

The Board of Commissioners of the Niagara Falls Housing Authority (NFHA) met in a Monthly Board Meeting session on Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at 744 Tenth Street at 4:00 pm. Chair Dobbs called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Present:

Bishop Kevin Dobbs
Mr. Lawrence Cook
Mr. Brian Archie, Sr.
Mr. Frank Soda
Mr. Andrew Turton

Also Present:

Mrs. Patricia L. Barone
Mr. Jason Cafarella

Absent:

Ms. Kristen Grandinetti
Ms. Alicia Laible-Kenyon

At the Request of the Interim Executive Director: Melissa Matsulavage, Nancy Haley, Roger Lis, Angela Smith, George delValle, Mary Jean Buddenhagen, Shawn Fair and Maria Vitello

I. INVOCATION

Bishop Dobbs gave the invocation.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Turton, seconded by Commissioner Soda and carried, the December 11, 2018 meeting minutes of the Board of Commissioners' meeting were approved.

III. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Dobbs welcomed Mr. Brian Archie as a new board member. Mr. Archie thanked the board for its confidence in him and he hopes to be effective in the community.

Chair Dobbs stated members have received an updated board directory for their use.

Chair Dobbs thanked management and maintenance staff for their efforts in an incident that recently took place at Packard Court working with police, FBI and the health department.

IV. INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Request approval of the Election of Tenant Representative to NFHA

Commissioner Soda made a motion to approve the Election of Tenant Representative to the NFHA. Commissioner Cook seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

Incident at Packard Court

- Mrs. Barone reported that an incident occurred at 4D Packard Court where a relative of a resident who was not on the lease, was arrested. Subsequently, approximately 21 people became ill after this and the health department and hazmat crew conducted tests on the apartment. All tests came back negative and no evacuation of the community took place.

Commissioner Soda asked if any employees became ill. Mr. delValle stated a maintenance mechanic became ill after being in the apartment two days prior to the incident with flu like symptoms. Ms. Smith stated two managers had conducted an inspection but did not become ill and the resident has moved out.

Security Guard Services

- New Request for Proposals will be going out.
- Current company now on a month-to-month contract.
- Staff has met with current company with regards to guard performance.
- Has been in contact with Mr. Paul Kudela who is a police officer and has his own security business. Will conduct meeting with him at end of the month to discuss options. He

will receive notice of the RFP when it becomes available.

- Discussion was held regarding using armed guards vs unarmed and cost associated.
- Commissioner Turton stated the current company is good but it's just one or two individuals that are problematic and asked if the authority can use its own guards. Mrs. Barone stated there are volunteer door monitors who work during the day.
- Commissioner Soda asked if a situation warrants to have a guard that's armed. Ms. Smith stated yes. Individuals with mental illnesses are on the rise. Discussion ensued.
- Commissioner Archie stated the provider becomes familiar with the residents and perhaps a better rotation of the guards can be utilized. He further stated that having guards carry a Taser vs. a gun is another option. Discussion ensued.

HUD OIG.

- Letter from HUD approving endowment has been received.
- Close out process has begun and CVR will conduct.
- Commissioner Soda had an issue with the scope of the second amendment plan as it pertains to homeownership and would HUD prevent the authority from pursuing this in the future. Vice Chair Cook stated he interpreted the document as the authority will have the latitude to engage in homeownership if it is favorable to do so in the future. Mrs. Barone stated she will seek clarification from HUD.
- Discussion ensued. Commissioner Soda asked that Mr. Glover, the CSS Coordinator give a presentation to the board with regards to statistics on the self-sufficiency programs.

HUD Physical Inspections.

- Still awaiting appeal response for Spallino Towers.
- Unable to contact anyone due to current government shutdown.

Employment Recruitment Services

- Conference call with Mr. Quy will be held on February 8 at 3:30 pm.
- Mrs. Barone stated she had sent members information on board training conducted by Rutgers (2 days) and from Stan Quy (1 day) and is looking to schedule this.
- After discussion, members agreed to have Mr. Quy conduct the training in July.

Updates.

- Martin Luther King event to be held January 17 at 6 pm at Niagara Falls High School.
- NFHA employee Saladin Allah to receive the Civil Rights Achievement Award.
- Research is continuing on resident use of prescribed medical marijuana.
- Mr. Cafarella explained the federal government and state government rules are different. The federal government has no clear direction on this and is leaving it up to each public housing agency. There is nothing about current residents and agencies are going on a case by case basis. Mr. Cafarella stated he is working with other authorities to see how this issue is being handled without causing discrimination.
- Commissioners and staff members all spoke on this issue. Language stating zero tolerance is on the lease and Statement of Policy, signage, etc. Reasonable accommodation was also discussed and how the law is interpreted. The main issue is with current residents who may be prescribed this medication.
- Mrs. Barone announced that invitations to the door monitor luncheon have been given to members. This luncheon will take place on January 24 at 12:30 at the Como. If any board member is interested in attending, please let her know.

