

The Board of Commissioners of the Niagara Falls Housing Authority (NFHA) met in a Monthly Board Meeting session on Tuesday, June 9, 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
Mr. Brian Archie, Sr.
Ms. Colleen Todd

Also Present:

Mr. Clifford Scott
Ms. Angela Smith
Mr. Jason Cafarella

Absent:

Ms. Marcia Massaro
Mr. Dwayne Sledge

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

I. MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Moment of reflection was held.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Archie, seconded by Vice Chair Cook and carried, the May 5, 2020 Annual and Special meeting minutes of the Board of Commissioners' meeting were approved.

III. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Soda reviewed the consent agenda.

Commissioner Archie asked about the write off collection process. Mr. Scott explained the process. Mr. Lis reported on the April finances. The authority has received \$600,000 in COVID-19 funds and a detailed account summary is being conducted. The authority has also applied for FEMA funding as well.

Commissioner Todd suggested that each development have their write-offs on one sheet versus a sheet for each resident. Members were in agreement with this suggestion.

Motion was duly made by Vice Chair Cook, seconded by Commissioner Archie to approve the consent agenda for the meeting held June 9, 2020. Motion was unanimously approved.

IV. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Soda gave an overview on two conference calls he participated in and thanked Deputy Director Angela Smith for her input on the history and cultural setting on these calls. Her information was valuable especially to Police Chief Tom Licata and to Jerry Verdi from Verdi Planning. These calls dealt with recent incidents at Beloved Community and revitalization of the North End of the City of Niagara Falls.

Chair Soda reported on the advisory role between the Executive Director and the City's Community Development department. Commissioner Archie asked if a Memorandum of Understanding has been completed. Chair Soda stated this document is forthcoming. The authority's attorney and the city's corporation counsel are working on this. This document will be voted on by the city council as well as this board.

Chair Soda announced the authority is a recipient of a \$500,000 award through the NYS Office of the Attorney General for the rehabilitation of Jordan Gardens along with the Highland/Beech 2023 Plan initiative. A formal press release and press conference is forthcoming.

Chair Soda reported staff is working on the board retreat for July but stated due to current circumstances, this may be postponed. He asked all members to keep July 14 on their calendars. If the board retreat is not being held on that day, members can plan on this date for an extended meeting regarding the Highland/Beech 2023 Plan.

Chair Soda stated members should have returned their annual statements to Ms. Vitello. If members have not done so as of yet, he asked them to please send them in as soon as possible.

Chair Soda reported the annual evaluation of Mr. Scott will be held at the end of this month. Chair Soda stated he will contact Commissioner Massaro (Chair of the Human Resources subcommittee) with regards to the evaluation instrument.

Board members received an updated contact directory sheet for their information. Chair Soda stated the September meeting will have an amendment to the bylaws to include the office of Secretary to the Executive Committee.

Chair Soda stated members received stat information from Memorial Hospital with regards to COVID 19 and was very impressed by this report.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Scott reported that all things relative to COVID-19 remain a priority for the leadership team, staff and residents. The report from Memorial Hospital was shared with the board to dispel the chatter that is on social media. Opportunities for residents to be tested will be held by the end of the month.

Mr. Scott thanked commissioners Archie and Bass as well as Erza Scott for sharing information on a planned cookout that was to take place last Saturday at the Beloved Community and was effectively canceled. Security cameras have been installed at the Beloved Community and private security guards are now patrolling the development.

Mr. Scott stated the board retreat will concentrate on the Highland/Beech 2023 Plan. He will submit an agenda to board members for their review and input.

Mr. Scott stated the January 2021 PHADA conference will be held in Florida and encouraged all members to attend and will ask for approval for attendance at the September board meeting.

Mr. Scott thanked Mr. Dreer and Mr. Lis for their work on the budget.

Mr. Scott announced that over the next week, a press release will be issued on the grant the authority received from the NYS Office of the Attorney General for the rehab at Jordan Gardens and the Highland/Beech 2023 initiative. Mr. Scott stated a meeting of community stakeholders will take place to gather input.

Commissioner Archie asked if the authority receives any personal information on residents getting the COVID-19 test. Mr. Scott stated the authority does not. Commissioner Archie asked if residents are self-reporting. Mr. Scott stated only if they choose to. Discussion ensued. Future testing dates are as follows: Wrobel Towers, June 10; Packard Court, June 17; Jordan Gardens, June 24 and Beloved Community, July 1. All times are 10 am – 2 pm.

Commissioner Todd asked if the grant that was recently awarded goes directly to the city and the authority manages it or is the grant going directly to the authority. Mr. Scott stated the grant award is going directly to the authority.

Mr. Scott stated he is working on an agenda for the event in July. A meeting will be held at the Family Resource Building on the Highland/Beech 2023 Plan to discuss security and safety, curb appeal, blight, etc. Staff will also be included. The afternoon session will entail strategic planning with a cookout afterwards with community members, stakeholders and businesses being invited.

Commissioner Archie asked about the follow up on the resident needs assessment that has been conducted. Mr. Scott stated the assessments have been analyzed and resources are being provided to the residents that need assistance. Mr. Scott thanked Ms. Smith for initiating the assessment. Discussion ensued.

The Governor released an extension on the moratorium on evictions. Mr. Cafarella stated the order is in effect through August 20 and spoke on some points of the order.

Chair Soda stated the staff did an excellent job with the needs assessment with 600 residents that responded. He stated the board can discuss at the July 14 retreat how effective it has been in its policy role in meeting the needs of residents and can be a part of strategic planning.

VI. NFHA ATTORNEY REPORT

Mr. Cafarella noted his update on eviction moratorium was previously discussed.

Mr. Cafarella reported Mr. Scott and Ms. Smith are working on revising the security contract in place at Spallino Towers and Wrobel Towers and should be completed within the next few days for submittal to the security company. Discussion ensued.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chair Soda stated the bylaw amendment to add the office of Secretary to the Executive Committee will be voted on at the September board meeting.

Ms. Sullivan announced that this year is the last year for the UPK program. A drive by parade for the graduates will be held on Friday, June 12 at 11:00 am in the Sal Maglie parking lot and invited board members and staff to attend.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

The next meeting is September 8. The board retreat is scheduled for July 14.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Vice Chair Cook, seconded by Commissioner Archie. The motion was unanimously carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:56 pm.

Secretary