ability to pay rent. She explained we are continuing to move forward with repayment plans and other means of coordinating rental payments with residents. Ms. Lombardi noted this is a nationwide problem that housing authorities are seeing right now and therefore the concern within all housing authorities is whether they will have to eventually move forward with evictions. She said this is something that she does not want NHRA to do but wants instead to continue to work with families as necessary to provide referrals to agencies so they can obtain assistance. Ms. Lombardi said we are staying the course right now at that eight to nine percent of receivables and she is hopeful as we move forward the percentage will continue to decrease.

Mr. Deschenes asked about the Monthly Vacancy Report, and the amount of work having to be done in a unit when a resident suddenly vacates due to having passed away. He also inquired whether we are still doing unit inspections. Ms. Lombardi said we are conducting inspections, but what we are seeing is a lot of turnover recently by long-term residents. She provided an example of a unit that a resident had recently vacated after approximately twenty years of residency. Ms. Lombardi explained there is a lot of wear and tear in these units, as we do not enter and replace carpets, appliances and such during a tenancy unless they pose a safety issue or are in very poor condition. Ms. Lombardi noted that if a resident does cause damage in their unit beyond normal wear and tear, they are charged, and all those fees are

assessed directly back to the resident even if their security deposit does not cover the entire cost. She explained that the cost exceeding the security deposit on file remains accounted for and is reported through a database called the Enterprise Income Verification System. Ms. Lombardi further explained that this debt follows the family if they are to apply for subsidized housing at another federally funded housing facility. Mr. Deschenes asked if this chargeback would apply if someone transferred within NHRA public housing and left damages behind. Ms. Lombardi said we have had situations like this, and many times it may be a circumstance where a resident could require a transfer due to a reasonable accommodation for a medical need or otherwise, at which point after they move to the other unit, the costs of the damages are assessed back to the resident, and it becomes a tenant account receivable. She explained we work with families to create repayment agreements for those charges due.

Mr. Monahan asked about the notes in the Monthly Vacancy Report regarding refusals and lack of files. He asked if an applicant remains at the top of the waiting list if they refuse a unit. Ms. Lombardi explained an applicant is permitted two refusals unless they have a medical necessity or other reason based on a reasonable accommodation to live in a certain type of unit in which case they would not be penalized for a refusal. She went on to explain that if an applicant refuses a second unit without a verifiable medical need or reasonable accommodation, they are asked if they would like to be placed at the bottom of the applicant waiting list or be removed entirely. Ms. Lombardi noted examples of applicants who refuse units such as those who want to reside in a specific location, individuals who may not want to reside in a particular area because someone living there is unfavorable to them, families stating a unit is too small and that they cannot fit all of their furniture, a school system preference, and a multitude of other reasons why applicants may refuse to move into a unit, building or neighborhood. Mr. Monahan said this was understandable, and then moved on to the issue of the lack of files and why this has been reported more over the last couple of months. Ms. Lombardi said this is not due to a lack of applicants, as there are plenty of applicants on the waiting lists. She then explained that applicants come to the top of a waiting list and are drawn in batches of approximately twenty or more applicants from the top of the waiting lists, at which point we begin updating them for available units. Ms. Lombardi explained that what we are seeing at that point is lack of response, especially with the non-elderly disabled applicants, via returned mail as they have not updated their mailing address with NHRA or are simply non-responsive, and situations where we begin the update process and based on landlord references or criminal background, they are determined to be ineligible for housing. She explained that in situations like this we attempt to work with families to resolve issues such as monies owed to a previous landlord, which once resolved can help with eligibility. Ms. Lombardi said that applicants are allowed to appeal unfavorable criminal background issues. She said we have had quite a few recently that have been in the hospital or a rehabilitation center, have moved in with family or otherwise become unavailable. Ms. Lombardi said she and Ms. Reed-Lenane have discussed and plan to accomplish a full purge of the waiting list this summer which should help determine which applicants are still interested and reachable. Mr. Monahan thanked Ms. Lombardi for this information and then stated that his assumption based on same is that the issue of a lack of files is not due to NHRA not doing its job, but due to the reasons stated. Ms. Lombardi confirmed.

Mr. Monahan said he would like to add his usual notation for the record of us currently having approximately 2,980 families on the public housing waiting list and 3,977 families on the Section 8 waiting list. He said we have a lot of work to do and let's keep going.

Mr. Wilson added that with the work at Monahan Manor moving quickly, the purging of the files and looking at eligible applicant families being done would be terrific within the next year so that property can be leased-up quickly utilizing a portion of the current waiting lists. Ms. Lombardi agreed. She then explained that to begin the purge, a letter will be sent out to every person on the waiting lists with relevant questions to determine whether they wish to remain on the waiting lists, regarding household composition, unit size, and other information. Ms. Lombardi said the intention is to mail the letter regarding the opening of the waiting list for Monahan Manor at the same time. She said the letter will invite potential applicants to apply if interested, obtain an application online and will get the information out there so the process is started well in advance of the opening.

