**MINUTES**

Willington Housing Authority

Monday, February 11, 2019 – 4 p.m.

20 Senior Way – Senior Center

Willington, CT

**Present**: Chairman Don Berg, Secretary Laurel Millix (by phone), Treasurer Claudia D'Agata, Members William Bunnell and Mark Forkey, ACCESS CEO Peter DeBiasi, ACCESS Housing Management representatives Alex Fuentes and Melanie Savage, and Recording Secretary Brenda Sullivan.

**1. Call to order** – The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m.

**2. Present to speak** – opportunity for members of the public to speak.

No members of the public present.

**3. Old Business – Button Hill Senior Housing**

D Berg presented a revised list of 2019 meeting dates, meant to make it possible to receive more up-to-date reports from ACCESS. Meetings will be held the third Monday of the month at 4 p.m. at the Senior Center, beginning in March 2019, except when there is a conflict with a holiday, as follows:

January14 (per previous approved meeting list)

February 11 (per previous approved meeting list)

March 18

April 15

May 20

June 17

July15

August 19

September 16

October 21

November 18

December 16

**W. Bunnell moved to accept the revised meeting dates. M. Forkey seconded the motion. Following discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

D. Berg said he will give a signed copy to the Town Clerk’s office.

There was discussion about water usage at Button Hill. D. Berg said usage is within budget. He noted that voluntary conservation efforts on the part of tenants have had minimal impact to date. He said Building 12 is showing better water conservation than the other three buildings, but noted two tenants in Building 12 have been ill and not occupying their apartments. He added that one of the units is expected to be vacated.

Don reported that Earthlight was paid in full for the new extra row of snowguards.  Housing Enterprises and Putnam Bank approved the expenditure for the aluminum inserts for the snow guards.

Don reported that he, with the assistance of Housing Enterprises’ Lynne Skeet, provided the FHLBB (Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston) with the required semi-annual report for December 2018.  He noted that because L. Skeet helped with the report, ACCESS did not need to assist.

There was discussion about excessive consumption of electricity by some tenants. D. Berg said he will provide a chart mapping usage at the next meeting. He said he found 70 percent of the units were using about 3000 kWh or less for 2018.

There also was discussion about whether to make exceptions for appliances not currently permitted in the resident’s handbook and/or whether state and federal regulations would allow the Housing Authority to charge a tenant using such an appliance (i.e. a food freezer) an additional amount to cover the extra utility costs.

L. Millix joined this discussion via conference call.

M. Forkey said the freezer space in the refrigerators isn’t adequate for food storage for two residents and that tenants aren’t able to take advantage of the savings of buying in bulk because of inadequate storage space. He said he believes that a tenant might consider an additional charge for a food freezer acceptable in exchange for the savings on food bills. He estimated an additional power cost of $40 a year for a food freezer.

L. Millix asked if research can be done as to whether a resident can legally be assessed an additional charge for an appliance that receives a waiver from the Housing Authority.

C. D’Agata said she was concerned that allowing a freezer would set a precedent and the WHA would receive many requests for waivers for other kinds of appliances or equipment (such as heating lamps for reptiles) currently not allowed by the resident’s handbook. M. Savage noted the handbook currently states that keeping rodents and reptiles by tenants must be approved by management.

P. DeBiasi noted that the Housing Authority should discuss a policy change, which would affect all residents, separately from a specific request from a resident. If a WHA member who is also a resident has a request, for example, he or she should submit it separately and abstain from the vote so there is no conflict of interest.

C D’Agata asked how the Housing Authority would determine how much of an additional fee to charge for high-energy-use appliances/equipment. And how would that money be accounted for? M. Savage said it could be included in the rent.

P. DeBiasi said the Department of Housing should be consulted about how to handle this kind of charge. M. Savage said she will contact the DOH.

**It was agreed by consensus to postpone a decision on whether to allow food freezers, and ACCESS was asked to suggest revised language in the handbooks regarding pets, for the next meeting.**

L. Millix left the meeting, by phone, at 5:05 p.m.

There was discussion about property management fees. D. Berg said he wants a clearer breakdown in terms of what’s part of the fee. He also said there’s not enough room on the work-order form to show totals.

He also asked for reconciliation reports he previously requested from Parker Stevens, and an explanation of payroll taxes, workers compensation and benefits. He said there appears to be a discrepancy with the contract, off by about 2 percent.

D. Berg reported that there’s about $10,500 available in development money, which he’d like to use to pay Housing Enterprises, which is currently owed $16,447.

P. DeBiasi noted that payments to ACCESS are about three months behind, from when the project began and before full rental.

D. Berg said he will ask Putnam Bank if it will release more funds now that the units are fully rented. C. D’Agata said she’d like to see both bills paid.

M. Savage reported that building 12 has had issues with no heat, three times. D. Berg suggested hiring a different contractor. P DeBiasi said he will get a report on what the problem was and what was done to correct it.

**C. D’Agata made a motion to ask ACCESS to research and hire a new HVAC contractor. M. Forkey seconded the motion, and suggested ACCESS try to match the current cost. Following discussion, the motion passed unanimously.**

C. D’Agata asked if ACCESS has been advertising Button Hill so that there are potential tenants for the higher-rent units. P. DeBiasi said ACCESS bought ads in the Planning Ahead section, aimed at senior citizens, in Mansfield’s parks and recreation catalog, and in the Journal Inquirer.

**4. New Business** – None.

**5. Correspondence** – There was a letter from a local resident saying he had a room to rent. Two bills – one from Atty. Scaramossa and one for insurance – were given to ACCESS.

**6. Approval of minutes** – C. D’Agata moved to approve the January 14, 2019 minutes as submitted. M. Forkey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**7. Treasurer’s report** – C. D’Agata reported a balance of $3,369.11, with secretarial expenses of $69.97. The report was accepted by consent.

**8. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**C. D’Agata made the motion to go into Executive Session at 6:16 p.m. to discuss the pay rate for the recording secretary position, and to address the upcoming management contract. M. Forkey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

B. Sullivan left the meeting, D. Berg took minutes as follows:

During Executive Session, it was decided to modify the pay rate for the recording secretary as follows:

$0 if a meeting is canceled in advance.

$35 for a meeting not canceled in advance (for example, lack of quorum) and recording secretary is present.

$65 for a meeting of 1.75 hours or less (recording secretary present).

$55 for a meeting of 1.75 hours or less when transcribed from a recording (recording secretary absent).

$85 for a meeting exceeding 1.75 hours (recording secretary present).

$75 for a meeting exceeding 1.75 hours when transcribed from a recording (recording secretary absent).

The Executive Session concluded at 6:50 p.m.

By consensus, the WHA exited Executive Session.

**8. Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 6:55 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.*

