

The Board of Commissioners of the Niagara Falls Housing Authority (NFHA) met in a Monthly Board Meeting session on Tuesday, June 11, 2019 at 744 Tenth Street at 4:00 pm. Chair Soda called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Present:

Mr. Frank Soda
Mr. Lawrence Cook
Ms. Kristen Grandinetti
Ms. Marcia Massaro
Mr. Earl Bass
Mr. Brian Archie, Sr.
Mr. Andrew Turton

Also Present:

Mrs. Patricia L. Barone
Mr. Jason Cafarella

Absent:

At the Request of the Interim Executive Director: Melissa Matsulavage, Nancy Haley, Mary Jean Buddenhagen, Tomorrow Allen-Collins, George delValle, Angela Smith, Ronald Christopher and Maria Vitello

Presentation by Ronald Christopher –Security Measures

Nancy introduced Mr. Christopher who is from Peter Vito & Associates. Mr. Christopher gave his background information and spoke about what he has been doing with the housing authority, what has been accomplished to date and his recommendations for the future. A question and answer session followed.

I. MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Moment of reflection was held.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Grandinetti, seconded by Commissioner Bass and carried, the May 7, 2019 annual and special meeting minutes of the Board of Commissioners' meeting were approved.

Due to a time constraint, Human Resources and Counsel Reports were given.

G. Human Resources– Ms. Grandinetti – Chairman.

- Request Approval for the offer of employment for the position of Executive Director.

Commissioner Turton made a motion to approve the offer of employment for the position of Executive Director to Mr. Clifford Scott. Commissioner Grandinetti seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

- Request approval of the contract of employment.

Vice Chair Cook made a motion to approve the contract of employment for the position of Executive Director and approve the authorization of the Chairman to execute said contract on behalf of the Niagara Falls Housing Authority. Commissioner Turton seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

- Personnel Action Chart was received and filed. Chairman Soda asked what steps are in place for a new ROSS Coordinator. Ms. Barone stated an internal posting has been done and outside resumes are forthcoming.

- Mr. Cafarella stated he will contact Stan Quy and advise him of the offer and contract. Mr. Quy will send the contract to Mr. Scott for his signature.

H. Counsel – Mr. Cafarella.

- Mr. Cafarella reported he has been working with staff with regards to program education on bedbugs for residents.

- Mr. Cafarella reported he is researching the ADA requirements with regards to the pet policy; specifically, service and therapy animals to make sure the authority is in compliance and provides reasonable accommodations for residents.
- Mr. Cafarella requested to enter into Executive Session with regards to litigation matters.

Commissioner Bass made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Commissioner Massaro seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

Executive Session began at 4:36 pm
Executive Session ended at 5:04 pm

Commissioner Massaro made a motion to return to Regular Session. Vice Chair Cook seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

III. CHAIR'S REPORT

- Chair Soda reported that an updated board directory has been given to members for their use.
- Chair Soda reviewed the updated committee listing.
- Chair Soda reported each member received a mandate of a strategic committee which addresses the major areas of each standing committee's focus.
- Chair Soda gave an update on the blighted property on Center Avenue and provided a summary report to all members. Follow-up is being conducted on a few items from the meeting that was held and will update members accordingly.

IV. INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Approval for an Increase of Fixed Assets

- Ms. Barone reported the increase is requested to establish a capitalization threshold of \$5,000 for all fixed assets except computer related purchases which will remain at the current threshold of \$500. Ms. Buddenhagen stated this is being done to alleviate depreciation.

Commissioner Grandinetti made a motion to approve the increase of fixed assets as stated above. Commissioner Turton seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

Approval to Proceed with Business Credit Card Application

- Ms. Barone reported the application is through M & T Bank which has no annual fee and would eliminate the American Express card currently being used.

Commissioner Archie made a motion to approve the completion of the application of a Business Visa Card with M & T Bank and eliminate the American Express Business Card upon the activation of the new charge account. Vice Chair Cook seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

Parking at the Administrative Offices

- Ms. Barone reported that she has called and emailed Mayor Dyster and is awaiting an update. She will also speak with Mr. Cafarella with regards to this matter.

