

MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

Wilmington Housing Authority
Monday, July 15, 2019 – 4 p.m.
20 Senior Way – Senior Center
Wilmington, CT

Present: Chairman Don Berg, Treasurer Claudia D'Agata, Secretary Laurel Millix, Members William Bunnell and Mark Forkey, ACCESS Housing Management representatives Alex Fuentes and Melanie Savage, ACCESS Finance Director Parker Stevens, Recording Secretary Brenda Sullivan. Members of the Public: Francis Pippin, Betty Robinson, Linda Sene.

1. Call to order – The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

W. Bunnell joined the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

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

Francis Pippin told the Housing Authority that the water tank used for the garden at Button Hill is empty. D. Berg said that tank is on town property. M. Savage said she will email Jenny Arpin about the matter.

B. Robinson asked when the rent increases will take effect, and asked what percentage the Housing Authority used to determine the amount of the increases.

M. Savage said rent increases take effect August 1 for residents who've lived at Button Hill for a year and for others, their increase takes effect once they reach the one-year mark. As for the percentage, M. Savage said it is 5.99 percent except for two income categories – in those cases, a 5.99 percent increase would have exceeded the maximum rent allowed by the Department of Housing, so their increase is about 3.4 percent.

B. Robinson asked if these rent increases will allow the Housing Authority to reach its financial goals. D. Berg said part of the reason the Housing Authority is having to raise additional revenues through rent increases (in addition to reducing expenditures) is because the project's initial budget was based on projected cost estimates that in some cases were significantly too low. Now that the project has been operating for more than a year, the Housing Authority can use actual costs to craft a new budget. M. Savage added that revenues also were affected by the fact that more apartments were rented at the lower income level (50 percent of AMI) than originally planned.

B. Robinson asked who is responsible for replacing dead plants on the property. W. Bunnell said he has a list of what needs replacing, provided by M. Savage, and he is getting prices. There was discussion about possibly substituting other kinds of plants than what is on the project's landscaping plan. D. Berg said this would require approval by Planning & Zoning. W. Bunnell also pointed out that some plantings should wait until cooler weather.

Linda Sene told the Housing Authority that she is having difficulty sleeping because of nighttime noise from the apartment directly overhead. She said that apartment's den is over her bedroom and she is

disturbed by the sound of a CPAP machine, coughing and other noise. She asked if her neighbor can be asked to move into his bedroom at night.

Members said that they cannot tell a resident not to sleep in his or her den. There was discussion about the construction of the units and issues with pipes under the floors that conduct sound, possibly insufficient insulation and other factors. It was suggested that thicker carpeting might muffle some of the sounds.

D. Berg also suggested polling residents about concerns like this. He said he's been working on a satisfaction survey to distribute to residents to determine what kinds of issues they may have. M. Forkey noted that M. Savage recently sent a notice to residents asking them to be considerate of their neighbors, in terms of noise.

There was also discussion about how to encourage residents to become active in their Residents Association.

M. Forkey said residents have told him they're reluctant to get involved in a group that requires such formalities as electing officers or raising money. It was suggested that a resident might organize less formal, more social gatherings (with help from M. Savage) to talk about concerns or other matters at Button Hill. M. Forkey said residents might be invited to a meeting to talk about the call-for-aid alarm system, particularly because there is a misunderstanding that alarms automatically call 911 (they currently only turn on a light and sound an external alarm. An upgraded system is currently being researched).

3. Old Business – Button Hill Senior Housing

Work Orders

A. Fuentes distributed a list of work requests for June; there were only 4, all of which have been completed.

He noted that he's anticipating more issues, however, related to condensation problems with the air-conditioners, especially in the bathrooms in a couple of units, due to improper installation. D. said switches were installed to turn off the AC if the condensation pan is full. A. Fuentes said there was a leaking incident that turned out to be due to a disconnected sensor wire. D. Berg said he did a cost comparison of companies to do repairs and Yankee seemed the least expensive. W. Bunnell noted that this company also has a better pricing structure; it bills by the quarter hour versus by the hour. D. Berg said they're also more local.

D. Berg made a motion to hire Yankee Oil for HVAC and heating maintenance and repair. M. Forkey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Management Contract (effective July 1, 2019)

Parker Stevens joined the meeting at 4:15 p.m. He distributed budget documents.

D. Berg said he had questions about workers compensation costs (line 6722). P. Stevens said this is a statutory cost. D. Berg also noted that the contract includes 15-20 hours for the onsite property manager, assigned to Button Hill.

