



# Newburyport Housing Authority NEWSLETTER

Summer 2019

[www.nhahousing.com](http://www.nhahousing.com)

## ADMINISTRATION STAFF

### **Executive Director**

Tracy M. Watson

### **Director of Leased & Public Housing**

Kathryn Leary

### **Occupancy Manager**

Suzan Moffett

### **HCV Administrator**

Frank Friel

## MAINTENANCE STAFF

### **Maintenance Supervisor**

Peter Bettencourt

### **Maintenance Mechanics**

Joseph Vigneault

Robert Merenda

Dempsey Hernandez

## Board of Commissioners

Cheryl Amey, Chair

Dan Koen, Vice Chair-CPC Member

Kimberly Logue, Tenant Member

Mary Karabatsos, State Appointee

Thomas O'Brien, Treasurer

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*Email*

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## OFFICE HOURS



Monday – Thursday

8:00am – 4:15 p.m.

Friday

8:00am – 12:00 p.m.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES

**Dear Residents:**

**Hard to believe that the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is just around the corner!! Summer is upon on! And with a new season comes new projects! Sullivan Building just received a new entrance buzzer system and coming soon there will be new front entrance and Charter Street doors, as well as a facelift for the lobby! Once all doors are in we will be showcasing resident's artistic talents in the lobby too! All this along with additional cameras for the safety of our residents will be installed in the coming months as well.**

**VEG OUT! See attached memo! Nourishing the NorthShore's Mobile Farmer's Market is back again this year every Friday at the Sullivan Building!**

**Phase III of window replacements will begin over the next few months at Horton Terrace too! Please keep an eye out for future memos which will have further details pertaining to the project!**

**At this time the Kelleher Gardens Community Building project has gone back out to BID. We are hoping that this round goes better than the last! I will update residents updated as this moves along! The current insulation project is projected to continue for the remainder of the summer and possibly into early Fall. We will update as this progresses!**

**I was recently invited to give a presentation regarding how we set rental rates, when are there court appearances, etc. Please see the attached handouts I used during this presentation. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions!**

**Thank you for taking the time to review this newsletter! I wish you and yours a very safe and Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!**

**Thank you,**

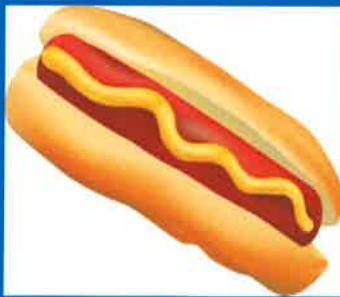
*Tracy M. Watson*



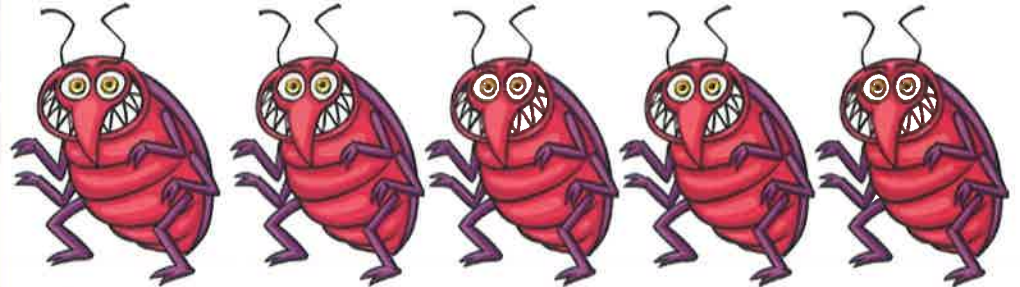


The Hairdresser (Denise) is  
 @ SULLIVAN BUILDING  
 EVERY TUESDAY!!  
 8th Floor!  
 She's also @  
 Horton Terrace  
 EVERY WEDNESDAY in  
 the Community  
 Building!

Please...  
**NO FOOD**  
 in  
 recycling  
 bins!!  
**THANK  
 YOU!**



**BED BUGS!!!**



*If you even SUSPECT that your home may have bed bugs we are requesting that you please contact us IMMEDIATELY! The sooner we can treat your home the easier it is to eradicate the pest problem. PLEASE do not attempt to take care of the issue on your own!*

**We are here to help!!**

*Units that may be affected MUST have professional treatments!!  
 Please do not try to fix this  
 on your own!*

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**PETTENGILL HOUSE INC.**  
**The Senior Support Program**  
**Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of Each Month**  
**10am – 12 pm**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Floor**

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***LAUNDRY MACHINE INCREASES***

We have been notified by MacGray that rates will increase \$.25 for both washing AND drying machines as of June 20, 2019.

