

**RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE
RENT LEVELING BOARD OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF NEPTUNE**

I. MEETINGS

- A. The Rent Leveling Board [hereinafter “Board”] shall meet for one Agenda Meeting and one public meeting [hereinafter “Regular Meeting”] each month.
- B. To convene a meeting of the Board, a quorum of the Board’s members must be present.
- C. The Board may meet at such additional times as it deems necessary. Any such additional meetings shall be advertised by public notice in the official newspaper(s) of the Township and announced at the regularly scheduled meeting preceding the additional meeting.
- D. The Agenda Meeting and Regular Meeting will be held in the Township Committee Chambers, on the second floor of the municipal building on the 1st Thursday of each month, with the Agenda Meeting commencing at 6 p.m., and the Regular Meeting commencing immediately thereafter.
- E. All Regular Meetings and Agenda Meetings are open to the public and are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12.
- F. The Agenda Meeting shall be for the sole purpose of establishing the agenda for the following Regular Meeting and no formal determinations may be made thereat.
- G. Executive sessions closed to the public are allowed only upon motion made and passed by the Board pursuant to and in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) which provides specific items that can be discussed in closed session.

II. OFFICERS

- A. The presiding officer of the Board shall be the Chair who shall preside at all meetings.
- B. The duties of the Chair shall be as follows:
 - 1. To preside at all meetings of the Board;
 - 2. To sign all formal decisions and resolutions of the Board on behalf of the Board;

3. To ensure that the Rules and Regulations of the Board and the terms of the Neptune Township Rent Control Ordinance are observed and adhered to in the conduct of the business of the Board;
 4. To perform all other duties incidental to the office of the Chair as may, from time to time, be required.
- C. The Chair shall serve for the balance of the year of initial organization and thereafter serve for a term of one year, commencing with the organizational meeting each January and shall serve until election or reelection of any particular chairperson to the Rent Leveling Board by the Board. There is no limitation of terms for the election or re-election of any particular Chair to the Rent Leveling Board by the Board.
- D. The Chair shall be elected by majority vote of the Board at the initial organizational meeting and the annual reorganizational meeting of the Board each January. If no candidate for the office of Chair receives a majority of the Board's member's votes, a runoff election between the two members receiving the highest number of votes shall be held and the winner shall assume the office of Chair. If, because of a tie vote, two runoff candidates cannot be ascertained, the two candidates receiving the highest vote totals and having the longest term of service on the Board shall be runoff candidates.
- E. In the absence of the Chair, the member present having the longest term of service on the Board shall preside.

III. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- A. The order of business at the Board's Agenda Meetings shall be as follows:
1. Roll call;
 2. Reading of Sunshine Law;
 3. Approval of minutes and any amendments thereto;
 4. Reading of Consumer Price Index;
 5. Old business: continuation of hearings on complaints previously filed and acted upon and other carry-over business;
 6. New business: review of new complaints received by the Board;
 7. Public participation;
 8. Announcement of Decontrols;
 9. Approval of vouchers;
 10. Any other items before the Board;
 11. Adjournment.
- B. The order of business at the Board's Regular Meetings shall be as follows:
1. Roll call;
 2. Reading of Sunshine Law;

3. Establishment of Regular Meetings for the year at the Re-organization Meeting;
4. Appointment of Chairperson at the Re-organization Meeting;
5. Approval of minutes and amendments thereto;
6. Reading of Consumer Price Index;
7. Old business: continuation of hearings previously commenced on complaints filed and other continued business;
8. New business; hearing and adjudication of new cases based on complaints filed and other new business;
9. Discussion of other pertinent and timely matters raised by Board Members;
10. Hearing of public comments and questions;
11. Reading of decontrols;
12. Approval of vouchers;
13. Adjournment.

As appropriate, the Agenda for the Regular Meeting may designate matters under the categories of "Old Business" and "New Business".

