

MINUTES

Willington Housing Authority

Monday, June 15, 2020 – 4 p.m.

Via a conference call in accordance with the Governor's executive Order 7B (March 23, 2020)

Willington, CT

Present (via conference call): Chairman Don Berg, Treasurer Claudia D'Agata, Member William Bunnell, Member Mark Forkey, ACCESS Housing Management representative Alex Fuentes, ACCESS Finance Director Parker Stevens.

1. Call to Order – 4:05 p.m.

2. Present to Speak – Opportunity for members of the public to speak.

No members of the public participated in the meeting.

3. Old Business – Senior Housing “Button Hill”

FINANCIAL REPORT

P. Stevens reviewed the monthly financials with the Board. He said the project is performing well. He said the budget is ahead on revenues mainly because there have been no vacancy losses. He said the cost of office salaries is also down because of the change in staffing hours.

P. Stevens said there's also some remaining funds for legal services. D. Berg said he is waiting for billing for recent legal services. P. Stevens asked that the bill be submitted before June 30, because that is the close of the fiscal year.

P. Stevens said the budget is a bit ahead on utility costs primarily because of propane. He said the price of deliverable fuel dropped significantly this past winter and it was a mild winter. He said the maintenance salaries budget also is lower. He noted that actual versus estimated expenditures have been used to develop the budget for the new fiscal year.

P. Stevens said contract expenses are slightly over, and include electrical and plumbing work, and carpet stretching.

He said the cost of trash removal is down because of a change in servicing levels. He said HVAC costs are less than budgeted because they were estimated based on when Button Hill first opened, when there were several issues.

P. Stevens said the snow removal cost came in \$2,400 lower than budgeted because of the mild winter. He said the variable rate agreement also has been beneficial for two years in a row.

He explained that the “miscellaneous” expense in the report is interest on resident's rent deposits.

P. Stevens said the Transfer to Reserve is at \$15,000 as of May, and will be at \$16,000 in June, so it's right on budget.

He said the budget is \$11,500 ahead after Transfer to Reserves and the mortgage payment, and added that this helps build up cash in the Operating account, which allows management to pay bills at the beginning of the month before revenues from rent payments have posted at the bank.

P. Stevens reviewed the Statement of Financial Position. He pointed out that item 1120, Operating, is \$13,901, which is in the project's checking account, and which is more than the current monthly mortgage amount. He said Reserve for Replacement, item 1320, is at \$20,002 including interest as of May, and is expected to end the fiscal year at about \$21,000.

P. Stevens said he thinks the Housing Authority is in a very good position to request Putnam Bank release of the \$50,000 being held in escrow, which can then be used to pay any outstanding bills.

P. Stevens reviewed the Statement of Cash Flow, and pointed out Net Changes in Cash of \$11,727. He noted that the project's beginning cash was about \$2,000, so the difference is a positive indicator for the project.

LANDSCAPING

A. Fuentes reviewed the most recent maintenance works orders and said there were only three in May – toilet replacement by the plumber, repairing a broken shower head and repairing a fitting under a sink.

Regarding contracts, A. Fuentes said he requested proposals for landscape work discussed at the last meeting and he needs feedback from the Housing Authority. W. Bunnell said he wants to know the amount of mulch the recommended contractor plans to use, and asked if he is basing his estimate on a sketch or an actual visit to the site.

A. Fuentes said the contractor said he plans to bring the mulch level up to two inches, and that the contractor said he would also remove mulch from areas that are built up too high, but he doesn't know how much mulch is included under the proposal. W. Bunnell asked A. Fuentes to get an answer to this question. M. Forkey asked if weeding is included. A. Fuentes said yes. He added that the contractor quoted \$350 to trim bushes and trees and remove the clippings.

