

MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

Wilmington Housing Authority
Monday, December 16, 2019 – 4 p.m.
20 Senior Way – Senior Center
Wilmington, CT

Present: Chairman Don Berg, Secretary L. Millix, Treasurer Claudia D'Agata, Member Mark Forkey, Member William Bunnell, ACCESS Housing Management representative Alex Fuentes, new ACCESS Onsite Property Manager Richard Gold.

1. Call to order – The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m.

R. Gold talked about his professional background both with ACCESS and previous positions, in real estate as well as property management.

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

M. Forkey joined the meeting at 4:13 p.m. R. Gold introduced himself to M. Forkey.

REVISIONS TO THE RESIDENT HANDBOOK

A. Fuentes distributed copies of the Residents Handbook with the latest revisions emailed to him by Housing Authority members.

D. Berg asked that the sentence regarding “Call 911...” be put in bold type and that the word “that” be added to the sentence “... if you hear or see that your neighbor’s alarm has been activated.” He also asked that this section include a sentence stating that each building is equipped with a fire alarm (p. 5).

W. Bunnell asked that words such as “in a tightly secured bag,” regarding disposal of sanitary products, such as adult diapers, be added under the section addressing trash disposal and recycling (p. 6).

D. Berg asked that information regarding disposing of “sharps”/needles specify that they are to be discarded in the trash, not the recyclables. And he asked to add the word “bin” – as in “recyclables bin.” He also asked that this section direct residents to rinse containers before putting them in the recyclables bin. He asked that these three topics be broken into three separate paragraphs.

There was discussion about the procedure to follow when a resident requests a meeting with the Housing Authority board, under the section about the appeal process (5. on p. 8). D. Berg asked that the wording be changed so that residents contact the property management office, and that notification of the request will be forwarded to all WHA members, not just the Chair.

A. Fuentes was asked to drop the word “salutation” on p. 12.

There was discussion about the transfer policy and the \$350 fee (9. on p. 13) and whether there needed to be clarification about the fee being in addition to any part of the resident's security deposit that might be deducted to cover damage or unusual cleaning costs. W. Bunnell asked that this section simply include wording that states, "In addition, the resident requesting transfer to a different apartment shall abide by the terms of the lease." A. Fuentes said he will email members a copy of the lease so they can see information about the security deposit and asked that they email him any suggested wording for the Residents Handbook on this topic.

A. Fuentes suggested that the policy regarding a resident failing to move his/her car in order to facilitate snow removal – \$25 for the first offense, \$50 for the second – be included in the Resident Handbook. Members also suggested adding that if there's a third offense, property management has the authority to have the car towed at the resident's expense.

There was discussion about problems with the way snow is blown when walkways are cleared. Snow has accumulated on residents' decks, and has been blown against the buildings. Members also discussed asking the contractor to clear doorways and walkways first so that residents are safely able to reach their cars to clean them and move them out of the way of the snowplow. D. Berg asked A. Fuentes to contact the contractor to discuss possible solutions to these issues.

D. Berg noted that he heard the Town has been applying salt to the roads inside the Button Hill, Willington Woods and Senior Center complex and therefore, questioned whether the Housing Authority should be billed by the snow removal contractor for this same task.

There was discussion about the Resident Handbook's pet policy (Item 1, p. 15) which currently stipulates residents may have no more than two domestic animals (cats/dogs) as pets, with a combined weight of no more than 50 pounds. The policy also gives the property management company the discretion to decide whether or not a tenant can have non-domesticated pets such as birds, fish, hamsters, reptiles and the like. C. D'Agata said she is concerned that a resident may interpret this as being able to have two domestic animals and a number of non-domesticated animals, or more than two non-domesticated animals. W. Bunnell said members might want to be apprised of requests for non-domesticated animals so they can give management direction. D. Berg said if this is the procedure members want to adopt, then they would have to communicate with property management in a timely manner in order to prevent delays in renting units.

MARKETING

D. Berg noted that the lettering in the final version of the Button Hill ad placed in the Jorgensen theater handbill (at UConn) was gold against black and legible. He also said an article and photo was submitted for the next issue of the Willington Wire.

FINANCIALS

There was discussion about the Onside Property Manager's hours being reduced by 5 hours and whether there would be a resulting decrease in the Button Hill budget. A. Fuentes said that change would be taken care of immediately as well as prorated from December 9.

