

**** SPECIAL MEETING ****

MINUTES

Willington Housing Authority

October 3, 2018 – 3 p.m.

20 Senior Way – Senior Center Willington, CT

Present: Chairman Don Berg, Treasurer Claudia D'Agata, member Mark Forkey, ACCESS President/CEO Peter DeBiasi and ACCESS Housing Management representatives Alex Fuentes and Melanie Savage.

1. Call to order – 3 p.m.

2. Present to speak –

A Button Hill resident asked the Housing Authority to explain why her rent wasn't adjusted in line with the new Department of Housing income guidelines. The new guidelines put her, in terms of income, in a lower bracket. It was explained that these are eligibility guidelines and that the determining factor in this case is whether or not her income had decreased. Therefore, based on DOH rules, her rent will not be decreased. She was invited to contact DOH if she wanted to get an explanation about its policy.

3. Old Business – Button Hill Senior Housing budget discussions and management contract discussions.

Housing Authority members asked for more documentation from ACCESS, including copies of work orders and a list of payments made for monthly bills. D. Berg said these requests are based on a desire for transparency and for information that will help craft a budget that meets the bank's requirements. P. DeBiasi said these are unusual requests but they can be fulfilled.

There was discussion about heating issues in one unit apparently related to a faulty thermostat, and about the possibility of installing ceiling fans in order to boost the effectiveness of both the heating and cooling systems in the units. A. Fuentes said another unit is having problems with the thermostat, it won't increase above 73 degrees, and he has referred this problem to the company that installed the thermostats. D. Berg said there are other types of thermostats that might be easier for tenants to use.

M. Forkey expressed concern about the answering service connected to the alarm. He said it takes a long time for someone to answer.

There was discussion about timely response to work orders. P. DeBiasi offered to provide a weekly report on maintenance issues and how they were handled. He also noted that when D. Berg is approached by a tenant with a maintenance issue, they should be referred to the property management staff so that it is clear to tenants that is the proper procedure.

There was discussion about payroll taxes and fringe benefits on page 10 of the budget. D. Berg said the fringe benefits seem unusually high. P. DeBiasi said he will get more detailed information about those figures. He noted that ACCESS does have a generous benefits package. He also explained that A. Fuente's hours working at Button Hill are included, as a flat monthly rate, in the figures in question.

D. Berg said he'd like to see the percentage of rent paid to management reduced. P. DeBiasi noted

ACCESS did reduce it from 7.5 to 7 percent.

D. Berg asked how much was paid to Earthlight in the last year, how was the amount in the new budget determined, and he asked for more details about the contract with Earthlight. P. DeBiasi said the payments to Eversource noted in the budget are separate from the contract with Earthlight.

There was discussion about the snow removal budget item of \$10,000. P. DeBiasi said that figure is based on the contract for a similar project in Franklin, based on snowfall versus a flat fee, with a 20 percent increase based on bids and another 20 percent increase because Willington historically has had more snowfall than Franklin. It still saves about \$4,000.

There was discussion about acquiring a larger Dumpster and/or having less frequent pickup, which would save about \$912 a year, and talking with tenants on reducing waste. There was a question about whether the larger Dumpster(s) would fit on the current site(s).

It was agreed to reduce the janitorial supplies line in the budget from \$1,500 to \$1,000. Supplies include salt for pavement.

It was also agreed to reduce the snow plowing item by \$1,600 and to reduce the maintenance payroll by \$1,000. D. Berg said there was a \$500 savings on electricity.

P. DeBiasi calculated that the Reserve for Replacement line item was now \$15,425. And the variance, which is the difference between \$15,425 and the \$35,000 is \$11,925. He also pointed out that now that the grass is grown, there might be less water usage. And working with tenants might lower that cost further. It might be possible to reduce water and sewer costs by 5 percent each, would bring water down to \$15,200 and sewer down to \$4,275 – which brings Reserve for Replacement to \$16,525 and variance to \$13,025. D. Berg noted that's without making any adjustments to benefits.

It was agreed to also reduce the line item for office supplies by \$644.

P. DeBiasi noted he will need to justify to Putnam Bank how each of these reductions was arrived at, but they're all reasonable assumptions.

D. Berg said he hoped the budget could be reduced enough that there would be no need for a rent increase in the next fiscal year.

Referring to the September 10, 2018 minutes, D. Berg asked if progress has been made on developing a mandated tenant participation plan and a satisfaction survey; did management attempt to get a combined contract for landscaping and plowing services (no); further discussion about establishing a utility “allowance” for tenants (which, once exceeded, would require the tenant to pay the difference) was postponed until a future meeting; further discussion about the water bill also was postponed. D. Berg also asked for progress on setting a date for the ribbon-cutting and will follow up with Lynn Skeete.

D. Berg also stated that the inspector is supposed to reply to inquiries this week.

4. New Business – None.

5. Correspondence – None.

6. Approval of Minutes – C. D'Agata moved to accept the September 10, 2018 minutes as presented. L. Millix seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Treasurer's Report – None.

8. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Recording Secretary Brenda Sullivan. Please note that minutes are posted prior to being officially approved – changes/corrections are normally indicated in the subsequent month's meeting minutes.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brenda Sullivan", written in dark ink on a light background.