

The Board of Commissioners of the Niagara Falls Housing Authority (NFHA) met in a Monthly Board Meeting session on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 via conference call at 4:00 pm. Chair Soda called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

Present:

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

Also Present:

Mr. Clifford Scott
Ms. Angela Smith

Absent:

Mrs. Nadrué Braswell

At the Request of the Executive Director Nancy Haley, Tomorrow Allen-Collins, George delValle, Roger Lis, Samika Sullivan, and Maria Vitello

I. MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Moment of reflection was held.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING

On a motion duly made by Vice Chair Cook, seconded by Commissioner Turton and carried, the March 10, 2020 meeting minutes of the Board of Commissioners' meeting were approved.

III. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Soda reviewed today's consent agenda. Motion was duly made by Commissioner Massaro, seconded by Commissioner Archie to approve the consent agenda for the meeting held April 14, 2020 was unanimously approved.

Mr. Scott thanked the staff for their appreciation and understanding in efforts to keep expenses under control. Chair Soda concurred.

IV. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Soda commended the staff, Executive Director and leadership team during this unbelievable extenuating set of circumstances during this COVID-19 virus under which to work in.

Chair Soda's report focused on the safety and security of residents, especially during this pandemic. His report included crime stats stating the three most common crimes in the city were larceny, burglary and aggravated assault and then researched by census tracts and gave a review on his findings.

Chair Soda asked Ms. Smith how residents are directly and indirectly impacted by these crimes and using Jordan Gardens as an example and are they victims. Ms. Smith stated that since cameras have been installed, there is not much crime at all. Many times there are no reports of a crime because the resident knows the individual who committed a crime. Mr. Archie concurred stating at the Beloved Community, crime is committed by people outside the development.

Chair Soda asked about the safety of the children at the community centers. Both Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Allen-Collins stated there are specific procedures in place and with the security system in place, staff and children are well protected.

Chair Soda asked the Executive Director and leadership team to review the policies and procedures regarding resident safety and security, compile a needs assessment and evaluation and to bring their recommendations to the board.

Mr. Scott reported on safety measures currently in place, especially at the hi-rises. Only one visitor is allowed per apartment and no children under the age of 14 will be allowed in. These measures may have reduced some of the crime activity and may continue after the pandemic.

Chair Soda stated May 5th is the Annual Meeting and election of officers will take place. He encouraged all board members to consider running for an office. Chair Soda also asked the board to complete and return their self-evaluation to him prior to the May meeting.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A) Approval of the Election of Tenant Representatives to the Niagara Falls Housing Authority Board

Vice Chair Cook made a motion to approve the election of tenant representatives to the Niagara Falls Housing Authority board. Commissioner Turton seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

Chair Soda extended his appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Turton for his dedication and service during the past two years.

B) Approval of Award for Human Resource Consulting Services

Mr. Scott provided members with a bid tabulation and scoring summary of the two proposals that were received. The recommendation is to award the Human Resource Consulting Services contract to JBM HR Consulting, Inc. for a period of one year at \$1,500 per month.

Commissioner Massaro made a motion to award the Human Resource Consulting Services contract to JBM HR Consulting, Inc. for a period of one year at \$1,500 per month. Commissioner Bass seconded.

Commissioner Archie asked if the monthly rate was a flat rate whether the services are used or not? Mr. Scott stated the services are always needed and used since the consultant will be providing the office of all human resource pertinent regulations. Commissioner Archie asked what the rate is if it exceeds 10 hours a month. Ms. Smith stated the rate is \$150 an hour after the 10 hours and assured members that it has been under 10 hours a month for quite some time. Commissioner Archie noted that at some point, the authority should hire a human resource person. The motion was unanimously carried.

- Mr. Scott reported the individual staff meetings he and Ms. Smith conducted yielded very good information and was very impressed with staff members.

- The energy savings agreement with Ampion has been executed.

- Mr. Scott asked Ms. Allen-Collins to speak on the ATTAIN meeting held. She reported she met with Michael Pratt, the statewide coordinator along with Mr. Brown and Ms. Polito. Duplication of information on the monthly reports was discussed and Mr. Pratt stated the information is required to keep in the reports. The contact with the city (mayor) has been updated and although Isiah 61 is dissolving, it is not finalized and there continues to be communication with this organization. operation hours will now (after the pandemic) be open later on Fridays. Vice Chair Cook stated he would like to see a deeper engagement take place with outreach and services provided.

Chair Soda asked about the opt out clause in the energy savings contracted. Mr. Cafarella stated the housing authority is sufficiently protected if the energy savings do not deliver as presented and will opt out immediately prior to the 90 days given.

Vice Chair Cook stated the Oishei Foundation is ready and willing to assist area agencies during this pandemic and to please advise if the authority should seek assistance.

Mr. Scott stated there is quite a bit of misinformation about this pandemic and who has contracted the virus, etc. Ms. Smith stated there are two cases at Jordan and one at Wrobel and is known since one posted it on Facebook and one told a maintenance staff member. Residents are encouraged to self-report to the housing authority and a hotline number has been established for this purpose. The health department cannot release any information and the number shown in the papers for Niagara Falls also includes Wheatfield so accuracy remains an issue. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Scott reported that some non-essential staff will be a part of a resident assessment team and will be contacting all residents to conduct a survey to ascertain what their needs may be with regards to healthcare, food/clothing, transportation, etc. Mr. Scott stated the city has a \$1.6 million dollar block grant to provide funding to area organizations in terms of education, supplies, etc. Discussion ensued.

VI. NFHA ATTORNEY REPORT

Mr. Cafarella reported that there is a 90 day eviction moratorium from the governor's office which presents a challenge over the next couple of months. Chair Soda asked if the memo provided with regards to open meetings law and COVID-19 is adequate for public authorities to conduct meetings via videoconferencing or conference call. Mr. Cafarella stated these measures are adequate and are in effect until May 7 so the May board meeting may very well be conducted via conference call again.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Smith stated the maintenance staff has been wonderful, understanding and patient as well as the union presidents. Non-essential staff has been of since March 18 and some employees have been working from home. The assessment team will be contacting all 789 residents including the public housing residents at the Beloved Community. The responses from the survey will be logged into a tracking form and cell phones are being provided for each team member. The team will also be able to assist residents in completing the census. If a resident has questions, the team member will relay it to the appropriate manager and the manager will contact the resident. Security is now 24 hours and there are no volunteer door monitors at this time. The work order line is for essential and emergencies only. Protective equipment (masks, etc.) have been ordered and a shipment should arrive next week. Residents have been reminded about social distancing and to remind the children of this as well.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Chair Soda stated next month's meeting is the Annual Meeting (May 5 at 4 pm), with nominations and elections for officers. He asked that members complete and send him their self-evaluations prior to the May meeting.

Ms. Allen-Collins reported that the Independent Health Foundation would like to distribute up to 200 care packages from the Family Resource Building and she and staff will coordinate.

Mr. Lis stated he and Mr. Dreer have been working quite well remotely. Chair Soda asked about a financial projection. Mr. Lis stated the authority is in very good shape. Mr. Scott stated HUD has issued a waiver to push back the audit. Mr. Lis stated that March 31 fiscal year authorities have been given an extension of their 2020 audit to June 30, 2021. Ms. Smith asked if the auditors could submit their requests from staff as soon as possible since many staff members are on vacation when the audit takes place in the summer. Mr. Lis stated he will work with the auditors on this.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Massaro, seconded by Commissioner Turton. The motion was unanimously carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Chairman