IV. TENANT'S COMPLAINTS

- A. A tenant may institute a proceeding by signing a complaint and presenting it to the Board in person or by mail. This complaint shall be on the Board's prescribed complaint form available at Township Hall and each filed complaint shall be numbered consecutively as received and filed. The complainant shall signify his intent to testify at the public hearing on the complaint and will sign any complaint submitted.
- B. At the hearing on any complaint, the complainant shall be required to submit either copies of the written leases pertaining to the rented premises or other proof of present and previous rent charges. The original documents will be made available for examination and inspection and, if appropriate, entered into evidence at the public hearing.
- C. The Board may, in its discretion, group similar complaints involving the same issues and landlord, in an effort to expedite disposition of cases.
- D. For purposes of control, if a complaint is presented to the Board at its Regular Meeting, the date of said meeting shall be the filing date for the complaint. If a complaint is filed other than at a Regular Meeting of the Board, the filing date shall be the date in which the Board Secretary received the Complaint for filing.
- E. No relief shall be granted by the Board to the extent that a complaint seeks relief for any period more than one year prior to the filing of the complaint.

V. LANDLORD'S APPLICATION

- A. A landlord may apply to the Board for an additional rental increase based upon the grounds set forth in Section 4 of the Ordinance.
- B. The application may be presented to the Board during any Regular Meeting of the Board. The Board shall number the applications consecutively as they are received and filed.
- C. The Board shall schedule hearing dates for applications received and advise applicant of said hearing date.
- D. All Hardship Applications shall make use of the Hardship Application attached hereto as Exhibit A.
- E. All Capital Improvement Applications shall make use of the Capital Improvement Application attached hereto as Exhibit B.
- F. All Landlord Applications for Hardship or Capital Improvements shall include in addition to the original application and attachments/exhibits provided to the Board Secretary, copies of the application and all attachments/exhibits for all Regular Members of the Rent Leveling Board, as well as additional copies for all appointed Alternate Members, and a copy shall be mailed or delivered directly to the Board Attorney.

VI. BOARD INITIATED HEARINGS

- A. Any board member may initiate a complaint by introduction of a motion which must be duly seconded and adopted by a majority of those members present.
- B. Said motion shall include a statement of the pertinent facts warranting the initiation of the complaint and a hearing thereon.
- C. Written notice of the action of the Board initiating a complaint and the stated facts thereof shall be provided to the landlord and any affected tenants. If, by virtue of the number of affected tenants, individual notice to tenants is not practicable, the Board shall, in its notice to the landlord, require the landlord to post a copy of the notice in a conspicuous public place at the premises, not later than fifteen (15) days preceding the date set forth in the notice for the hearing on the complaint.

I. NOTICE

- A. Tenant Complaint: Notice shall be served upon a landlord either personally or by Certified Mail/RRR along with a copy of the complaint and exhibits, if any, not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing date.

- B. Landlord Application: Upon the filing of an application by a landlord, notice shall be given the tenant(s) by Certified Mail/RRR or personal service within the fifteen (15) day time period, and per the requirements of Section VII, D below.
- C. Upon initiation of a hearing by the Board, notice will be served upon the landlord and affected tenant(s) in the manner prescribed in VI. C. above.
- D. Any notice required by this section shall include for each affected party a copy of the filed complaint or application and all attached exhibits that were part of the filed complaint or application and notice of the date, time and place that the matter is scheduled for hearing.
- E. Notice provided to the landlord shall be sent and/or served at the address last provided to tenant(s) in their Lease Agreement or by separate certified notification. The landlord is responsible to advise the tenant(s) and the municipality of any change of address from that in municipal records by copying the tenant and the municipality with any amended Registration Statement required to be filed with the State of New Jersey or the municipality. Failure to comply with this provision shall serve as the basis for dismissing any motion or appeal by a landlord stating that the landlord failed to obtain notice due to a change in address.

