

THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND  
HELD ON MARCH 11, 2021

The Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Newport, Rhode Island met in regular session in the Administration Building Newport, Rhode Island at 4:00 p.m. on March 11, 2021.

Roll call followed the Pledge of Allegiance and Silent Prayer:

PRESENT:	Chairman	Charles Laranjo (Zoom)
	Vice Chair	Nikki Vazquez (Zoom)
	Commissioner	Frank Coleman (Zoom)
	Commissioner	Cheryl Abney (Zoom)
	Commissioner	Dave Roderick (Zoom)
	Commissioner	Tommy Sheehan (Zoom)
	Commissioner	Vanessa Soares (Zoom)

ABSENT: None.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Vazquez to approve the minutes of the regular monthly meeting held on February 11, 2021. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Roderick, and unanimously carried.

Under communications to this month's Board meeting, the Secretary presented the following update:

- a) *Solar Net Metering Project Presentation – Source One Energy*
- b) *NBC 10 Story on Newport Housing Authority Vaccination Clinic*
- c) *Providence Journal Article on Affordable Housing*
- d) *FCC Broadband Benefit Program*

A brief overview of the 20-year contract for the Solar Net Metering Project was presented to the Board by Alexey Cherniack, Energy Consultant for Source One Energy. Alexey discussed the evolution of the rules in Rhode Island affording all of the Public Housing Authority's the benefits of solar. The contract consists of 20-years of rights for a bill credit of 42% being fully compensated to the Newport Housing Authority in creating solar energy.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roderick to receive the communications as presented and refer them to the Administration. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Abney, and unanimously carried.

The Chair submitted to the Board the Consent Calendar items which included a) COP Report, b) Asset Management Report, c) Occupancy, Applications, & Section 8 Report d) Resident Services Report, e) Executive Directors Report f) Actual YTD Expenses, g) Operating Reserve Analysis h) Collection Loss Payment i) the Capital Fund Obligated /Expenditure status report.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roderick approving the above Consent Calendar items as presented. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Abney and unanimously carried.

The Chair requested authorization and approval of the monthly bills for January 2021 in the amount of \$1,116,877.58.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roderick to approve all due and just bills presented for payment. This motion was seconded by Vice Chair Vazquez and unanimously carried.

The Chair presented to the Commissioners the collection loss write-offs report which reflected write-offs for the month of January 2021 in which there were none.

A motion was made by Commissioner Abney to approve all collection loss write-offs as presented. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Roderick and unanimously carried.

The Chair requested authorization and approval of the payment to TAG Associates for Invoice No. 102 in the amount of \$5,882.00 and Invoice No. 103 in the amount of \$8,486.63 for the Park Holm Redevelopment Phase III Project.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roderick to approve payment to TAG Associates for Invoice No. 102 and Invoice No. 103 for the Park Holm Redevelopment Project Phase III, this motion was seconded by Vice Chair Vazquez, and unanimously carried.

The Resolution No. 2029 Solar Net Metering Contract was introduced and considered by the Commissioners.

Questions from the Board included:

*Commissioner Abney:* Has the City had any involvement and/or approved the contract?  
What are the Executive Director's thoughts?

*Rhonda Mitchell:* Public Housing Association of RI (PHARI) and a number of Housing Authority's have been reviewing this plan, some Housing Authorities were involved through their cities or towns. I spoke with Joe Nicholson a year or so ago about the proposal and he was working with a consultant to review the plan for the city. HUD confirmed that the Housing Authorities had to be included in the initial plan with the city/town to be able to participate, HACN went through the process with PHARI, but I will follow-up with Joe Nicholson to keep him informed.

*Commissioner Sheehan:* Has other Public Housing Authorities (PHA's) paired with Source One Energy and have they benefited from the 42% savings?

*Rhonda Mitchell:* All PHA's who are participating are working with Alexey with a group contract and with separate contracts with HUD for each housing authority for the cost savings of 42 cents on the dollar.

*Vice Chair Vazquez:* Once contract is finalized can we do some kind of press release to share this information?

*Rhonda Mitchell:* Yes.

*Commissioner Coleman:* If there is a catastrophe and the grid goes down, who would be responsible for the repairs?

*Rhonda Mitchell:* The repairs are all on the developer; they take care of the solar farm and HACN would continue to have the benefits of the cost savings.

Commissioner Roderick moved that Resolution 2029 be adopted, which motion was seconded by Vice Chair Vazquez, and upon roll call the "Ayes" and "Nays" were as follows:

AYES		NAYS
Commissioner	Tommy Sheehan	None.
Commissioner	Cheryl Abney	
Vice-Chair	Nikki Vazquez	
Commissioner	Frank Coleman	
Commissioner	Dave Roderick	
Vice Chair	Nikki Vazquez	
Chair	Charles Laranjo	

The Chair requested a review of the proposed amendment to the Bylaws of the Newport Housing Authority. A brief discussion ensued regarding the review of the bylaws prior to the motion of the amendment as included in the Board packet as outlined on the Agenda. Commissioner Roderick reiterated the amendment by reading it aloud and requested the amendment be resolved as presented and approved. Commissioner Sheehan asked if there was a specific example of the reason for the amendment? Commissioner Roderick stated the amendment was overdue and that he had approached the Board previously his concerns and the amendment would be used for resolve of any future problems.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roderick to amend the Newport Housing Authority Bylaws as presented. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Coleman, and upon roll call the "Ayes" and "Nays" were as follows:

AYES		NAYS
Vice Chair	Nikki Vazquez	Chair Charles Laranjo??
Commissioner	Cheryl Abney	
Commissioner	Frank Coleman	
Commissioner	Dave Roderick	
Commissioner	Tommy Sheehan	
Commissioner	Vanessa Soares	

#### Commissioners Reports & Requests:

*Vice Chair Vazquez requested the following:* I attended the NAHRO conference remotely in Washington, DC with Rhonda and were given the opportunity to have a conference call with the RI Legislators where we were able to discuss the need for Broadband for our residents. Our legislators are recognizing the need and are reviewing stimulus funding. Although there were no RI participants on the call it was a positive experience.

*Commissioner Sheehan:* Wanted to recognize Dennis Sheehan for all his work on the Broadband grant with the Newport Housing Authority and the Hi-Lo group to bring Broadband to our residents. We are at the top of the list to receive funding and will be one of the first PHA to obtain this type of funding.

*Rhonda Mitchell:* We are very excited about finalizing the application to submit to RI Housing for \$75,000 worth of funding. This will not be enough to complete the project, HACN will contribute \$25,000 of COVID funds and we will be reviewing what the infrastructure will look like. The challenge on this project is how to cover the \$50,000 in annual operating expenses, possibly by the Solar Net Metering

would cover some costs after one year. We will need to review our annual budgets as well as explore other opportunities to cover the operating expenses.

*Commissioner Sheehan requested the following:* Since more businesses are beginning to open including the gyms, when will the Wellness Center at Donovan Manor be able to open?

*Rhonda Mitchell:* Some re-opening plans are currently being discussed with our Attorney following the completion of our vaccination clinics. I will keep the Board informed as the plans are finalized.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roderick to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 p.m. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Coleman, and unanimously carried.