

**** SPECIAL MEETING ****

MINUTES

Willington Housing Authority

December 10, 2018 – 4 p.m.

20 Senior Way – Senior Center Willington, CT

Present: Chairman Don Berg, Treasurer Claudia D'Agata, members Mark Forkey and Laurel Millix, Housing consultant Dave Berto, ACCESS Housing Management representatives Alex Fuentes and Melanie Savage, Recording Secretary Brenda Sullivan.

1. Call to order – 4 p.m.

2. Present to speak – Wilbur Gangaway.

W. Gangaway asked when the property management contract for Button Hill Senior Housing was signed with ACCESS. D. Berg said the contract was approved retroactive to July 1. W. Gangaway said that when it's time to renew the contract, the Housing Authority should seek at least three bids. He also said the Housing Authority should create and distribute a satisfaction survey for Button Hill residents. He said the Housing Authority should do this on their own and not delegate the task to ACCESS, in order to avoid bias. He asked if the Housing Authority oversees Willington Woods. C. D'Agata said it is overseen by the ASHoW Board of Directors.

W. Gangaway asked if the question about solar output at one of the buildings, which is producing less than the others, was resolved. D. Berg said they are losing about \$150 a year from one building. D. Berg said he is waiting for bank funds to be released to pay Earthlight and then the company will come out and investigate the problem.

There was discussion about who should communicate with the bank about releasing funds.

D. Berto joined the meeting. He said it is the Housing Authority's responsibility to follow up on the release of construction funds. A. Fuentes noted that the bank asked him for a copy of the official wait list (people interested in renting a unit at Button Hill).

W. Gangaway asked if there's a way to control some of the outdoor lights independent of the others. He asked if it's possible to install a motion sensor light so that the light outside the utility room isn't on all night. He also asked if there's a way to set a timer for the perimeter lights on the road so that they aren't turned on until 11 p.m. D. Berg said it's his understanding that all the lights are connected, so it currently isn't possible to adjust when the road lights are turned on.

W. Gangaway reported problems with water pressure and hot water. He said he has to run the hot water a long time before it reaches the right temperature. M. Forkey said he thinks the water also doesn't get as hot as it should. D. Berg said the problem might be addressed by adjusting or replacing thermostats for the domestic hot water recirculating loop. ACCESS was asked to address these issues.

W. Gangaway also expressed dissatisfaction with the length of time ACCESS took to resolve a heating issue for one of the units, approximately three months, he said.

3. Old Business – Button Hill Senior Housing

There was continued and lengthy discussion about a request from a Button Hill resident asking to have her rent lowered, based on new income categories recently issued by the Department of Housing (DOH).

D. Berg distributed copies of correspondence between himself and the resident, dated Oct. 22 and Nov. 20, 2018. He said he felt the policy adopted at the November 5, 2018 meeting didn't adequately spell out the Housing Authority's policy regarding any resident's request to change his or her rent amount. There was further discussion.

A. Fuentes reiterated that the DOH guidelines are for determining *eligibility* to rent a unit assigned to a specific income category. He said the purpose of the annual recertification is to determine whether the resident is still eligible to rent the unit he or she is living in. He added that the resident's income/ability to pay the rent has not changed.

D. Berto noted that each unit is assigned a particular AMI (Area Median Income) category, in compliance with DOH requirements for Button Hill senior housing. For example, 11 of the 24 units are designated for 50 percent of AMI. Rental amounts are tied to the unit's category.

D. Berto noted that residents have the option of moving into a unit assigned a different (i.e. lower income) category, if he or she meets the financial criteria and if one is available. Currently, however, there is a waiting list for the 50 percent units.

In order to clarify the Housing Authority's policy in this matter, C. D'Agata moved to replace the policy approved at the November 5, 2018 meeting with the following wording:

It is the policy of the Willington Housing Authority that any rent adjustments will be determined on the date of a resident's annual recertification, based on the Area Median Income (AMI) classification of the unit being rented, and within the Department of Housing's (DOH) most recent guidelines, and as determined by the Willington Housing Authority. In cases where the resident's income decreases by \$750 or more a month, an interim recertification will be considered.

The motion was seconded by L. Millix and the motion passed unanimously.

The board then continued discussion of the resident's appeal of management's decision not to adjust the resident's rent based on new DOH guidelines. The board, by consensus, denied the appeal.

There was discussion about items in the budget. D. Berg distributed an expenditure packet and other budget documents, including a reconciliation report.