As a side note it has been more than 6 years since the last MacGray increase.  
 WASH \$1.25    DRY \$1.25





## **NEED A RIDE? CALL THE COUNCIL ON AGING**

The COA vans are available to all residents of The Sullivan Building and Horton Terrace. The vans can accommodate wheelchairs. They operate Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. They will bring passengers to any Newburyport location for \$1. (\$2 round-trip) The most frequently requested destinations are medical offices, grocery stores, hair salons and the Senior/Community Center. To request a ride, call the Council on Aging 978-462-0430. Leave your name, your address, your phone number, your destination, and the day/time of your appointment. We generally pick people up 30 minutes before the appointment time. Call the COA office again when you're ready to return home, The transportation dispatcher will radio the driver to return you home.

### **GROCERY SHOPPING**

Most passengers. use the COA vans on Monday, Thursday and Friday for grocery shopping at Market Basket or Shaw's. Shopping times are as follows:

**Monday:** 1-2:30 p.m. (Note: when Monday is a holiday, grocery shopping is on Wednesday that week)

**Thursday:** 9-10 a.m. and 1-2 p.m.

**Friday:** 9-10 a.m. and 1-2 p.m.

Shoppers who need more than the stated time are welcome to call the COA office when they are ready for a ride home. Please call before 3:30 p.m.

Grocery shoppers are asked to limit their purchases to 4 cloth (store) bags. The drivers will help load the bags on/off the vans.

### **SPECIAL TRIPS**

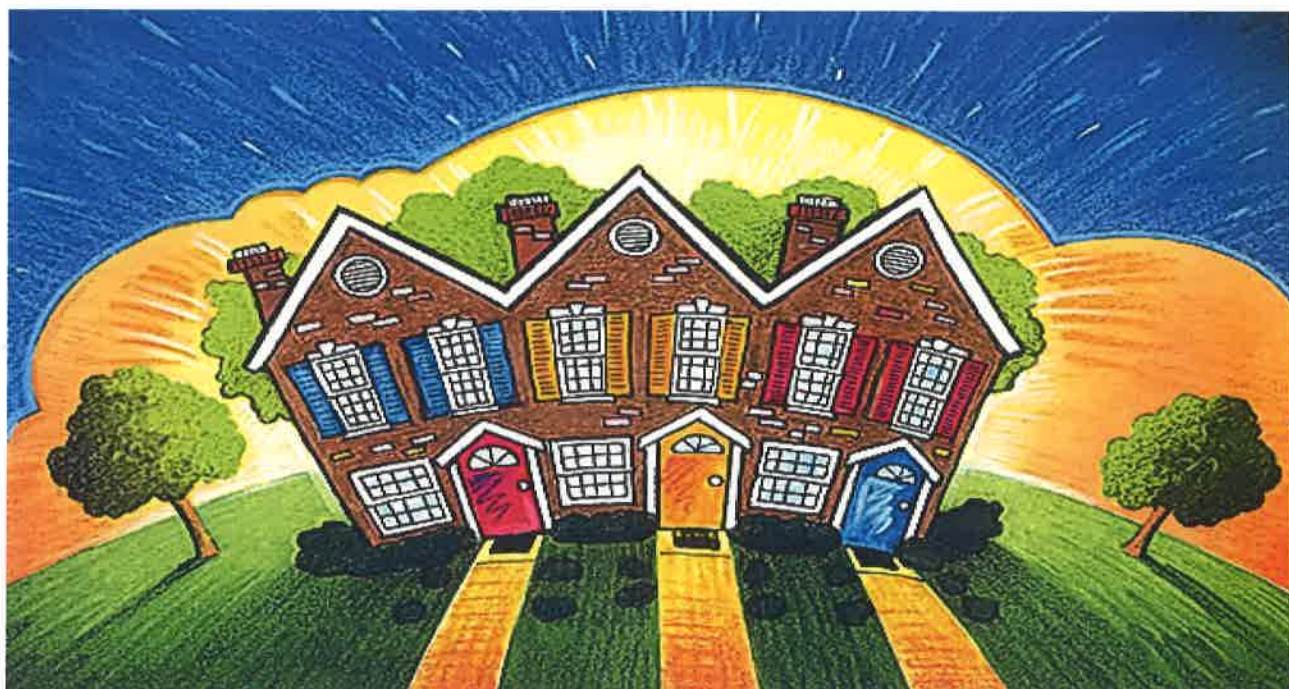
**'Restaurant trips'** - Once each month a COA van brings passengers to a restaurant for lunch somewhere outside of Newburyport. Recently visited restaurants include Hungry Traveller, Poet's Inn, Markey's, and Spud's. The 'Restaurant trip' is usually on the first Friday of the month. The cost is \$5 plus the cost of lunch.

