



**HATFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
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AMENDED

***SPECIAL MEETING TUESDAY, June 1, 2021, HELD BOTH IN PERSON AND REMOTELY
DUE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES REALTED TO THE COVID-19 STATE OF
EMERGENCY.***

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. with Chairman John Wilkes presiding.

Roll Call: Chair John Wilkes, Alex Malinowski, Mike Hogan, Christopher Smith, Judy Schell and Brenna Duquette/Executive Director. Tenants present were Roland Laurin, Sandra Wildman. Members of the public present were Halina Wilkes and Michael McGrath. There was also a "non-participant" present virtually, but they did not introduce themselves.

Citizens Speak:
Nothing at this time.

Old Business:

Project #127036 – Repave the Parking Lot: Bids were received for project #127036. Chair Wilkes – being that he is the longest standing board member at this time and the most familiar with the project – made the motion to accept low bid from JL Construction Corporation out of West Springfield, Massachusetts, in the amount of \$147,450.00 and to move forward with the contract as recommended by DHCD. Motion was made and seconded by Alex Malinowski; Chair Wilkes opened for discussion. Christopher Smith began the discussion by claiming the bids were never reviewed and it was unclear which of the three alternates included in the bid package were incorporated in JL Construction Corp.'s bid and contract. Mr. Smith was informed all three alternates were to be included. Mr. Smith then proposed a new HHA policy: all incoming tenants with vehicles will not be granted parking if no space within HHA's allotted twenty-nine spaces is available at the time of move-in. Meaning HHA would not go forward with the addition of the six spaces as planned and limit the project to repaving what is currently available to tenants, citing the current construction design does not solve the parking problem at HHA. Mike Hogan pointed out that simply repaving the existing parking lot does not resolve many of the issues that will be addressed within project #127036; the sidewalks are a large concern for the safety of the residents and are being reconstructed with this contract as well.

Mr. Smith then stated there was one more issue to address, accusing someone (no one specific at this time) of falsely reporting to DHCD that the acting fire chief during the November 2019 Town Meeting was embracing project #127036. Chair Wilkes rebutted that the current fire chief is in favor of the project and that is what the board considered when voting. The Director momentarily interjected; commenting that DHCD was present at the November 2019 Town Meeting, as well as most of Town Meetings where the HHA's parking lot project was on the agenda, by way of HHA's assigned DHCD

Construction Advisor Tom Boyer. Mr. Smith was encouraged to contact him regarding these Town meetings. Mr. Smith also voiced the need for a fire lane behind HHA.

Chair Wilkes acknowledged Mr. Smith had raised all the points he had wanted to and asked the other commissioners if anyone else wished to add to the discussion. Mike Hogan added through his personal research and discussions with members of the community, the six additional spots will be adding more room for emergency vehicles to enter the parking lot compared to what is currently there. Mr. Hogan added though the design may not be ideal, it is an improvement. Mr. Smith then stated HHA would be in a liability situation with the lanes going from twenty-four feet to twenty-two feet. Chair Wilkes rebutted, stating HHA is currently in a liability situation with the dilapidated state of both the parking lot and the sidewalks and any further delay of the project would not be in the best interest of the housing authority. To lose the low bidder, or the project all together, would mean the reversing of \$109,000 granted to HHA from DHCD. This funding would not be moved to other projects, it would be retracted as it was allocated specifically to HHA for project #127036. There were brief discussions about Main Street parking as an alternate, snow removal, and the two mature trees being removed. Mr. Hogan reiterated that this may not be an ideal plan, but it shows HHA's attempt to resolve the issues at hand; by not doing so there is a real impetus for an attorney to find fault with HHA for neglecting to move forward with necessary repairs and that should be a concern of the Board.

Chair Wilkes asked if there was any further discussion and moved the vote to a roll call; Chair Wilkes – aye, Alex Malinowski – aye, Mike Hogan – aye, Judy Smith – aye, Christopher Smith – nay. Motion passed 4-1.

Project #127048 – Emergency Generator for Backup Power: The board was given the Work Order for this project in advance and was provided information obtained the afternoon before the meeting; DHCD's timeline for the project, including tentative start and finish dates for project #127048. Mr. Smith pointed out the board anticipated a generator that would power all Capawonk units, and this Work Order is only outlining generator for the Community Building. Mr. Smith posed the question: what happens in the event of a power outage in the middle of winter? Chair Wilkes expressed HHA is fortunate enough to be located directly across the street from an emergency center and has been assured during an emergency – such as the one Mr. Smith described – all HHA residents would be able to be transported to a warm, safe location by emergency personnel. Chair Wilkes emphasized the cooperation amongst the Town, the Council on Aging, and the Housing Authority in the event of an emergency.