There was discussion about grub control of the grounds. D. Berg said the least toxic materials to use appear to be milk spore or beneficial nematodes, but both require watering and he prefers that watering be done by someone who carries liability insurance, because hoses would have to be stretched across walkways, posing a tripping hazard. He asked if ACCESS is willing to be responsible for watering, paid on an hourly basis.

D. Berg said because the weather has been so hot and dry, it might be better to wait until August or September to do grub treatment. He asked A. Fuentes to check with the landscape contractor to see if he would do the application. W. Bunnell suggested using sprinklers to water the treated areas, running for whatever time is needed. D. Berg said he recommends treatment only in the areas beside the apartments. He said he will get more information about the watering requirements.

D. Berg said he received an estimate from a soil scientist of \$350 to test Button Hill's topsoil in about a half dozen spots and provide a report. In response to a question from C. D'Agata, about the need for the testing, D. Berg said the information would be shared with the Housing Authority's attorney in regard to any claim made against Zlotnick Construction, Inc.

D. Berg made the following motion:

The Willington Housing Authority authorizes D. Berg to hire a soil scientist recommended by Gardiner & Peterson for \$350 to evaluate the topsoil at Button Hill.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Regarding low pressure lock out switches for AC unit, A. Fuentes said he is still waiting for a response from Yankee Gas to D. Berg's questions. D. Berg noted it's been a month.

There was discussion about advertising. D. Berg asked where ads are being placed other than a local paper, Neighbors, and one other publication. A. Fuentes said current advertising has been limited because of a small budget, that there's about \$400 left.

A. Fuentes asked if the Housing Authority wants to place an ad in UConn's Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts programs again with funds from the new fiscal year's budget. D. Berg said he will contact the center to see if this can be done for free, but that the ad didn't seem to get much response. M. Forkey noted Jorgensen probably had to canceled performances because of the COVID-19 shutdowns.

A. Fuentes said if there's no cost for the Jorgensen program ad, then more funds could be spent advertising in the Manchester-Vernon editions of The Courant and maybe the Chronicle. W. Bunnell asked about advertising in the Journal Inquirer (Manchester). A. Fuentes said ads were placed in a special edition for seniors inserted in the JI last year. He said an ad was also placed in the Mansfield Parks and Recreation catalog.

There was discussion about the custom Dumpster signs. A. Fuentes asked for a copy of the changes the Housing Authority requested at the last meeting, which he also needs to provide to the sign company, which apparently cannot locate them.

D. Berg said he hasn't heard from the Board of Selectman regarding his inquiry about a Senior Way road sign, other than that the Town is avoiding spending money at this time. M. Forkey said he believes it would be legal to install a "Private Way" sign because there are no public buildings onsite, and even the senior center is by membership only.

SCREEN DOORS

There was continued discussion about a resident's request for permission to use a screen over his door that is affixed with magnets. A. Fuentes said the resident agreed to sign a document stating that he's been advised that the screen may pose a tripping hazard and that resident absolves the Housing Authority and ACCESS management of any liability. D. Berg said he is OK with addressing the request this way. C. D'Agata said she is concerned that if it's allowed for one resident, it needs to apply to all the residents. D. Berg said he wants see a copy of the document and the topic can remain open until the next meeting, after he's had a chance to look at the resident's screen door.

D. Berg asked A. Fuentes whether the Residents Handbook, in regards to residents asking to move into a different unit, should include a statement they will be put on a waiting list for a unit that matches the

AMI assignment of the unit they were originally rented. A. Fuentes said the Housing Authority didn't ask for that information to be added, and that management just puts the resident on the waiting list. He also noted that the information about the onsite property manager, on the Housing Authority's town website, that currently lists Melanie Savage as that person, needs to be updated with the new staff member's name, and that the version of the Residents Handbook on the website also needs to be updated. D. Berg said he will ask Recording Secretary B. Sullivan to make those changes.