There being no further discussion, the Recording Secretary called the roll with the following responses:

AYE

Helen Honorow
Paul Deschenes
Eric Wilson
James Tollner
Thomas Monahan

NAY

Motion passed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

The Public Housing Authorities Directors Association (PHADA) Annual Convention and Exhibition is taking place May 19 – 22, 2022 at the Grand Hyatt San Antonio River Walk in Texas. In addition to sessions for executive directors and staff, PHADA will provide training for commissioners. Some expected sessions will cover asset repositioning, effective strategic and succession planning, workplace rule changes stemming from the pandemic, ethics, and current events in housing. PHADA is requiring proof of vaccination for attendees. Please reach out to Andi Reed-Lenane if there is interest.

With the surge of the Omicron variant of COVID occurring nationwide, it has caused delays to NHRA's plan to reopen the administrative office to the public. I am approaching the reopening with extreme caution due to short-staffing in the Section 8 Department. NHRA continues to seek two viable candidates for vacant Section 8 positions. I will keep the board apprised as I continue to monitor this new surge.

HUD has officially announced the return of the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) for housing authorities starting with agencies having a March 31 fiscal year end. HUD is temporarily adjusting the standard under the Management Assessment Subsystem indicator for the Tenant Accounts Receivable (TAR) sub-indicator for the FY 22 PHAS assessment cycle. PHAs may now receive the full five points for TARs above 80 percent (instead of the prior 98.5 percent) to account for adverse impacts on rent collection, and ultimately management performance scores that most agencies have experienced. I find it difficult to understand how HUD intends to evaluate housing authorities during a pandemic creating circumstances beyond an agency's control. For two years, the pandemic has

affected NHRA in ways that have never been experienced, such as COVID outbreaks, personnel shortages, difficulty collecting rents, unit turnover delays, and supply chain issues.

Supply chain shortages and delays, as well as the scarcity of contractors willing and able to bid on work creates huge challenges. The inability to enter units for inspections and repairs due to resident and employee health concerns, as well as finding higher than normal repair needs upon unit turnover is being seen nationwide. These issues, combined with the staffing and materials shortages, as well as the lack of response from and frequent ineligibility of public housing applicants, have contributed to longer turnover times, and in NHRA's case, challenges to filling units. I am perplexed why HUD determined now is a good a time to reinstate the PHAS scoring in public housing. I will keep the board updated as I receive more information.

The Chairperson entertained a motion for approval of the Executive Director's Report. Mr. Tollner made a motion, and Mr. Deschenes seconded the motion. The Chairperson asked if there were any comments or discussion.

Mr. Deschenes requested that the community rooms at 56 and 57 Tyler Street be reopened to the residents. Ms. Lombardi agreed. Mr. Monahan asked that Ms. Lombardi open all community rooms as necessary to the residents.

Mr. Tollner asked Mr. Costa if he is notified by all relevant entities, service providers and contractors when there are going to be any delays with Monahan Manor construction, equipment or parts being delivered. Mr. Costa said yes, and they have weekly meetings to discuss same. He also said they are buying all the materials they can now to help get the required supplies before another increase in pricing.

Mr. Monahan commented that in respect to the PHAS scoring reinstatement issue he is hoping that being members of NAHRO and PHADA, as well as having our senators and congressmen representing us in Washington, D.C. it may help us with respect to a resolution. He noted we are doing better than most as a housing authority and this should be considered. Mr. Monahan said we have to pay attention to it, and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) might not be listening, and they won't listen to us, but they will have to listen to those representing all of the housing authorities. He said NAHRO and PHADA are good coalitions and going forward he hopes HUD lightens up a little.

There being no further discussion, the Recording Secretary called the roll with the following responses:

AYE

Helen Honorow
Paul Deschenes
Eric Wilson
James Tollner
Thomas Monahan

NAY

Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

BILLS/INVESTMENTS:

The Chairperson called for a motion to pay the bills as listed on the Cash Disbursement List - check numbers 66347 through 66454 and from the Park View Apartments Cash Disbursement List – check numbers 5655 through 5660 and to approve the investments as listed. Mr. Tollner made a motion to approve, and Mr. Deschenes seconded the motion. The Chairperson asked if there were any comments or discussion.