The original by-laws of the Hatfield Housing Authority have been a topic of discussion within the board for some time as their whereabouts were unknown. Fortunately, the Director has found the original by-laws and copies were provided to the board for review. In addition to the by-laws, HHA's management plan – with updated policies throughout the past thirty years made by the previous Director – were located. The Director intends to include recent policy changes before providing the board with the whole of both the management plan and by-laws. Chair Wilkes emphasized the necessary changes to the management plan being the board's responsibility and not the Director's undertaking. Mr. Smith referenced a former commissioner's attempt to "re-vamp" the by-laws, stating there is no mention of these efforts in the current documents. Chair Wilkes explained nothing came to fruition due to sudden health concerns experienced by several board members and therefore the former commissioner's efforts came to an unexpected halt.

New Business:

Chair Wilkes welcomed the newly elected members of the HHA's board of commissioners; noting both members were well-deserving candidates of the positions they hold, and the board looks forward to the addition of both Mike Hogan and Judy Schell as commissioners.

Reorganization of the Board: Election of offices was performed.

Alex Malinowski made a motion to elect John Wilkes as the Chairperson, seconded by Mike Hogan. After a lively discussion, which has been recorded and available upon request, the motion was moved to a roll call vote; Alex Malinowski – aye, Mike Hogan – Aye, Judy Schell – aye, Christopher Smith – nay. Motion passed 4-1. Chair Wilkes made a motion to elect Alex Malinowski as Vice Chairperson, seconded by Mike Hogan. The motion was moved to a roll call vote; Judy Schell – aye, Mike Hogan – aye, Chair Wilkes – aye, Christopher Smith – nay. Motion passes 4-1. Chair Wilkes made a motion to elect Mike Hogan as Treasurer, seconded by Judy Schell. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Wilkes made a motion to elect Judy Schell as assistant treasurer, seconded by Mike Hogan. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Wilkes voiced his willingness, ability, and hopes of continuing his position as the housing authority's CPA representative. Judy Schell made a motion to elect Chair Wilkes as the CPA representative for HHA's board of commissioners, seconded by Mike Hogan. A brief discussion surrounded the use of CPA funding, specifically it cannot be used for project #127048: Emergency Generator for Backup Power. Motion passed 4-1.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Community Building will reopen as of June 16, 2021. The Director stressed to the residents of Capawonk that there will be a "use at your own discretion" policy; residents were made aware of the current State policy – the mandate to lift masks – but that the Housing Authority is not responsible for each individual resident's conduct when utilizing the community building. The Director proposed the idea of cameras in the community room opposed to contract tracing; Judy Schell felt this was unnecessary and intrusive. Both Mike Hogan and Judy Schell agreed HHA should mandate that those residents who have not been vaccinated should wear masks upon entering the community building. The Director will inform all residents of this decision. Chair Wilkes took the opportunity to commend the Director for persevering through the COVID-19 pandemic with no cases of COVID-19 at HHA.

Ethics training is required of all new Board members; Mike Hogan has already completed his. The Director requested a copy of Mike Hogan's certificate for HHA's files although it should be submitted to the Town Clerk. Mr. Smith took the opportunity to bring up the LHA Board Training. Mr. Smith was under the impression he was the only commissioner with updated LHA training; Chair Wilkes is current in his training with Alex Malinowski the only DHCD recognized board member not current in his training. New members Mike Hogan and Judy Schell will have to complete this training; the Director will provide the newest members with the information for taking this online training.

OTHER BUSINESS - Consideration of any matter not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen within 48 hours of this meeting.

The Director almost exclusively works via a laptop – purchased by HHA at an unknown date – and for the second time in her two years of holding her position, this laptop has crashed and HHA's IT company, C & C Concepts, is attempting to save all the data within the hard drive. The Director obtained a price for a new laptop from C&C Concepts, which could be obtained as soon as June 2, 2021. Chair Wilkes inquired as to whether technology money was available to fund the new laptop, adding he considered the decision an administrative one. The Director added it has been brought to the board as the policy requires due to the price of over \$1,000.00; specifically, \$1,100.00. After a brief discussion, the board agreed the Director should purchase a new computer contingent on obtaining at least three prices to ensure HHA was getting the best deal and the most suitable equipment for the office.

Chair Wilkes voiced disappointment that no residents had attended the special meeting. Judy Schell alluded to the residents' personal interests being a main priority rather than board decisions. The Director added her concerns of residents approaching board members directly, rather than her office, as it obscures the boundaries of the Director's position versus the Board's duties.

Motion to Adjourn

Alex Malinowski made a motion to adjourn the June 1, 2021, special meeting, seconded by Mike Hogan. All in favor; non opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenna Duquette, Secretary