

## **MINUTES REGULAR MEETING**

Willington Housing Authority  
Monday, June 17, 2019 – 4 p.m.  
20 Senior Way – Senior Center  
Willington, CT

**Present:** Chairman Don Berg, Treasurer Claudia D'Agata, Members William Bunnell and Mark Forkey, ACCESS Housing Management representatives Alex Fuentes and Melanie Savage, Finance Director Parker Stevens, Recording Secretary Brenda Sullivan. **Absent:** L. Millix.

**1. Call to order** – The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

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

No public present.

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

A. Fuentes went over work orders for May 2019 and discussed some recent repairs on AC units. He verified that the tool to remove anti-tamper clamps is in the utility rooms.

A. Fuentes asked the Housing Authority how to proceed in response to a resident who's asked for new carpeting in the bedroom because of its smell. A. Fuentes said he didn't smell urine before or after the carpet was replaced (3 months prior to the latest complaint). It was determined management will not clean the carpet since it was new when the resident moved in.

P. Stevens said Button Hill has received an Eversource credit and a \$46.15 credit from Frontier and that from now on, all four phone service bills will be the same each month, and that compared to this year, there will be savings in the new budget.

He also said a check was sent to the Willington Woods account to correct an error in which a payment for laundry services was accidentally deposited in the Button Hill operations account.

P. Stevens then reviewed the 2019 FY budget. He distributed two versions – one pro-rated for 11 months and one projecting the full 12 months of expenses and revenues.

He noted the legal costs for reviewing the property management contract were \$2,000. C. D'Agata asked whether the quoted price had been \$600. D. Berg said she was probably thinking of the maximum cost for the recent Gardner and Peterson solar site plan work.

P. Stevens pointed out a \$128 expense for cleaning/repairs to vacated Unit 12C to cover costs that exceeded the tenant's security deposit. He noted that "forfeited tenant revenues" refers to the security deposit.

Under utilities, he said the water bill is coming in under budget, propane is slightly over budget but that amount was based on a best guess; the new budget is based on actual data. Also, sewer costs are on

track and electricity costs are slightly under budget. He said HVAC expenses include two PerfectTemp invoices.

He explained the “miscellaneous financial expenses” include interest on security deposits

P. Stevens said the \$6,000 transfer from reserves was to pay operational bills not covered by revenues, leaving a balance of \$5,000. He noted that during the initial rent-up period, ACCESS deferred paying itself. Currently, ACCESS is owed for March, April and May – about \$17,000.

He said the plan is to rebuild the reserves account in the new budget (with a goal of \$12,000). He noted the FY 2020 budget will include carry-over debt from FY 2019. He said there is enough revenue to meet obligations but not enough to maintain \$12,000 in reserves.

P. Stevens distributed two versions of the draft FY 2020 budget – one without the proposed reduction of hours for the Button Hill property management representative and one with the reduction. He said these drafts are work-in-progress, ex. they don’t include the debt service ratio and other changes still under discussion.

He said the \$1,200 advertising budget is consistent with what was spent in the current budget.

He said the management expense reflects a reduction in the property management fee.

There was discussion about snow removal costs. P. Stevens said because it was high (\$13,500) it would be worth exploring other options.

P. Stevens asked if it was possible to get a reduction in property taxes from the town. C. D’Agata said the \$7,838 already reflects a reduced rate. P. Stevens suggested the Housing Authority consider negotiating with the town for an additional reduction in order to build a cushion for expenses that will come up in the long term.

P. Stevens noted the Debt Service Ratio is under the required 1.15 (1.01 or \$11,199 in savings and/or revenue) and that this includes \$12,000 in reserves. He said if the Housing Authority chooses the FY 2020 budget with reduced property management staff hours, the Debt Service Ratio is 1.09 (or \$4,547 in additional revenues).

There was discussion about raising rents and what the maximum allowed by the Department of Housing would be for each AMI.

C. D’Agata suggested raising the rent by the same percentage for each AMI category. She said she’d like to see figures for what the revenues would be at different percentage increases.

P. Stevens said that if the rent increases resulted in a revenue surplus, those dollars could be put into the reserves.

P. Stevens also noted that with enactment of new minimum wage legislation, the Housing Authority should expect to see vendors passing on that increase in their charges.

Returning to the discussion of rent increases, P. Steven said the Housing Authority could structure the increase as a percentage, capped at the maximum allowed under DOH guidelines. He said the most

room for increase is at the 50 percent AMI and 100 percent AMI levels. The most impact on the tenants would be at the 50 percent AMI level.

D. Berg said he will create a document comparing revenues at 4 percent, 4.5 percent and so on, up to the cap and email this to Housing Authority members to discussion at a special meeting.