VII. HEARING AND ADJUDICATION

- A. The Board will not entertain any issues not in the written complaint or application.
- B. A hearing on any complaint or application shall be opened by introduction of parties and their representatives, followed by identification of pertinent documents and other papers.
- C. In connection with a landlord's application as provided in V. above, the following must be submitted by the landlord to the Board in addition to his application:
 - 1. Legible profit and loss statement;
 - 2. Balance sheet;
 - 3. Copies of invoices and/or contracts evidencing major expenditures;
 - 4. A computation of projected rent increases as authorized by the Ordinance for a twelve (12) month period (for purposes of this projection, a uniform lease expiration ate may be used);
 - 5. A statement sufficient to identify expenses that may fall into the capital improvement category;
 - 6. Sufficient copies as listed in Paragraph V (F) above;
 - 7. Request for hearing (shall be made at least thirty (30) days prior to requested hearing date);
 - 8. Proof of service upon tenants (may be provided at time of hearing);

9. Landlord's affidavit attesting to the accuracy of the profit and loss statement and the balance sheet submitted and that the line items contained therein are true and accurate.
- D. In cases where a tenant's personal appearance at the hearing constitutes a hardship to the tenant/complainant, the Board may waive the requirement of personal appearance, provided the complainant has a personal representative with knowledge of the relevant facts appear and state the complainant's case, or the complainant has fully explained the case in writing in detail sufficient to permit the Board to render a decision.
- E. The order of the proceedings shall be:
1. Opening statements;
 2. Introduction of documents;
 3. Examination of witnesses;
 4. Cross examination of witnesses;
 5. Questioning by Board members;
 6. Presentation of exhibits;
 7. Final summation.

The complainant or applicant shall proceed first. The order of presentation may be varied by the Board when it deems it advisable to do so.

- F. Proceedings before the Board shall be informal in that strict adherence to the rules of evidence shall not be required provided, however, that in each instance, the evidence presented must be relevant to the issues before the Board.

VIII. DETERMINATIONS

- A. The Board shall send written notice of its final determination to the complainant and the landlord.
- B. The Board shall provide the Governing Body with the determination of the Board when requested to do so.
- C. All determinations of the Board shall be a matter of public record and shall be part of the minutes of the hearings.
- D. Reduced Services – Continued Credits.

In cases where the Board awards a continued credit for deficiencies that have not ceased in the case of a Complaint for Reduced Services, the Landlord may seek to end said continued credits by filing a Motion with the Board seeking termination of the continued credits with a supporting Affidavit or Certification that states that the deficiencies have been corrected on a date certain. The Motion and supporting documents must be served upon the

Tenant/Complainant who received such credits personally or by Certified Mail/RRR and regular mail at least ten (10) days prior to the Board hearing the Motion. The Tenant has a right to file an Affidavit or Certification in Opposition to the Landlord's Motion where the Tenant disagrees that the subject deficiencies have been corrected.

The Board, upon receipt of the Motion and opposition (if any) shall decide the Motion, and any oral argument requested, at its next regular available meeting, and issue a Resolution on said Motion; either denying said Motion in total or in part, or granting said Motion, effective no sooner than the date of the Board's decision (not formal Resolution) and notify the parties pursuant to the same procedure of any adopted Resolution on an application by either party.

IX. ENFORCEMENT OF BOARD DECISIONS

- A. In cases where a landlord or tenant is in willful wanton and intentional violation of a Board decision or in violation of any aspect of the "Open Housing Practices; Rent Control; Protective Tenancy" ordinance, the Board, by resolution, pursuant to Sections 4-32.1 and 4-32.2 of the Rent Control ordinance may make a recommendation to the Township Committee that the violation be prosecuted by the Township Code Enforcement Officer by signing a complaint within fifteen (15) days after Township Committee authorization by resolution.
- B. Prior to any recommendation being made to the Mayor and Township Committee concerning a violation of a Board decision or a violation of the Rent Control ordinance, the Board shall authorize the Board Attorney to put the violating landlord or tenant on written notice of the alleged violation by mailing a letter by certified mail, return receipt requested, and regular mail to the violator and demand that the violator cease his violation within ten (10) days of receipt of the aforesaid notice or a time period that the Board Attorney feels would be reasonable under the circumstances with regard to cessation or remediation of the violation and should said violation not cease, or is remediated, within the time period prescribed by the notice the Board's recommendation may at that time be forwarded to the Mayor and Township Committee. The Board may authorize the notice and recommendation to the Mayor and Township Committee simultaneously under the same resolution with the provision that the recommendation be made subject to the violator failing to cease his violation or failure to remediate within the time period prescribed by the notice.
- C. The enforcement procedure stated in Paragraphs (A) and (B) above shall not be considered either exclusive or mandatory in nature and the Board may pursue any and all existing means of enforcement allowed by the Rent Control Ordinance and by law within the authority and powers granted to the Rent Control Board.