CALL-FOR-AID ALARMS

Regarding the call-for-aid alarms, A. Fuentes asked if he should go forward with buying the supplies, which will cost about \$2,400. There was discussion if the installation work could be done, given the COVID-19 precautions currently in place. M. Forkey noted that it's all exterior work, except for testing the system, which the residents could do. A. Fuentes said it would be OK to do the external work.

D. Berg made the following motion:

The Willington Housing Authority authorizes management to spend up to \$2,400 to buy call-for-aid alarms and accessories.

C. D'Agata seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Berg said he met with C&T Electric Company and asked for a quote regarding the wiring of the AC compressor units to the utility panels, but the contractor said he wants to go into each unit and look at the breakers. D. Berg said given the current COVID-19 precautions, he would not want someone entering the units unless absolutely necessary.

D. Berg also asked management to inquire about Yankee Oil's opinion on protecting the exposed Amor flex black insulation on the AC compressor piping and is awaiting that information as well, for over a month.

D. Berg asked for an update about using Button Hill residents being allowed to use Willington Woods as emergency shelter. A. Fuentes said the AshoW board, at its last meeting, deferred making a decision until after the pandemic emergency.

M. Forkey noted that a resident passed away last week and asked if the spouse intends to stay, A. Fuentes said he hasn't spoken with the spouse about this yet but that there likely would be a change in the rent rate because of the change in the household income.

D. Berg said he would like information about how to treat water that accumulates in the catch basins in order to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

There was discussion about a cherry tree on the Button Hill site that appears to be dying. D. Berg said he's made calls to landscapers to determine whether to treat the tree or replace it with a different kind of tree. A. Fuentes said it appears to be damage due to insect infestation, which may not be treatable.

M. Forkey asked who's responsible for maintaining the grassy island. He said it looks like only half of it has been mowed. D. Berg said he will look at it and send an email to the town.

4. New Business

2020-2021 MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

The was discussion about the new 2020-2021 property management contract with ACCESS. D. Berg said an Executive Session will probably be scheduled this month for the Housing Authority to go over the contract.

D. Berg asked about why a clause regarding part-time staff billed at 20 percent was removed and replaced with reference only to 32 percent. He said this appears to increase the budget by \$2,640 on an annual basis.

P. Stevens said the wording was changed in an effort to eliminate confusion. He said the invoices will still list workers compensation, payroll taxes and benefits. He said it's not an increase, it actually better reflects actual practice. He said the 32 percent breaks down to 20 percent for benefits, 10 percent for payroll taxes, and 2 percent for workers compensation. He said the contract now reads that what the Housing Authority pays is "not to exceed 32 percent of" whatever the wage is for staff. He said regarding maintenance costs, base wages are being increased for the lower two tiers, because their wages include a cost of living adjustment of \$2.

C. D'Agata said that in the past, changes were indicated in red on copies given to the Housing Authority, but there is nothing noted in red in the new contract. P. Stevens said that other than the date, most of the changes are about how charging occurs and the hours on site.

D. Berg asked about payroll taxes for maintenance. P. Stevens said these are statutorily-mandated taxes (FICA/Medicare and Unemployment). He said workers compensation taxes for maintenance staff are higher than office staff because maintenance involves more risk.

P. Stevens also noted that, regarding the new budget, because of the potential change to the rent rate for the aforementioned surviving spouse's rent rate, this would bring the bottom line down by about \$4,000. He said the budget can be amended to reflect that.

5. Correspondence – D. Berg reported that he received a letter from the Town tax collector stating that the Housing Authority may delay paying taxes if it needs to do so, but he feels that isn't necessary. P. Stevens agreed and said there is enough funds for the taxes, as well as the mortgage payments.

6. Approval of Minutes of May 18, 2020: C. D'Agata moved to approve the minutes of May 19, 2020 as written. M. Forkey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Treasurer's Report – deferred to the next regular meeting

8. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Don Berg, Chairman

Please note that minutes are posted prior to being officially approved – changes/corrections are normally indicated in the subsequent month's meeting minutes.