

MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

Willington Housing Authority
Monday, August 19, 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 representative Alex Fuentes, Recording Secretary Brenda Sullivan.

- 1. Call to order** – The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.
- 2. Present to speak** – opportunity for members of the public to speak.

No members of the public present.

3. Old Business – Button Hill Senior Housing

WORK ORDERS

Boiler and AC Maintenance

A. Fuentes reviewed work orders for the past month. He also expressed concern that there's currently no provision for preventative maintenance and tune-ups for the boilers because of budget constraints. At the meeting he expressed his concern about going into another cold season without servicing the boilers as he's concerned that if there's a breakdown, especially around a holiday, it might be difficult to get the repairs done without an existing contract. He noted that last year we obtained a quote to service the boilers from Blake authorized Camus boilers dealer and certified service providers in the amount of \$6,275.00 to be paid in one installment. The other option we were considering was Perfect Temp. Perfect Temp stated they had experience with Camus boilers and they are quoting about \$2,000 to service them. As the WHA has decided to work with Yankee Oil for cooling and heating, we have requested a quote from them for the boiler's annual service. He said he'd also like to fund preventative maintenance for the air-conditioning.

There was discussion about water pressure problems in Building 12. D. Berg said the filter screen was inspected and it was clear of any blockage. There have been no recent complaints about water pressure in building 12

FINANCIAL UPDATE

A. Fuentes distributed copies of a financial report that included a snapshot of July, and pointed out that the recently approved rent increases didn't take effect until August 1.

Under contracts, he noted \$350 was budgeted for landscaping in July, but the actual cost was \$500.

There was discussion about who is responsible for maintaining the green around the veteran's memorial. D. Berg said it's unclear because it's partly on Button Hill property.

A. Fuentes reviewed another part of the financial report, a projection for the next 12 months, as well as the Statement of Financial Position.

He pointed out an expense that is a refund to tenants who mistakenly paid their increased rent rate in July, before the increase took effect.

He noted the Reserve for Replacement fund (line 7) includes \$5,000 carried over from the previous fiscal year, plus \$1,000 budgeted for July, for a total of \$6,000.

D. Berg reported that he has received an updated bill from Housing Enterprises.

Advertising Budget

A. Fuentes distributed a copy of the ad placed in a “Planning Ahead” insert in the Journal Inquirer, aimed at senior citizens, for a one-time cost of \$175.

D. Berg said he researched the cost of placing an ad in UConn’s Summer Nutmeg Theatre/Jorgensen playbills – \$1,075 for a quarter-page ad. He said one of the advantages of advertising in the playbill is it reaches a more affluent population, which could help finding potential residents for the higher-rent units. Members decided not to place an ad at this time.

A. Fuentes said ACCESS outreach staff also visits local senior centers and leaves pamphlets, and that it costs \$78 to place an ad in the community newspaper, Neighbors (which is published bi-monthly). An ad in the Mansfield Community Center catalog, published quarterly, is \$250 an issue and reaches several thousand people in Mansfield and surrounding towns, he said.

WAITING LIST

A. Fuentes said Button Hill is now at full occupancy and there are 7 people on the waiting list. Members asked how the list is prioritized. He said it is partly determined by the income designation assigned to vacant apartments.

There were other questions that A. Fuentes said would have to be addressed to the property manager, Melanie Savage. This led to discussion about a new policy instituted by ACCESS that prevents property managers (including M. Savage who manages Button Hill and Willington Woods) from attending Housing Authority meetings.

A. Fuentes said the policy applies to all ACCESS property managers because attending these meetings isn’t part of their assigned duties and it results in overtime. And specific to Willington, he said, there also has been an issue of inappropriate communication with M. Savage about her employment at ACCESS.

D. Berg objected to A. Fuentes’ statement about overtime, since P.eter DiBiasi stated at a previous meeting – during a discussion about cutting the property manager’s hours – that M. Savage could still perform her duties even with 5 less hours than the Housing Authority elected to pay for in the budget. Therefore, attending a 3-hour meeting once a month should not create overtime. D. Berg said overtime should be an internal management issue for ACCESS and not a reason for the preventing the property manager from attending WHA meetings.

Members expressed concern that Melanie cannot attend Housing Authority meetings. They said they are unhappy with the policy because they usually have questions for the property manager and they believe this should be part of the services provided by ACCESS.

Members asked for a waiting list report at each meeting, including information about which income bracket each applicant falls under. A. Fuentes said M. Savage calls people on the waiting list every six months to see if they’re still interested and whether their financial circumstances have changed.

EMERGENCY PLAN

D. Berg said he followed up on a request to research the town's emergency plan. He said there isn't a lot of detail to the plan. He did find out Walmart is the local federal distribution center, and he was told the Red Cross would handle much of the emergency response.