A. Fuentes discussed the \$4,000 savings that resulted from not having to have an outside audit, as discussed at the last meeting. At that time, members agreed to move those funds into reserves. A. Fuentes said that because it appears we are going to have more snow this winter than last, that it might

be more prudent to move those funds to the snow removal account, and that any remaining balance at the end of the season could then be moved to reserves. Members concurred with this suggestion.

There was discussion about how the Housing Authority is billed by ACCESS for the Onsite Property Manager. D. Berg said it appears the WHA has been billed for a full-time position (30 percent) in terms of payroll taxes, fringe benefits and workers comp costs when in fact the position is part-time (which would be billed at 20 percent). A. Fuentes said he will speak to Financial Director Parker Stevens about these questions.

D. Berg asked why M. Savage was transferred to a different position and new Onsite Property Manager assigned to Button Hill Senior Housing. A. Fuentes said ACCESS believes this is in the best interests of the project. He said there will be a special get-together for residents of Button Hill and Willington Woods to meet R. Gold. He said R. Gold has a solid background and an excellent reputation for positive interaction with residents at other complexes, and he is a Certified Occupancy Specialist, which is a requirement of the job.

There was discussion about the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston request for documentation about Button Hill's occupancy rate, rents and other information. A. Fuentes said FHLBB usually follows this request for general documentation with a request for more detailed data about 3 or 4 additional units. He said he has not yet received an update from FHLBB.

A. Fuentes said ACCESS is contesting the invoice of \$4,300 from Fire Protection Alarm, LLC for replacing batteries in the fire panels. He said ACCESS made it clear this was not an emergency, but the invoice for \$405 for labor is not "standard." He also said the contractor appears to have installed the wrong size batteries, each costing \$291, or almost three times what they should. He said ACCESS has made several attempts to discuss the bill with the company, via phone calls and emails, and because there has been no response to date, ACCESS is not paying the bill.

2020 MEETING DATES

D. Berg asked Housing Authority members if they wanted to continue to meet on the third Monday of the month (except when it falls on a holiday) – which allows ACCESS to provide more timely financial reports. Members agreed. D. Berg said he will email members with a list of meeting dates for 2020 to review before submitting them to the Town Clerk.

WATER TESTING

D. Berg said he's been unable to obtain a copy of the water tests for Button Hill and asked A. Fuentes if he would follow up on this. D. Berg also asked A. Fuentes to research what kind of water testing needs to be done for Legionnaire's bacteria and the costs for testing both the cold and hot water supplies.

MISCELLANEOUS

D. Berg said that so far, four residents were interviewed with the resident-satisfaction questionnaire and additional interviews are anticipated.

D. Berg told A. Fuentes that the domestic hot water system needs at least a couple of new thermostats.

4. New Business – None.

5. Correspondence – D. Berg said he received a notice from the Town of Coventry asking the Housing Authority to share information about Section 8 housing available in that town. He also received a real estate tax bill for half the year, which is paid out of the mortgage. He said he will give a copy to A. Fuentes.

6. Treasurer's Report – C. D'Agata distributed the report and noted \$91.51 for secretarial expenses for November, leaving a balance of \$3,305.86.

7. Approval of Minutes – There was discussion of the November 18, 2019 minutes.

C. D'Agata asked A. Fuentes if he'd contacted the ASHoW Board about whether Button Hill residents could use Willington Woods as an emergency shelter. A. Fuentes said he hadn't received a response yet and would follow up.

M Forkey moved to accept the November 18, 2019 minutes as written. W. Bunnell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Members then agreed to enter into Executive Session to discuss a response to a request from ACCESS, as property manager, to establish a policy regarding Housing Authority members doing repairs/maintenance at Button Hill. Previously in the meeting, A. Fuentes gave members a copy of a letter from their insurance company, Vermont Mutual, which stated that it would drop coverage if there was liability resulting from unauthorized persons doing repairs or maintenance.

After coming out of Executive Session, Housing Authority members voted on the following policy, based on wording suggested by the property management company:

“All members of the WHA board are not authorized to, and should not contact or engage with contractors on any Button Hill related maintenance and repair issues nor do any repair work at Button Hill themselves.”

A motion to accept this language was offered by D. Berg and seconded by M. Forkey. The vote to accept the policy was unanimous.

9. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 7:35 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.

