

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING**

Willington Housing Authority
Thursday, May 9, 2019 – 4 p.m.
20 Senior Way – Senior Center
Willington, 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, and Recording Secretary Brenda Sullivan.

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

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

Button Hill resident Ruth Forkey, regarding a request to relocate with her husband M. Forkey to a larger apartment in Button Hill. Discussion was held under New Business.

3. Old Business – Button Hill Senior Housing

D. Berg announced there were two quotes for \$6,000 to perform the Cost Certification Audit required by Department of Housing (DOH). He said there is \$7,000 set aside by Federal Home Loan Bank for this audit. He added that he also contacted Willington Financial but they don't provide this kind of audit.

One of the \$6,000 bids was from Whittlesey Forward Advising, the other bid was from Brian Borgersen of Kircaldie, Randall & McNab llc.

D. Berg said that Dave Berto suggested contacting Whittlesey Forward Advising after Brian Borgersen confirmed he was currently too busy to perform the audit within the time frame required by the Housing Authority.

A. Fuentes explained that the audit is part of closing out the construction phase of Button Hill and that it is necessary in order to move on to providing annual audits of Button Hill operations.

W. Bunnell arrived at the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

D. Berg asked for a motion to accept the \$6,000 offer from Whittlesey Forward Advising to perform the Cost Certification Audit. C. D'Agata made the motion and M. Forkey seconded it. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Sullivan joined the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

4. New Business

The Housing Authority listened to a request by M. Forkey (board member and resident of Button Hill) to relocate with his wife, Ruth, from Unit 12B to a larger apartment on the upper level, Unit 14E, recently vacated. He recused himself from the decision, except to answer questions from the Housing Authority.

The Forkeys said that when they applied to rent at Button Hill only three of the four remaining lower level “B” apartments were available. [Note: 8 of the lower level units do not include a den-area; the remaining 16 units do.]

There was disagreement between the Forkeys and M. Savage of ACCESS about a conversation in which the Forkeys said management suggested there might be an opportunity to move to a larger unit. M. Savage said this isn’t an offer she would normally make. M. Forkey said he did not recall management saying they could absolutely do it.

A. Fuentes said that management prefers not to let tenants move from one apartment to another because it means increased maintenance costs, more paperwork (if there's a difference of AMI assignment between the units) and loss of rental income from the existing tenant’s vacated unit. He said they try to limit moves to instances where there's a need to make reasonable accommodations or the apartment needs repair. He said he's also worried about setting a precedent.

There was discussion about a resident moving mid-month. M. Savage said the vacating tenant gave 30 days notice and was allowed to pay a half month’s rent.

D. Berg asked Housing Authority members if they were concerned about setting a precedent by allowing a tenant to move to a different apartment. M. Savage said she is aware of another resident who also would like to switch apartments.

L. Millix noted that the Forkeys’ request differs from a previous request by another tenant, L. Sedlock, to be reassigned to a lower AMI unit, because her request was triggered by changes in Department of Housing income categories.

D. Berg said being flexible, by allowing a tenant to move from a smaller to a larger unit when it becomes available, could help with marketing the apartments.

L. Millix asked why a single resident can rent one of the larger apartments. A. Fuentes said Fair Housing rules stipulate that they cannot discriminate against single people and that the larger apartments are considered to have an occupancy rate of “up to” two people.

M. Savage said that from the management’s perspective, she’s worried that setting a precedent for the kind of move being requested could create a kind of musical chairs situation that would result in loss of rental income.

W. Bunnell agreed, saying that he was worried about a domino effect. He said he’d like to support M. Forkey’s request, but not if it affects the project financially. He also noted that L. Sedlock’s request for a lower AMI unit was triggered by external events – a change in DOH guidelines – versus a tenant’s desire for more space.

C. D’Agata said she’d rather the Forkeys be added to a waiting list.

M. Forkey said that as a long-term tenant (one year), he will be unhappy if the vacated, larger unit is rented to a single tenant. M. Savage said she has a couple that is interested in moving into Button Hill who meet the qualifications for the vacated apartment.

A. Fuentes said the Department of Housing makes it the Housing Authority's responsibility to set a policy for requests for transfers to other apartments in the same complex. He said federal HUD rules are different.

Based on a draft written by D. Berg, W. Bunnell made the following motion:

The Willington Housing Authority sets the following policy: If an existing resident in a B Unit requests transfer to another unit, a resident can be moved to a unit with the same AMI assignment.* This request will be granted only once. If the cost of repairs to the vacated unit exceed the resident's security deposit, the tenant will be responsible for the excess amount. Authorization to move is contingent upon payment in full two weeks in advance.

D. Berg, W. Bunnell and L. Millix voted in favor of the policy. C. D'Agata abstained. M. Forkey recused himself. The motion passed.

**AMI [The Area Median Income (AMI) is the household income for the median — or middle — household in a region as calculated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on an annual basis.]*

D. Berg asked A. Fuentes to update the Residents Handbook with the Housing Authority's recent policy changes.

D. Berg reported that he has been working with ACCESS to get a call-for-aid system that's louder than the existing one. He distributed photos and information about two options.

A. Fuentes said he was told that the answering service will call 911 if alerted to an emergency at Button Hill.

5. Correspondence – None.

6. Approval of minutes – Tabled.

7. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 5:57 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, appearing to read "Brenda Sullivan", is centered on the page. The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.