D. Berg said he wants more detailed work order reports that include information such as – what was the problem and how was it resolved, who did the repairs and how many hours was staff on site to make repairs or otherwise resolve a problem. He said he'd like copies sent to him every two weeks. M. Forkey also asked the report to include any costs not covered by the management fee. A. Fuentes distributed the latest report, up to date as of December 7.

D. Berg asked ACCESS to provide a breakdown of what is covered under the monthly management fee. He also asked for an explanation of the \$498.70 charge for Post-It notes. He also asked for details concerning card member services charges as well as ACH fees from Real Page in July and August. He also asked that the different instances of “insurance” be defined.

There was discussion about the need for additional snow guards on the roofs. C. D'Agata made the following motion:

The Willington Housing Authority authorizes the expenditure of \$3,250 for one row of additional snow guards on the solar panels, to be paid from the Button Hill development account.

L. Millix seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Members also agreed, by consensus, to authorize D. Berg to talk to Putnam Bank about whether the bank might make a contribution from its community grants program toward buying additional solar panels for Button Hill Senior Housing.

Members also asked ACCESS to research what it would cost to install internet service, on a temporary basis, at Button Hill to allow Earthlight to connect its equipment to inverters, in order to determine the cause of low power generation by unit 12.

D. Berg asked A. Fuentes to add him to the email list on communications between ACCESS and the DOH regarding Button Hill Senior Housing.

D. Berg suggested the Housing Authority discuss at the January meeting adopting a conflict of interest policy.

There was discussion about bumps in the carpeting in some units. A. Fuentes said the contractor will be inspecting the units to determine the cause of the problem and then make repairs. M. Savage said she will contact the other residents to find out if this is happening in other units.

A. Fuentes reported on resolution of a heating problem that involved a censor in the boiler. He said the contractor suggested maintaining an inventory of parts, at a cost of about \$1,200, on site. No formal action by Housing Authority members was taken on this suggestion.

M. Forkey reported that the recently installed ceiling fan in his unit's living room is doing a good job of circulating warm air and has allowed him to lower his thermostat. He said the average cost to operate the fan is \$11 a year. He also said the fan's LED lights, and dimmer switch, not only provide more pleasant lighting but probably will further decrease power costs. He asked for another ceiling fan to be installed in his unit's bedroom to determine the full impact on energy usage. He noted four units at Button Hill don't have cross ventilation The Housing Authority will assess the impact of the fans in M. Forkey's unit before deciding whether to add them to these other units.

C. D'Agata made the following motion:

The Housing Authority approves installing a second ceiling fan in unit 12B to test the effect on air circulation and energy cost savings.

L. Millix seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

There was discussion about snow plowing. M. Forkey said the contractor needs to avoid creating a snow bank between the curb and the cars because this causes accessibility problems for residents with mobility issues. A. Fuentes said he will convey this to the contractor.

4. New Business –

D. Berg reported a savings of \$2,500 with Earthlight this year. He also said energy credit monies are currently be added to the development fund, but they should be credited to operations.

There was discussion about payment for B. Sullivan's work on the Housing Authority's web pages on the Town website. The Housing Authority, by consensus, agreed to a payment of \$100. B. Sullivan and D. Berg will also provide information requested by the payroll department, including an hourly rate (\$25/hr) and a description of tasks.

D. Berg distributed data on water conservation efforts, which seem to indicate residents are responding to management's memo.

5. Correspondence – Copies of letters between a resident and D. Berg regarding the appeal of management's denial of a rent decrease. (See discussion/motion under Old Business.)

6. Approval of Minutes –

There was discussion about an email from ACCESS President/CEO Peter DeBiasi with suggested changes to the November 5, 2018 minutes. It was agreed that Chairman D. Berg will review minutes before they are submitted to the Town Clerk's office.

C. D'Agata moved to approve the November 5, 2018 minutes as submitted. M. Forkey seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

D. Berg noted his objection to a statement made at the November 5 meeting, as noted in the minutes, and said that losing the opportunity to possibly choose a new contractor for snow removal was not a result of his interference in the process but was because ACCESS did not provide copies of the contract proposals to him in a timely fashion.

7. Treasurer's Report –

C. D'Agata distributed the report. The balance for November 2018 was \$4,848.67. Payroll expenses in November were \$69.97 and the Directors & Officers Insurance reimbursement to ACCESS was \$1,162, leaving a balance of \$3,616.

L. Millix moved to accept the Treasurer's report. M. Forkey seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

8. Adjourn –

L. Millix moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m. M. Forkey seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

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". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.