Sale of Wrobel Towers

- Ms. Barone reported she received an email from Erika Torres who represents Lincoln Avenue Capital, a family office based in New York that purchases affordable housing assets. They are aggressively looking to expand their holdings and have identified Henry E. Wrobel Towers in Niagara Falls as an asset they would like to purchase.

- Chair Soda stated it appears that Lincoln Avenue Capital is another of the many subsidiary companies affiliated with the Bronfman family (Seagreaves Distillery). This company was started in 2016 and has as its business model the acquisition of "older" former "high end" apartment complexes that it converts to LIHTC affordable housing. In addition to the tax credit value of these properties, this company has been very successful in securing Section 8 and Section 42 housing vouchers from HUD. In March of this year, this company completed the purchase and conversion to low-income affordable housing of the Sutton Place Apartment complex in Amherst. Lincoln Avenue Capital paid \$15.9 million for the 246-unit apartment complex that was built in 1973.
- Ms. Matsulavage explained the qualifications and eligibility of LIHTC and stated there would be many current residents at Wrobel that would be ineligible.
- Discussion ensued with members instructing Ms. Barone to contact Lincoln Avenue Capital to stated the authority is not interested.
- Ms. Barone reported the bathroom rehab contract with CVR is in place to assist in the relocation of residents during this project.

HUD OIG – HOPE VI

- Ms. Barone reported that the final submission for the grant close out was sent to HUD on June 4 and is awaiting final word from HUD.

Updates.

- Summer hours have begun and the office is open from 7:30 am – 3:30 pm.
- Summer Enrichment Programs at the Family Resource Building and Packard Court Community Center will take place July 8 – August 9.
- NFHA was awarded a \$60,000 CDBG grant for the Summer Enrichment Program.
- Board retreat will take place July 9 from 9 am – 4 pm.
- RAD Conference Call will take place August 14 from 11 am – Noon.
- Angela Smith will contact members to set up a day/s to tour sites in July.

Occupancy.

- The occupancy rate for May was 97.98%

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
 - Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATTAIN)
 -

V. Committee Reports:

A. Finance – Mr. Cook, Chairman

Financial statements were received and filed.

Ms. Buddenhagen reported the audit is going very well.

Request approval of write-off accounts.

After review of the write-of accounts, Commissioner Grandinetti made a motion to approve the accounts for write-off. Commissioner Turton seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

B. Family Housing Representative- Mr. Archie.

- Mr. Archie stated he met with Commissioner Turton and will begin having committee meetings with staff recommended by Ms. Barone.

C. Elderly Housing Representative- Mr. Turton.

- Residents want to know what will happen in August with respect to their cable. Ms. Barone stated she and staff are meeting with Spectrum and will provide an update.

D. Facilities/Operations/IT – Mr. Cook, Chairman.

- No report.

E. Planning – Mr. Soda – Chairman.

- Minutes from the last meeting were given to all board members.
- Key performance indicators were given to each committee chair.
- Each standing committee is to develop its evaluation plan for annual review before the board. This will be due at the September 10 board meeting.
- The Strategic Plan will be given to the new Executive Director for review/comment.

F. Governance – Mr. Soda – Chairman.

- Minutes from the last meeting were given to all members.
- Revision of bylaws was given to all members. Please review for adoption at September board meeting.

Approval of Corporate Policies

- Nine policies have been reviewed by Leadership Team and given to the Governance Committee for review and approval. The following policies are being brought to the board for its approval:

Annual Policy Statements: Anti-Drug Strategy/Security, Resident Economic Development & Self-Sufficiency, Resident Participation, Risk Control

Business Credit Card or Line of Credit

Exposure Control Plan

Media Response and Communications

Motor Vehicle

Requisitioning Process

Commissioner Turton made a motion to approve the above nine corporate policies. Vice Chair Cook seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- Next meeting: September 10, 2019 4:00 pm.
- Board Retreat: July 9, 2019 9:00 am.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Turton, seconded by Commissioner Bass. The motion was unanimously carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:04 pm.

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