There was discussion about ACCESS's 6 percent management fee. P. Steven said it is based on actual collection of rents, not a projection.

D. Berg said the Housing Authority previously gave him approval to sign the new contract. P. Stevens said the contract will be retroactive to July 1. He also said he can email the signed contract to the Housing Authority members. D. Berg noted that either party has the option of canceling the contract within 30 days.

Budget

P. Stevens distributed year-end financials and the July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 budget. He said it is basically what was presented at the previous meeting, but it requires a formal vote by the Housing Authority to adopt it.

M. Forkey asked if the rent increases will change some of the figures shown in the negative on the financials. P. Stevens said they will, as well as some other potential savings.

P. Steven reviewed expenses that differed from what was projected. He said he just received the water and sewer bill from the town and noticed there was an error for one building. He had the error corrected, so the amount on the budget document is accurate.

He noted trash removal costs will be lower because of the change the Housing Authority made in the frequency of collection. However, after residents at the meeting reported problems with flies, D. Berg suggested trash might be collected more frequently in the summer. Residents also noted some tenants haven't been putting adult diapers in garbage bags before putting them in the Dumpster.

P. Stevens said liability insurance has been adjusted in the new budget and that it's probably higher because the company initially low-balled its quote and has now adjusted its premium to reflect the actual value of the completed buildings. He said the fidelity bond is where it should be and the mortgage and interest is on track.

He noted that under liabilities (\$25,500), about \$17,000 is owed ACCESS.

He said once the Cost Certification is finalized, they will see the true value of the property. Right now the net value is understated.

D. Berg read a definition of Debt Service Coverage Ratio. P. Stevens said that what a bank wants to see, essentially, is how many times over can the Housing Authority make a mortgage payment, and if it's below 1, it means the project cannot meet its obligations. He said the Debt Service Coverage Ratio figure is used to hedge its risk and smaller banks such as Putnam Bank are more risk-averse.

He said the budget presented results in a 1.15 Debt Service Coverage Ratio.

P. Stevens reviewed the July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 budget with rent increases included. He noted that the budget assumes the town's property taxes will be similar to the current bill.

He said that once the Cost Certification is filed, the next step is an operational audit, which would cover about two years of operations. Funds for this service are accruing in the budget and the target figure is based on what ACCESS paid for one of the other properties it manages.

C. D'Agata made a motion to adopt the budget as presented. L. Millix seconded the motion; it passed unanimously.

P. Stevens reported that D. Berto asked him for data requested by Federal Home Loan Bank.

D. Berg asked A. Fuentes if he had load test analysis data for generators. A. Fuentes said running this test would cost about \$500-\$600.

D. Berg said the new call-for-aid alarm/light was tested; it's an 85-decibel horn with a strobe light. Although it's much louder, D. Berg suggested not installing the equipment at this time, because it doesn't plug into a dial-in network. He said he'd like to do more research.

Move-out Policy/Transfer Fee

There was discussion about D. Berg's motion at the June 17 meeting (see lines 127-142 of those minutes) that was tabled, regarding establishing a move-out policy – in particular, wording it so that rent is not pro-rated according to the date the resident moves out. After trying several ways of wording the policy, it was tabled until a future meeting.

M. Savage said she will create a wait list for those existing residents who have asked to move into a different apartment.

There was discussion, continued from the last meeting, about establishing a transfer fee for residents moving to a different apartment.

D. Berg made a motion that a resident who transfers to a new apartment will be charged a one-time transfer fee of \$350. Claudia seconded the motion. All voted in favor, except L. Millix who abstained.

W. Bunnell left the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

D. Berg asked A. Fuentes to look into placing an ad for Button Hill Senior Housing in UConn's summer theater program.

4. New Business – None.

5. Correspondence – None.

6. Treasurer's Report – None submitted.

7. Approval of Minutes –

In the June 17, 2019 minutes, line 67 regarding the advertising budget, the amount should be \$1,200 (comma, not a period).

D. Berg moved to approve the June 17, 2019 Regular Meeting minutes as corrected. L. Millix seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. D'Agata moved to approve the June 21, 2019 Special Meeting minutes as written. L. Millix seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Berg moved to accept the June 26, 2019 Special Meeting minutes as written. L. Millix seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 7:22 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, reading "Brenda Sullivan", is centered on the page. The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.