- Mrs. Barone presented Commissioner Soda with a newspaper clipping of him and Mrs. Soda as they recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Occupancy.

- The occupancy rate for December was 96.56%

Staff Reports.

- Board members received the following reports:
 - Aged Balance, Cumulative Rent Receivable Summary
 - Community and Supportive Services (HOPE VI CSS)
 - Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) Service Coordinator
 - Successfully Transitioning Youth to Adolescence (STYA)
 - Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATTAIN)

V. Committee Reports:

A. Finance – Ms. Laible-Kenyon –Chairman (Given by Roger Lis, Staff Accountant).

Mr. Lis reported the finance committee met last week and gave an overview of the financial report. The annual audit has been completed and there were no findings; it was a clean audit. There were comments in the management letter with regards to updating procedures and policies, especially the Capitalization Policy and these are being worked on. Revenue for the Family Resource Building and Central Office was also discussed.

Mr. Cafarella noted that it is not necessary to have a resolution approving expenditures that have already taken place. The budget is formally approved and if there is something that comes up which would require a budget amendment, then that would come before the board for vote. The monthly financial reports presented are for informational purposes only. Mr. Lis agreed and stated at other authorities, these documents are received and filed and so noted in the minutes.

Chair Dobbs asked about the casino payments. Mrs. Barone stated the authority was to receive \$50,000 annually. Only one payment in 2016 has been received.

Commissioner Soda spoke about the Buffalo Housing Authority and its use of their capital fund. Mr. Lis explained there is a HUD program for authorities to borrow from its capital fund for future renovations. Commissioner Soda asked if interest is charged. Mr. Lis said yes and the fees incurred for this bond process are extremely high.

Commissioner Soda made a motion to approve the financial statements. Vice Chair Cook seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

B. Family Housing Representative- Mr. Archie.

- No report.

C. Elderly Housing Representative- Mr. Turton.

- Wrobel and Spallino residents went to the Fatima Shrine on December 21.
- Wrobel Towers hosted a New Year's Eve party.
- Commissioner Turton stated the need to have policy and procedure in place with regards to individuals suffering from mental illness and violence tendencies. He spoke about an incident in which the police needed to be called and what the guard on duty did. Mrs. Barone stated language is in the lease and eviction will take place for violation. Ms. Smith stated that there is a zero tolerance policy with regards to violence. Staff has been trained with regards to mental health in order to be more aware. Commissioner

Turton suggested that security staff receive this training as well. Mrs. Haley noted there is the 24/7 on call emergency staff number that responds as well. Vice Chair Cook suggested a future discussion be held with other service agencies. Discussion ensued.

D. Facilities/Operations/IT – Bishop Dobbs – Chairman.

- No report.

E. Planning – Mr. Soda – Chairman.

- Minutes from last meeting given to all board members.
- Goal is to have a draft of strategic plan for committee review in January with adoption by the board in February.
- The succession plan should be made part of the strategic plan. Mrs. Barone stated she is on the Personnel & Human Resources Committee and no action for a succession plan has been formed as of yet. Chair Dobbs stated he will contact the chair of this committee to get a status report.

F. Governance – Mr. Soda – Chairman.

- Next meeting will be held on January 15.
- Task is to do a final review of the self-evaluation form for board members. This process will begin in March and at the annual meeting in May, the results will be presented.
- Mr. Cafarella will give a presentation in February on executive sessions and legislative hierarchy.

G. Personnel & Human Resources– Ms. Grandinetti – Chairman.

No report.

H. Counsel – Mr. Cafarella.

- Mr. Cafarella gave an update on the Packard Court litigation.
- There is a motion to dismiss and parties are awaiting the court’s decision on this.
- More fees are forthcoming and there is nothing on the table regarding settlement.
- Mrs. Haley stated a conference call between attorneys is scheduled for Jan. 14.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Soda asked if Mr. Lis can give an overview of the current audit (line by line) at one of upcoming board meetings. Mrs. Barone stated she will schedule this.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- Next meeting: February 12, 2019 4:00 pm.
- Martin Luther King event taking place January 17 at 6 pm at Niagara Falls High School.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Turton, seconded by Commissioner Soda. The motion was unanimously carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.

Chairman