

HINGHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY  
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**Special Board Meeting  
August 22, 2016  
Minutes**

7:07 PM Meeting called to order by Chair James Watson

Present: Chair James Watson, Treasurer Robert Keyes, Commissioner Irma Lauter, Commissioner Davalene Cooper, and Executive Director Sharon Napier  
Visitors: Doreen Cole, June Seitz, Elizabeth Brody, and Beth James (all residents of Thaxter Park)

The only item on the agenda for this special meeting of the Board was the discussion and possible support for a resident to be appointed to the vacancy on the Board resulting from the resignation of William Wise. Executive Director Napier distributed a notice sent to all residents of Thaxter Park notifying them of the vacancy and of DHCD's future regulations that are expected to outline the process for electing tenants as members of the housing authority board. This notice is attached to these minutes. In response to this notice, one tenant, Elizabeth "Beth" James submitted a letter of interest in the vacancy. That letter is attached to these minutes.

Commissioner Cooper shared information she had received from Cate Mingoya at DHCD regarding the regulations to be promulgated regarding Chapter 121B, §5A, which requires the department to establish regulations for the election of a tenant by tenants to the board, "and regulations establishing appointment by the board of selectmen, if no election may be held." Commissioner Cooper learned those regulations have not yet been promulgated and are not likely to be promulgated until sometime between October and January. There is no clarity yet as to what happens when a tenant is already a member of the Board, although the statute itself requires regulations establishing a waiver to section 5A if a "tenant has been elected under section 5."

Commissioner Cooper asked for clarification of past practices when there has been a vacancy. In particular, has the vacancy been advertised in the Hingham Journal and on the town website? Executive Director Napier stated past practice has varied as there have been few vacancies in the past. Commissioner Watson stated there have been notices of vacancies in the past. Executive Director Napier notified the Board of Selectmen of the vacancy and requested a joint meeting to interview applicants and make an appointment.

The Board discussed the vacancy with Thaxter Street Apartments resident Elizabeth James. She reported she was interested in the vacancy because she cares a lot about the residents, especially the seniors and veterans living there. In addition, she is aware of the issues with the complex and

feels she can be useful as a member of the Board. She served as an officer, including President, with the Tenant's Association, when there was one, and has a lot of experience in dealing with the Board. Over time, she reported that there was not enough interest in the Tenant's Association to keep it going, and she was overwhelmed with running it on her own. She resigned in 2015, and the Tenant's Association has since ceased to function. Ms. James also ran for a position on the Board in 2012, but did not win the contested seat.

Commissioner Lauter noted how hard Ms. James had worked on efforts to replace the boilers at Thaxter Street several years ago. Commissioner Keyes noted how hard Ms. James has worked over the years on behalf of the residents of Thaxter Street. He said she "did a great job with the Tenant's Association."

Commissioner Watson invited the visitors to speak to the Board about the vacancy. Resident Doreen Cole stated that Ms. James had always spoken on behalf of the tenants and she did not see anyone else who would do that for them. Elizabeth Brady expressed her view that she would like to see a resident on the Board, and Ms. James "would be great." June Seitz stated she was glad Ms. James was interested in serving on the Board.

Commissioner Keyes moved to support the application of Elizabeth James to the Housing Authority Board. Commissioner Lauter seconded.  
Vote: 4-0.

Motion to Adjourn made by Commissioner Cooper at 7:33 p.m.  
Seconded by Commissioner Keyes. Vote 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Davalene Cooper, Commissioner and Secretary