Mr. Monahan noted that a good amount of the monies add up to Monahan Manor expenses for which we will be reimbursed. Mr. Wilson said he believed the first check, number 66347, in the amount of \$108,000, was being held, and requested confirmation from Mr. Costa. Mr. Costa confirmed and said it is the check which was cut to the City of Nashua for the permits until we get approval from the Board of Aldermen. Mr. Wilson said we may not be required to pay that as we are attempting to get the City of Nashua to waive that amount. Mr. Monahan said it was the City of Nashua who provided us with the cost of permits, and this was about how far off they were in their calculations. Mr. Monahan said this is a correction and while he understands we have the support of the Aldermen for same, he hopes it is a formality.

Mr. Deschenes noted the payments for the security cameras and asked for an update. Mr. Costa said we are currently still in the design phase and this payment is for a portion of the contract. He said we are past the conceptual design phase and almost ready for construction bid documents. Mr. Costa said we are solidifying some of the specifications and some of the equipment needs are being worked through as we are trying to determine what will be the most beneficial. He explained cost estimates are still being gathered and the struggle is getting contractors to confirm their costs due to the volatile market. Mr. Costa then confirmed that both 56 and 57 Tyler Street are on the scope for that work. Mr. Deschenes asked if any camera work was being done at any of the other buildings. Mr. Costa said this is in the five-year action plan, but it is not being done at this time as we are focusing on these two developments.

There being no further discussion, the Recording Secretary called the roll with the following responses:

AYE

Helen Honorow
Paul Deschenes
Eric Wilson
James Tollner
Thomas Monahan

NAY

Motion passed.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:

Mr. Wilson requested that the Board go into nonpublic at the end of the meeting to discuss some ongoing matters. Mr. Monahan stated he would like to conduct the nonpublic session after the Nashua Affordable Housing Meeting if possible. Mr. Wilson agreed.

Ms. Honorow said she was in Miami and one of the guests at the event does public housing in the Portland area. Ms. Honorow said she was speaking with her about Monahan Manor and how the whole process went with relocating residents and everything else and the woman was wide-eyed, saying she was thrilled with how it had all gone. Ms. Honorow said she just wanted to share that with everyone. Ms. Lombardi thanked Ms. Honorow.

Mr. Wilson said he heard on the radio that there is a movement in the legislature and the Governor's Office that the State of New Hampshire may accept one hundred million dollars in COVID-19 relief funds for affordable housing. Mr. Wilson suggested this may be something we can investigate for potential future development. Mr. Monahan said he knows a little about this and they are meeting today. He said it has a maximum of three-million dollars per development, but that is not the only issue. Mr. Monahan said the money is also allotted for redevelopment of housing and proposals must be in by June of this year and completed by 2024. He said it frees up opportunities, as when people are moving into new housing, they are not all coming from our state, which opens up the housing people are moving out of - a good portion of which is also affordable housing. Mr. Monahan noted it is great and said that sixty-million dollars is going to developers and thirty-million dollars is going to communities. Mr. Monahan said the thirty million is the amount we should keep an eye on because of the timing.

Mr. Deschenes thanked NHRA for the gardening tools he requested. He also noted that the carpets in the buildings are very dirty and asked when they would be cleaned. Ms. Lombardi said this work is generally scheduled in the spring as the winter ends and the salt and sand has dissipated. She then requested that Mr. Fagan arrange to have the carpets cleaned at all buildings.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bob Mack, Welfare Officer for the City of Nashua, thanked the Board for the opportunity to be at the meeting and address those present. He said he tries to come to the meetings every once in a while, to hear first-hand what is going on. Mr. Mack said that first and foremost he wanted to reinforce the partnership and working relationship that City Welfare has with NHRA. He said we both deal with a lot of mutual clients who are either residents of or seeking assistance through the housing authority and City Welfare works regularly with the staff at NHRA. Mr. Mack noted that City Welfare has a good working relationship with many of the staff at NHRA, and in particular communicates on a regular basis with Mr. Sanchez. He said when tenants are behind in their rent they try to work out arrangements so that they can maybe get some assistance from City Welfare and also work out those arrangements for back rent. Mr. Mack referred to what Ms. Lombardi had mentioned about avoiding evictions and stated that this is something he thinks is key to keeping a lot of the people in our programs. He commented that if they cannot afford to pay the subsidized rent, there is no way they are going to be able to pay "Main Street" rent. Mr. Mack reiterated that City Welfare staff work very closely with a lot of the NHRA staff and tenants to avoid evictions. He said that preventing homelessness is frankly the best way to address homelessness. Mr. Mack said again that the rent payment