**'WalMart trips'** - Once each month a COA van makes a trip to Seabrook where passengers can shop at Wal-Mart, TJMaxx, Kohl's Staples, and other stores in that vicinity. The 'WalMart trip' is usually on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. The cost is \$5.

### **OUT OF TOWN TRANSPORTATION**

The Council on Aging has a team of volunteer drivers on call who use their own cars to bring senior passengers to out of town destinations. This is called the NEET program (Northern Essex Elder Transport). Call the COA and ask for a NEET ride when you have appointments outside of Newburyport, including Boston, Peabody, Burlington, Amesbury, Rowley and Portsmouth.

## **NEWBURYPORT HOUSING AUTHORITY**



### ***1. How are rents established?***

Rents are established for all residents annually during the recertification process. During this process resident's income, assets as well as allowable exemptions are reviewed and tallied. Residents pay either 27% or 30% of their annual adjusted income for their monthly rent. The difference in percentage is between programs, whether state, federal, elderly or family.

The process is relatively complex when residents have numerous assets and or exemptions, etc. Other factors include Fair Market Rents and Income Limits based on household size and program. The entire process is regulated via legislation and regulations set forth by DHCD (Department of Housing and Community Development) or HUD (Housing and Urban Development) depending upon the program the resident resides within. Staff is certified by both state and federal programs as Occupancy Specialists in order to become fully versed in the complexities of the programs.

\*As a side note – interim recertifications happen throughout the year as well. These interim reviews take place when residents' income either goes up or down, they change employers, someone moves in or out, etc. It is the resident's responsibility to inform us in a timely manner of any household changes whether they be monetary or occupant changes.



## **2. *How are rent adjustments determined?***

Rents are adjusted according to household situations. Rents are either increased or decreased depending upon their individual circumstances of each household and the changes regarding their income, assets and exemptions.

All rental adjustments follow the set forth regulations whether they are annual adjustments or interim adjustments.

## **3. *How are residents notified of rent changes?***

Residents are notified in writing of rent changes. Each recertification and/or interim generates a full packet of paperwork that ultimately becomes a residents lease addendum. Packets are mailed via first class mail or hand delivered to the resident. Residents must sign and return this paperwork – however even if they do not return this paperwork their rent increases or decreases still go into effect.

NHA attempts to give all residents a minimum of a 30-day notice of rent increases however increases under the state program are regulated by a 14-day notice of rent increase while federal programs require a minimum of 30-days. Rent decreases are usually put into place with the start of the next month.

For residents who have “unreported income” – meaning they did not tell us in a timely manner that they or someone else in the household has become employed, has had an increase in pay, etc. the rent increases will go back to the date of employment or income change. Sometimes a situation such as this can create a large balance of back rent owed by the resident. These residents are generally notified verbally and in writing in the same manner all recertifications are handled.

## **4. *How are late rental payments handled?***

ALL rental payments are due to the NHA by the first of the month. As many of our residents do not receive their social security and other entitlements until the 3<sup>rd</sup> of each month NHA staff does not even begin reviewing late payments until at least the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. At that time late notice ledgers are sent to residents reminding them of the outstanding payment owed. By approximately the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month if we have not yet heard from a resident regarding their payment due we will begin the legal process to collect the rental payment owed.

This process begins with a 14-day Notice to Quit. This is a formal notice that the resident must quit and deliver their unit within 14-days or pay the amount owed. These notices are required under MA General Law. If the resident does neither a court date is scheduled. During this time NHA staff is still attempting to rectify the situation in house if possible.



Once the case moves to Housing Court --- both NHA and the resident meet with a Mediator otherwise known as a Housing Specialist. The reason for this meeting is to hopefully come to an agreement for repayment of the debt owed. Each case is different so agreements can vary however for the most part NHA will enter into agreements for at least one year or longer to allow for the resident to have the time to pay back what is owed. If the resident does not keep with this agreement though the NHA will take this resident back to court to create another agreement that may work better for the resident.