X. DOCUMENTATION

- A. Minutes will be recorded by the Board Secretary and shall be posted in Township Hall.
- B. All Regular Meetings will be tape recorded to provide a verbatim account of said meetings.
- C. The transcript of any hearing will be provided to anyone requesting it in writing. The request must be accompanied by proof of a contracted transcription service and direct payment of costs to said service:
 - 1. Upon proof of the above and payment of a non-refundable Administrative Appeal Fee of \$500.00, the Board will supply the tapes or recording to a transcription service contracted by the Appellant upon request of said tapes or recording.
 - 2. The Appellant shall pay for the costs of said transcripts directly to the transcription service.
 - 3. A request with a transcription service by Appellant must be made within thirty (30) days of the filing of the Notice of Appeal and the Township Committee and Board must receive copies of the transcripts within ninety (90) days of the filing of the Notice of Appeal; unless the Township Committee grants an extension of time.
 - 4. Sufficient hard copies of the transcript must be provided for all members of the Township Committee and its attorney and the Rent Leveling Board and the Rent Leveling Board's attorney.
- D. All matters coming before this Board, including but not limited to documents, evidence, testimony, applications, complaints, etc., shall be a matter of public record.
- E. The Minutes of the Board shall be a permanent record of the Board and maintained on file at Township Hall for such time as the Governing Body or Township Clerk, as appropriate, shall determine, or as otherwise provided by law.

XI. DETERMINATION OF PROTECTED TENANT STATUS

All applications made to the Board for protected status under the Senior Citizen and Disabled Protected Tenancy Act [“the Act”] shall be referred by the Board to the Board's attorney for his review and determination of eligibility. If the Board attorney concludes that any application is incomplete, he shall notify the applicant in writing of the nature of the incompleteness and request that any information or documentation necessary to render the application complete be provided to him within the time prescribed by the Act. Upon receipt of a complete application, the Board attorney shall promptly review the application and supporting documentation and render a decision thereon concerning the applicant's eligibility under the Act. The Board attorney's decision concerning eligibility shall be made

within the time prescribed by the Act, provided, however, that the Board attorney shall reduce his eligibility determination to the form of a written resolution which shall be presented to the Board for adoption as soon as practicable and unless the Board adopts a resolution contrary to the Board attorney's determination, the eligibility determination of the Board attorney shall be deemed final for all purposes of the Act.

II. PROCEDURE FOR APPEALS

- A. Time for appeal: Both landlord and tenant may appeal a decision, resolution or action of the Board within twenty (20) days from the date of the determination.
- B. How to appeal: An appeal from a decision of the Board is taken by serving a copy of the Notice of Appeal and a Request for Transcript upon all parties appearing in the action and the Board with the original Notice of Appeal to the Mayor and Township Committee and the original Request for Transcript to the Secretary of the Board within the time period prescribed by XIII (D).
- C. Requirements of Notice of Appeal: The Notice of Appeal shall set forth the name of the party taking appeal (appellant) and his address or the address of his attorney, if represented, the names of all parties to the action and to the appeal, and shall designate the decision, action or rules appealed from with an attached copy of the written decision, action or rule or, if not in writing, description of the same.
 1. No 'Notice of Appeal' will be accepted from an applicant who has failed to pay any deposits or fees due and owing as set forth under "Section XI, Documentation" either for the present appeal, or any other actions taken by the same applicant. Said application will not be heard by the Board until all present and past fees due and owing are satisfied by the applicant.
- D. Request for transcript – A request for transcript shall be filed not later than the time of the Notice of Appeal with the original filed with the Board's Secretary and a copy to all parties and to the Mayor and Township Committee. Said request for transcript shall state the names of all parties to the action, date or dates of hearing and be accompanied with a *fee* as prescribed by XI (C)(1). The Appellant shall select its own qualified transcription service to prepare the transcript and have the transcription service order the tapes or recording of the meeting within thirty (30) days of the filing of the Notice of Appeal and the Request for Transcript and pay the transcription service directly for all costs of services. See also Section XI on procedure. If no verbatim record was made the proceedings, the appellant shall within thirty (30) days of the filing of the Notice of Appeal serve upon all parties a statement of the evidence and proceedings prepared from the best available sources including his recollection. The respondent may within thirty (30) days after service, serve upon the Appellant, the Mayor and Township Committee and the Board any proposed objection or amendment. Within thirty (30) days after objections have been filed or if no objection within ninety (90) days of the Notice of Appeal, the Board shall file with the Mayor and Township Committee the settled statement of proceedings and provide copies to all parties.