A. Fuentes said that residents would need to be notified by Friday, June 28 for any rent increase that would take effect August 1, in order to meet the one-month notice requirement.

P. Stevens said he will adjust/pro-rate the proposed FY 2020 budget based on those increases.

D. Berg reported that the cost certification document should be done within a few days.

A. Fuentes distributed a draft updated Residents Handbook, without policy changes. He also distributed a form residents must sign for approval by management of any pets. He said the form will be updated annually, at the time of recertification. P. Stevens noted that the state doesn't permit a separate pet security deposit. They can only charge one month's rent.

There was discussion about the previously modified pet policy and the wording in the draft updated Residents Handbook. W. Bunnell said the policy should be consistent regarding the size of permitted animals (40 pounds maximum) and that adding wording that permitted dogs whose adult size would be 40 pounds or less is extraneous.

A. Fuentes was also asked to change the word "tenant" to "resident" throughout the document.

There was further discussion about expenses and revenues in the proposed FY 2020 budget. P. Stevens said Eversource's rates are decreasing as of July 1, 2019 so he recommends retaining Eversource as Button Hill's supplier. Other suppliers offering lower rates also are known to increase them at the end of an initial period.

There was discussion about the new policy regarding Button Hill residents who opt to move from one apartment to another. D. Berg suggested creating a waiting list and noted that some housing complexes charge a "transfer fee." M. Savage said these fees are useful because there are costs involved in preparing both the old and new apartments for occupancy (including about 4 hours of management's time), and that there's usually a two-week revenue loss for re-renting the transferring resident's apartment. P. Stevens said \$250 would help cover the rent revenue loss.

**D. Berg recommended creating a "move out" policy that includes a requirement to give notice on the first of the month. This would prohibit the practice of pro-rating a resident's rent when that resident moves out mid-month. He made the following motion:**

**The Willington Housing Authority's policy regarding a vacating tenant is that the tenant must give a 30-day notice on or before the first of the month preceding departure.**

**There was no second for the motion. Action on the "move out" fee and the notice policy was tabled until a future meeting.**

There was discussion about the call-for-aid system. D. Berg said they would install only one at this time, to test its effectiveness, before buying equipment for all the units.

D. Berg noted there's a need for an outdoor control for the boiler on building 12, as well as insulation for the air separator tanks. He also said he's waiting to hear from the company that might do the work.

D. Berg asked for approval by members to buy a digital recorder for recording minutes when the recording secretary is absent, and asked for reimbursement of \$25 for a Housing Coalition conference. Members approved these requests by consensus.

D. Berg said he wants to have a surge suppressor installed for the circuit boards, and that he will research the costs. W. Bunnell said it should be under \$500.

D. Berg asked A. Fuentes for the results of the load tests for the utility panels, to determine what kind of generator to buy.

D. Berg said he still needs to research the town's emergency plan for natural disasters such as a tornado.

There was discussion about repairs to the landscaping, including replacing some shrubs. W. Bunnell offered to check for savings through a company he uses as a supplier. There was discussion about relocating plants that were damaged by proximity to the sand and salt applied to pavement.

There was additional discussion about savings that would result from reducing onsite property management staff hours for Button Hill. D. Berg said a more accurate figure would be closer to \$5,000 versus the \$3,010 given in the draft FY 2020 budget, as stated in the May 20 minutes (lines 152, 155 and 159).

#### **4. New Business –**

No new business.

**5. Correspondence –** C. D'Agata said she received a bill for the Directors and Operators insurance, which she will give to the town.

**6. Treasurer's Report –** None submitted.

C. D'Agata left the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

#### **6. Approval of minutes –**

**D. Berg made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 9, 2019 special meeting as written. M. Forkey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**D. Berg made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 20, 2019 regular meeting as corrected. W. Bunnell seconded the motion.**

**The correction is to make changes to address an apparent error regarding the proposed reduction of hours in the property management position – to change the reduction from 20 to 15 hours, instead of 15 to 10 hours as written. The motion passed unanimously. [Please note that this motion was subsequently rescinded at the June 21, 2019 Special Meeting. The original number of hours were correct.]**

Members agreed by consensus to enter into Executive Session to discuss the proposed FY 2020 property management contract.

## **7. Executive Session**

There was discussion about retaining the onsite property management staff position at the current level and communicating this preference to ACCESS.

Members also discussed raising rents to increase revenues to meet budgetary requirements.

By consensus, members came out of Executive Session at 7:12 p.m.

There was discussion about scheduling a special meeting.

M. Forkey made the following motion:

**The Willington Housing Authority will notify ACCESS to provide a contract to sign at the next regular meeting that retains 20 hours a week for the property management staff position.**

W. Bunnell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**8. Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 7:02 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", written in black ink on a light-colored background.