

The Board of Commissioners of the Niagara Falls Housing Authority (NFHA) met in a Monthly Board Meeting session on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 3001 Ninth Street at 4:00 pm. Chair Soda called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm.

Present:

Mr. Frank Soda
Mr. Dwayne Sledge
Mr. Lawrence Cook
Mr. Brian Archie, Sr.
Ms. Colleen Todd
Ms. Maralynn Giancola

Also Present:

Mr. Clifford Scott
Ms. Angela Smith
Ms. Tomorrow Allen-Collins
Mr. Jason Cafarella

Absent:

Mr. Earl Bass

At the Request of the Executive Director Nancy Haley, George Dreer, Samika Sullivan, Melissa Matsulavage, George delValle, Matthew Montalbo and Maria Vitello

AUDIT PRESENTATION

Matthew Montalbo from Drescher & Malecki presented the March 31, 2020 audit report. An overview of the audit was conducted followed with a question and answer session after which Mr. Montalbo left the meeting.

I. MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Moment of reflection was held.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Sledge, seconded by Commissioner Giancola and carried, the October 13, 2020 monthly meeting minutes of the Board of Commissioners' meeting were approved.

III. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

After review, motion was duly made by Commissioner Sledge, seconded by Vice Chair Cook to approve the consent agenda for the meeting held November 10, 2020. Chair Soda asked about the rent situation. Ms. Smith reported meetings with residents owing the highest amounts are being conducted next week. Packard Court has the highest amounts. Vice Chair Cook asked what residents were impacted employment wise, are there organizations that residents can go to for assistance and what does the moratorium look like at the end of the year. Ms. Smith stated if a resident has a change in employment, a rent change is automatically done. Vice Chair Cook asked does it increase or decrease. Ms. Smith said it usually decreases and this is only done when the source of income changes. There are organizations residents can go to for assistance and are provided with this information. Vice Chair Cook suggested these agencies speak to the residents about their programs. Ms. Smith stated she will set it up. Commissioner Giancola asked if residents can go to more than one agency for assistance. Ms. Smith said yes. Commissioner Todd asked if the only remedy is eviction. Ms. Smith stated yes and explained the procedure with the court system. Discussion ensued. The motion was unanimously carried.

IV. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Soda reported on the ZOOM conference that took place on October 30 and the planning process deadline to secure third party vendors is December 31, 2020 along with the establishment of a working group as well as a stakeholders group. Chair Soda stated the third party vendors will be subcontractors to MM Development Advisors and asked if the board would have to approve the third party vendors. Mr. Scott stated no but board members will receive copies of all proposals to be scored. Chair Soda stated there is only one monthly board meeting remaining before the December 31 deadline. The working group consists of Ms. Smith, Commissioner Archie, Chair Soda, Mrs. W. Lee Whitaker (a board member of People and Possibilities), Ms. Dorothy McLymore, President of the Jordan Gardens

Tenant Association, Charles Walker (from CHCB), Tom DeSantis (City Planning Department) and Joe Collura (Sandstone Springs). The stakeholders group will be a larger group of individuals. The scope of work will include the integration of the Jordan Gardens Preservation Plan along with the work for the Highland/Beech area. The working group will have a rotation of different individuals for each phase. Draft one of the preservation plan is due October 2021.

Ms. Smith reported on the Jordan Gardens resident meeting held November 4 and distributed notes from this event while giving an overview of the meeting. She stated residents should be a part of the stakeholders group and suggested having a video made with the residents which can be placed on the website. She also spoke about the results of the survey. From this meeting, a resident became interested in serving on the tenant association.

Chair Soda stated he would like to have a 2 hour work session with commissioners, the Executive Director and the two Deputy Executive Directors and then hold a working group meeting. Commissioners decided to hold the work session on November 16 at 5 pm at the Family Resource Building.

Vice Chair Cook asked if the residents will receive a copy of the notes from the meeting. Ms. Smith said yes.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Scott stated the board will have the third party proposals by the next board meeting.

Mr. Scott reported there is a positive COVID-19 case at Wrobel Towers. Immediate testing for the residents was conducted by Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center and 128 people were tested. Meetings were held with the residents and Mayor Restaino was also in attendance. Commissioner Sledge stated the residents need to be educated on the seriousness of this pandemic and how to properly wear their masks.

Ms. Allen-Collins reported that the leadership team will attend a cultural sensitivity training on November 13. The presenter is Cassandra Daniels.

Mr. Scott stated property at 3006 Highland Avenue is slated for demolition along with other properties next week. Ms. Smith stated residents are concerned that extermination will be conducted.

Ms. Smith reported benches for the Highland/Beech area have been selected and locations are being looked at for placement. The People and Possibilities board suggested that to help defray the costs, families can purchase a bench in memory of a loved one or in their family's name. The benches will not be placed until Spring. Mr. Scott stated decorative garbage cans will also be placed. Commissioner Archie stated this should be the city's responsibility. While Mr. Scott agreed, he stated the housing authority is taking the lead on this. Commissioner Archie asked if there would be any issues with the city's labor union. Mr. Scott stated the Mayor is a proponent of this initiative and does not expect any issues.

Commissioner Todd asked who is paying for the demolition. Mr. Scott stated the city with funds from Community Development and the county. Commissioner Todd stated there should be some media about this initiative. Mr. Scott stated that would come from the Mayor's office. Chair Soda stated the housing authority would be responsible for media with the Jordan Gardens preservation project. Discussion ensued.

VI. NFHA ATTORNEY REPORT

Mr. Cafarella stated evictions are still being delayed through the courts. The authority has a case scheduled for December 4.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A work session for the Jordan Gardens renovation will be held on November 16 at 5 pm at the Family Resource Building.

A work group meeting will be scheduled sometime next week.

The Agency Plan public hearing will be held on November 20 at 4 pm at the Family Resource Building.

The next board meeting will be held on December 8, 2020 at 4 pm.

Chair Soda asked for a motion to go into Executive Session at the attorney's request to discuss contract negotiations.

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

Executive Session began at 5:14 pm

Executive Session ended at 5:38 pm

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

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Archie, seconded by Commissioner Todd. The motion was unanimously carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:39 pm.

Secretary