If a verbatim record made of the proceedings has been lost, destroyed or otherwise is unavailable, the Board will supervise the reconstruction of the record. In such a case, the Board's Secretary will advise the parties within thirty (30) days of service of the request of transcript of the need to reconstruct the record. At such time, the applicant shall have thirty (30) days to file his statement of evidence and proceedings prepared from the best available sources including his recollection. The respondent shall have thirty (30) days after service of appellant's statement to service upon the appellant, Mayor, Township Committee and Board any proposed objections or amendments. Within ninety (90) days of the filing of the Notice of Appeal, the Board based on the statements, amendments and objections, if any, of the parties along with its own evidence and recollection shall submit to the Mayor and Township Committee with copies to the respective parties a written statement as to the reconstructed record of the hearing which is the subject of the appeal.

- E. Decision of appeal: The Mayor and Township Committee shall hold a hearing on the appeal and schedule the same upon receipt of both the Notice of Appeal and transcript or statement or reconstruction of proceedings.
- F. Copies of transcript or statement or reconstruction of proceedings: The Appellant must provide an original and six (6) copies of the transcript, if available, to the Mayor and Township Committee and Township Committee's attorney with a copy to all parties in the action as well as copies for all Board Members and the Rent Leveling Board's attorney at its own cost and expense.
- G. The Appellant shall provide all affected parties written notice of the appeal at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing before the Mayor and Township Committee by Certified Mail/RRR or personal service, which shall include the Notice of Appeal, the date, time and place of the hearing and shall indicate to the affected parties the availability of the transcript and all documentation utilized for the appeal at a location convenient, on site with regard to the apartment complex, which can be inspected by the affected party or for which copies can be purchased at a rate which is the same as that of the municipal rate for copies.

XII. BOARD VACANCIES AND REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBERS

- A. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:9-12.1 the following grounds shall establish the existence of a vacancy on the Rent Leveling Board or the legal basis for seeking a removal of a Board member:
 - B. Upon it's being so declared by judicial determination;
 - C. Upon the filing by such member of his written resignation;
 - D. Upon refusal of a person designated for appointment for such office to qualify or serve;

- E. Upon the determination of the appointment authority that such officer shall have become physically or mentally incapable of serving;
- F. Upon the death of such of such member;
- G. In this case of a member of the board without being excused by a majority of the authorized members of such body, failing to attend and participate at meetings of such body for a period of eight consecutive weeks or for four consecutive regular meetings, whichever shall be of longer duration, at the conclusion of such period provided that such body shall notify the Township Committee of the Township of Neptune in writing of such determination; provided, further, that the Board may refuse to excuse only with respect to those failures to attend and participate which are not due to legitimate illness;
- H. Upon the removal of such officer for cause in accordance with the law or any other reason prescribed by law.

XIII. RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. A copy of these Rules and Regulations shall be filed with the Township Clerk.
- B. These Rules and Regulations may be amended by a majority vote of the Board.
- C. All amendments to these Rules and Regulations shall be presented at a Regular Meeting of the Board for public discussion and Board vote, prior to adoption.

Dated: December 17, 2013; amended November 3, 2016; February 2, 2017; March 1, 2018; May 3, 2018; August 1, 2019; February 6, 2020; August 6, 2020; October 20, 2022; March 3, 2023; November 2, 2023