COST CERTIFICATION

D. Berg asked for a vote authorizing him to pay Whittlesey Forward Advising for completing the Cost Certification document. He noted some corrections were made to the document, such as changing "grant from Putnam Bank" to "grant from Federal Home Loan Bank" as administered by Putnam Bank. D. Berg said about \$5,3000 was available in the budget, so he received permission from Putnam Bank to withdraw an additional \$700 from the development account in order to pay the bill in full.

C. D'Agata made a motion authorizing D. Berg to pay Whittlesey Forward Advising \$6,000 for completing the Cost Certification document. The motion was seconded by M. Forkey and passed unanimously.

D. Berg reported that he's had no response from Zlotnick Construction to his repeated requests for data that he needs to submit to Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston in order to confirm that the project used locally-sourced materials for construction. This was part of the project's funding requirements and needs to be documented.

CALL-FOR-AID SYSTEM

D. Berg gave an update on his research into different fire alarm/call-for-aid systems for Button Hill. He distributed a printout of a matrix showing different emergency systems and their costs.

The current system costs \$5,153 a year. He said a radio system could save about \$3,000 a year. A networked-fire-panel system vs network system could save \$4,553 a year, based on one operated by FASB (in Windham, CT), which is currently installing a system in Danielson that includes an option of providing lanyards and wristbands to residents, operating on a wireless system.

He suggested postponing a decision until the one in Danielson has been tested. He will also ask whether this is a month-to-month contract. He suggested the upgrade could be financed with a loan, however he did determine that neither this upgrade or additional solar panels at Button Hill are considered "remediating health and safety issues" by the Green Bank and so aren't eligible for funding from the EnergizeCT Health & Safety Revolving Loan Fund.

WATER SYSTEM

There was discussion about issues with hot water supply. D. Berg suggested measures to improve Button Hill's hot water loop circulating temperatures while reducing fluctuations, as well as increasing the temperature of stored hot water, while maintaining the current quality of the hot water system. Further discussion about replacing the existing pump with a small, more efficient pump that runs full time is planned for Building 12 – as well as adding check valves that were omitted during construction.

There also was discussion about cold water coming out warm in some apartments. A. Fuentes said he will have a plumber inspect the system to determine what's causing the problem and perform the pump and check valves upgrade. D. Berg said it's important to address this problem, because residents running the faucet for a long time until the water gets colder increases water costs.

LANDSCAPE PLANTS

W. Bunnell distributed a list of landscape plants that need to be replaced at Button Hill and their prices. He suggested some similar looking alternatives, in some cases, that are less expensive. He said he's willing to donate plants if these alternatives are approved. There was discussion about what could be done to protect the

new plants from road salt. C. D'Agata said she'd make a donation toward the cost of mulch. W. Bunnell said the best time to install these plants is in the cooler fall months.

4. New Business –

RESIDENT HANDBOOK

There was discussion about the latest update of the Residents Handbook. A. Fuentes said he forgot to delete “no freezers” from the section on Page 5 regarding prohibited appliances. Members decided to replace “no freezers” with “Freezers may be allowed with previous authorization by management.” This will allow management to specify to the resident the permitted size and efficiency requirements for freezers.

A. Fuentes was also asked to change any reference to “tenant” to “resident.” And on Page 15, he was asked to remove a redundant sentence, “Windows tilt for easy cleaning,” and to put in bold type the sentence, “The lower sash must be raised at least two inches before tilting.”

There was discussion about Page 12, Section 9, regarding the policy governing requests by residents to change apartments (including removing the commas around “within Button Hill Senior Housing”). (Also see Approval of Minutes, below.)

There was discussion about sections of the pet policy. On Page 21, members asked that a reference to Assistance Animals be removed from the first sentence, but retain “If an Assistance Animal causes damage to an apartment or common areas, management will charge the Resident for the cost of repairing the damage.”

Members were asked to review the handbook and email any suggested changes to D. Berg by Monday, August 26 – as well as any suggestions they may have regarding the resident questionnaire drafted by D. Berg.

5. Correspondence – None.

6. Treasurer's Report – C. D'Agata distributed an end-of-year report (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019), and a current report. She noted any costs incurred prior to July 1 are included in previous fiscal year.

7. Approval of Minutes –

There was discussion about the discussion at the July 15, 2019 meeting concerning not pro-rating rents when someone moves out mid-month. D. Berg said he believes this is addressed by the policy included in the Resident Handbook. There also was discussion about the new \$350 transfer fee – members agreed that it is both legal and fair in terms of covering costs incurred in preparing both the old and new apartments.

D. Berg made a motion to accept the July 15, 2019 minutes as written. C. D'Agata seconded the minutes and the motion passed unanimously.

8. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 7:50 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.