This process can go on a few times before we even request to go before a Judge. We are in the business of housing people not putting them out so NHA attempts to enter into agreements that are realistic for the resident and their situation. Unfortunately sometimes these agreements simply do not work and residents do not pay their back rent owed. Many times they incur even more rent owed by missing additional rental payments during this process and/or not making the agreed upon repayment amounts monthly. In these situations a court ordered execution for eviction is granted and NHA proceeds with eviction of the resident. However in order for this to happen we must again return to court and seek the execution for eviction --- each trip to court gives the resident an additional opportunity to sit and work with a Housing Specialist and NHA Staff to rectify the situation.

As a side note though balances are very rarely if ever “forgiven”. We simply cannot do that under the regulations we are bound to unless court ordered. Judges very rarely forgive rental amounts owed. If residents are evicted owing money we will refer them to the a collection agency.

## ***5. Evictions for CAUSE***

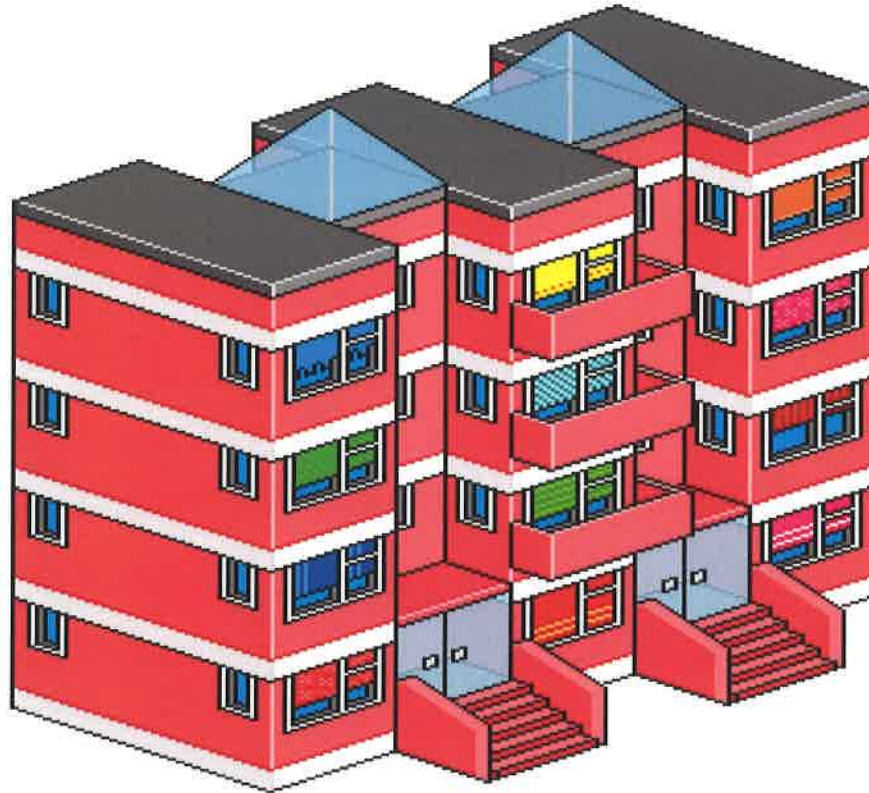
Residents can also be evicted from the NHA for “cause”. These are 30-day notices and they deal with all other aspects of the Lease and resident responsibilities. However court costs, etc. can often be incurred during this process as well. Many times these issues are cleared up and the resident is not evicted but now owes court costs, etc....these situations while rare do happen.



In closing I think it important to understand that the NHA staff are bound by state and federal regulations in regard to how we calculate and adjust rent for residents. It is also incumbent upon us to collect all rent owed. NHA is what is referred to as an “unsubsidized” authority. Meaning we literally function off the rental payments we receive and do not receive a large subsidy from the State of MA.

DHCD also conducts annual Property Management Reviews of all Authorities in the Commonwealth. Part of this review is the review of delinquencies of rental payments. Housing Authorities face penalties for not being aggressive in rental collections. However it is important to also know that NHA staff takes all situations into context and we attempt to work with residents even while working our way through the legal/court system. It is always ultimately our goal to preserve residency for our residents.

Thank you!



Should you find that you have any additional questions or concerns please never hesitate to contact me directly:

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