

## **MINUTES**

Willington Housing Authority

Monday, January 14, 2019 – 4 p.m.

20 Senior Way – Senior Center

Willington, CT

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

**1. Call to order** – 4:03 p.m.

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

Button Hill Senior Housing resident Lorraine Sedlock was present to discuss the Housing Authority's denial of her appeal regarding decreasing her rent based on recent Department of Housing income guidelines. D. Berg distributed copies of correspondence between himself and L. Sedlock.

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

There was discussion about new rent guidelines recently issued by the state Department of Housing. M. Savage said that L. Sedlock's rent of \$960 was based on the best information available at the time of the resident's recertification. Subsequently, however, ACCESS was made aware of new rent limits issued by the DOH that would have set L. Sedlock's rent at \$929 a month. (This issue is separate from the DOH AMI category changes that prompted L. Sedlock's appeal.)

M. Savage said she spoke with a DOH representative and was told that the department would make an exception so that ACCESS would not be required to adjust the rents for residents whose recertifications had already been done, but only for those with pending recertifications.

Responding to questions from the Housing Authority, M. Savage said L. Sedlock's next recertification date would be in November 2019.

The Housing Authority decided, by consensus, to authorize ACCESS to adjust L. Sedlock's rent to \$929 a month, and to make any rent adjustments applicable to other residents. M. Savage said she will create a lease addendum for each resident receiving a rent adjustment. It was decided that any overpayment of rents will be reimbursed via a credit toward future rent payments.

The Housing Authority also agreed, by consensus, that its prior denial of L. Sedlock's appeal to lower her rent based on the latest change in eligibility brackets (such as 50 percent of AMI, 60 percent of AMI and so on), still stands. (Please see December 10, 2018 minutes for the vote on a policy regarding rent adjustments.)

In answer to a question from D. Berg, M. Savage said that L. Sedlock has the option of submitting an application for a 50 percent AMI unit while she's living in her current 60 percent AMI unit.

There was discussion about questions raised at the December 10 2018 meeting by Button Hill resident Wilbur Gangaway concerning potential utility cost savings through the timing of outdoor perimeter lights and using a motion-detector light outside the utility room. D. Berg said he did a cost analysis and his conclusion is that, given the extent of the changes that would have to be made to the electrical networks, the costs would exceed the benefits.

D. Berg provided an update on the installation of a third row of snow guards. He said he paid the deposit of one-third of the price for the snow guards but as of this meeting, Earthlight hadn't installed them.

There was discussion about where to pile excess snow. D. Berg suggested using a spot at the top of the stairs, which would cover about 5-6 parking spaces. A. Fuentes said he also talked to the contractor about not creating a berm of snow between the apartments and the parked cars.

A. Fuentes gave an update on repairs being made to "bumpy" rugs in some units. He said he received a quote of \$725 to fix 9 areas in 5 apartments. He said it was difficult to find companies to submit bids because it is such a small job. P. Stevens said payment for the work will come from the operations budget. A. Fuentes said the tax currently shown on the bill will be removed.

**C. D'Agata made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$725 to repair the rugs in five apartments. L. Millix seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

In response to a question from M. Forkey, D. Berg said the warranty period for Zlotnick Construction Inc. to make these repairs has expired.

M. Forkey reported that all the ceiling fans approved by the Housing Authority have been installed. He said the fans do a good job of distributing the warm air, which should result in reduced heating costs.

There was discussion about work orders. A. Fuentes distributed copies and noted the new format. P. Stevens said these reports could be sent to Housing Authority members electronically. There was discussion about how repairs are billed. A. Fuentes said in-house work is billed as part of the contract; bills for outside contractors are separate. ACCESS was asked to include information in work orders about any parts or appliances that are purchased.

There was discussion about the maintenance budget and how wages and salaries are categorized.

P. Stevens said the maintenance budget should decrease in the new fiscal year because when Button Hill first opened, there were a lot of problems with the air-conditioning units.

There was discussion about the property management salaries in the budget and how M. Savage's and A. Fuentes' time are apportioned. P. Stevens said that A. Fuentes accounts for about 5 percent because certain of his functions fall under the property management category. P. Stevens said there is no "double-dipping" between Button Hill and Willington Woods budgets.

D. Berg noted that the contract with ACCESS includes 30 percent for employee taxes and benefits, but the document distributed at the meeting includes 32 percent. P. Stevens said he will look into this discrepancy and if necessary, an adjustment credit could be included in the new fiscal year's budget.