cases that come up are very important. Mr. Mack went on to say that he knows there have been clients of City Welfare who have been experiencing homelessness who have been trying to get on the waiting list, and although it is an extensive waiting list, his staff tells people to complete those applications because if they never apply, they can never be on the waiting list. Mr. Mack mentioned that some folks had a few challenges in obtaining applications, and he was able to reach out to Ms. Lombardi who worked with City Welfare to rectify that despite the COVID-19 restrictions. Mr. Mack noted the importance of the paper applications being available, also stating that his staff assist potential applicants with completing the housing applications and returning them to NHRA. Mr. Mack highlighted one of the challenges is people being able to obtain funding from City Welfare for a unit they have been offered. He said that people come in and say they have been offered a NHRA unit and need first month's rent right away as they need to move in tomorrow. Mr. Mack said he was pointing out the issue as he is not sure if it is already being tracked or addressed, but he wanted to mention it in case more can be done to prevent possible unit refusals for this reason. He said City Welfare does the best they can to help as quickly as possible because they want to them to be able to move into a public housing unit, but the timing is not always great. Mr. Mack stated it is very good to hear about the progress of the Monahan Manor development and congratulated Commissioner Monahan on the renaming of the development. He said he did have questions about the project and the tenants who used to live there, and he sent an email to Ms. Lombardi who responded right away which he appreciated very much. Mr. Mack suggested it would be beneficial for someone from NHRA to do a brief presentation regarding Monahan Manor to the Greater Nashua Continuum of Care so the group of agencies and interested parties could be informed of the progress and intentions surrounding the project as well as confirming that all tenants from the former Bronstein development have been placed. Mr. Mack said City Welfare has not had any requests from any residents of Bronstein who were displaced by the new construction, noting this is a definite testament to the excellent job NHRA did housing all of the residents prior to redevelopment so that no one was displaced or homeless. Mr. Mack said he appreciates the opportunity to address the meeting and all of the good work everyone at NHRA is doing.

Mr. Monahan complimented Mr. Mack on the great work his agency does as well, stating that it is not easy. Mr. Mack said he has great staff and good staff make the managers and directors look good. Mr. Monahan noted that while often at these meetings we get into the dollars and cents of things, it is always about the people and the families. He said we work hard to make sure that our residents are not put on the precipice of homelessness. Mr. Monahan said Ms. Lombardi and her staff work very hard to maintain a balance and do a very good job. He said these residents and applicants are people and that is first and foremost. Mr. Mack followed-up by saying that he also understands NHRA is a business, and we must pay attention that that end of things as well. He said he thinks it is imperative we have this partnership between City Welfare and NHRA, as we both have our processes. Mr. Mack said he understands we have to follow our procedures of handing out notices, requiring compliance and making payment agreements, among other things. He noted that when it gets to the point of non-compliance with other items besides rent, he understands tenants get evicted for other things, but when it comes to being behind with payments, that is when the partnership between City Welfare and NHRA is so important. Mr. Mack then noted he recalled there were a few vacancies at the properties at 56 and 57 Tyler Street recently and Ms. Reed-Lenane had been communicating with Ms. Joanne Perez from City Welfare about making sure Ms. Perez' clients who needed these units got in touch with NHRA and filled out the appropriate paperwork so they could be housed if determined eligible. Mr. Mack said he appreciated the way Mr. Monahan spoke to the importance of remembering that these are families.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH MAY COME BEFORE THE BOARD:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Chairperson entertained a motion to adjourn. Ms. Honorow moved to adjourn, and Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the Recording Secretary called the roll with the following responses:

AYE

Helen Honorow
Paul Deschenes
Eric Wilson
James Tollner
Thomas Monahan

NAY

Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:18 a.m.

Mr. Wilson made a motion to reopen the meeting at 9:18 a.m. for the purposes of voting on entering nonpublic session. Mr. Deschenes seconded. The Chairperson asked if there were any comments or discussion.

There being no further discussion the Recording Secretary called the roll with the following responses:

AYE

Helen Honorow
Paul Deschenes
Eric Wilson
James Tollner
Thomas Monahan

NAY

Motion passed.

Mr. Wilson made a motion to enter nonpublic session. Mr. Deschenes seconded. The Chairperson asked if there were any comments or discussion.

There being no further discussion, the Recording Secretary called the roll with the following responses:

AYE

Helen Honorow
Paul Deschenes
Eric Wilson
James Tollner
Thomas Monahan

NAY

Motion passed.

The Board reentered public session at 9:51 a.m. Mr. Tollner had to leave the meeting during nonpublic session at 9:47 a.m.

Mr. Wilson made a motion to seal the minutes from nonpublic session indefinitely, and Mr. Deschenes seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion, the Recording Secretary called the roll with the following responses:

AYE

Helen Honorow
Paul Deschenes
Eric Wilson
Thomas Monahan

NAY

The Chairperson entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wilson moved to adjourn, and Ms. Honorow seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the Recording Secretary called the roll with the following responses:

AYE

Helen Honorow
Paul Deschenes
Eric Wilson
Thomas Monahan

NAY

Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrea Reed-Lenane
Recording Secretary