P. Stevens pointed out that one change in rental income shown in the budget is the result of the death of the spouse of a resident.

He also noted that the maintenance budget includes the cost of extra parts for the boiler that had to be special ordered, to have handy for future repairs. He said the contractor provided an itemized invoice for the parts, so ACCESS will be able to keep track of the inventory.

There was discussion about the new snow removal contract. P. Stevens said Button Hill will be billed per storm versus billed a flat rate for the year.

Reviewing other items in the budget, P. Stevens said the insurance refers to property liability insurance, as well as a “crime bond” which is about \$300 annually. He noted that the Town is now paying for the Directors and Officers liability insurance.

P. Stevens said the budget is on track for the “transfer to reserves” line item, which is \$1,000 a month. He said there is flexibility in the monthly amount, as long as the Housing Authority reaches the annual goal. So, for example, they could use some of these funds to pay for unexpectedly high snow removal one month.

There was discussion about who is responsible for soliciting quotes for Cost Certification and for an Operating Audit. P. Stevens said he believes the Housing Authority would be responsible for Cost Certification quotes because this task is tied to construction, while ACCESS would solicit bids for the Operating Audit. D. Berg said he will confer with David Berto on this question.

D. Berg said he needs direction about who is responsible for completing a report requested by the Federal Home Loan Bank. He said the request was forwarded to him by Putnam Bank. P. Stevens asked if this kind of report had been done before and if so, ACCESS could refer to it and complete the newly requested forms.

P. Stevens said he plans to attend Housing Authority meetings on a quarterly basis to answer budgeting questions.

D. Berg asked if it was advisable to increase advertising in order to attract more tenants for the higher-rent units. A. Fuentes said he could place ads in a seniors-oriented publication, “Plan Ahead,” as well as a local newspaper called “Neighbors.” He also suggested placing an ad in Mansfield’s Parks and Recreation catalog since it reaches multiple towns. D. Berg asked A. Fuentes to also inquire about the cost of placing an ad on the Gampel Pavilion scoreboard.

D. Berg distributed an analysis he created of water/sewer usage. He said it appears residents are complying with a request to try to reduce their water usage. He also distributed an analysis of solar power generated by the solar panels. He said it shows Building 12 is falling below goal. A. Fuentes said he looked into what it would cost for a temporary wi-fi connection that could be used to track the problem at Building 12 and it is about \$49 a month.

This led to discussion about tenants who have pets that require high energy usage for their upkeep and about amending a tenant’s lease to include an additional assessment, in such a case.

Making note of a question raised at the December 10, 2018 meeting, A. Fuentes said the high cost of the Post-It Notes refers to sticky forms left by maintenance workers. He said they are frequently used and so, bought in bulk.

#### **4. New Business –**

D. Berg distributed photocopies of the WHA page on the Town of Willington website, which is now assigned to B. Sullivan for updating. There was discussion about the changes that were made and the complexity of the process. Members asked that B. Sullivan hide the top box listing members because it is redundant (the lower box includes members, their board titles and their terms). The words "Willington Housing Authority" also will be added to the title for the second box. B. Sullivan was also asked to replace the current photo background with an image of Button Hill Senior Housing.

A. Fuentes asked if the Housing Authority would like to consider, at the February meeting, whether the group would like to change its meeting dates to the third Monday of the month so that documents would be up to date by the time of the meetings.

Three other topics were deferred to a future meeting: possibly amending the tenant handbook to allow residents to have a food freezer, possibly paying the recording secretary more for meetings that run long (i.e. 3 hours), and drafting a conflict of interest form for the WHA (maybe based on the Town's). C. D'Agata said she will inquire about how the Town sets what it pays recording secretaries for other boards and commissions.

**5. Correspondence** – The WHA received a Christmas card from the Crosskey architectural firm.

**6. Approval of minutes** –

The following corrections were made to the December 10, 2018 minutes: line 128, replace "no formal action was taken" to "The Housing Authority approved the expenditure"; and correction of a spelling error – sensor (not censor).

**C. D'Agata moved to accept the December 10, 2018 minutes as corrected. L. Millix seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**7. Treasurer's report** –

C. D'Agata reported the expenditure of \$177.62 for secretarial services (including \$100 for work on the WHA website page), leaving a balance of \$3,439.08

**8. Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 7:10 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 dark ink, appearing to read "Brenda Sullivan", is written over a light blue horizontal line.