

COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING, OCTOBER 21, 2020

The Commissioners of the East Hartford Housing Authority held its regular meeting on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 by a Zoom Meeting pursuant to Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 7B. The meeting was called to order by Chairman James Kate at 1:35 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Hazelann Cook
Commissioner Kathleen Stephens
Vice Chairman Prescille Yamamoto
Chairman James Kate

Absent was Commissioner John Carella.

Also present were: Debra Bouchard, Executive Director; Christopher Pliszka, Finance Director; Brenda Pliszka, Executive Secretary/HR Director; Ralph Alexander, Legal Counsel; Michael Guyder, Marcum LLP (for Audit presentation) and Esther Clarke and Connor Martin, Town Council Liaisons.

Chairman Kate said he would like a motion to suspend the order of the agenda to move item 8. NEW BUSINESS b. Review of Audit Financial Statement – September 30, 2019 and allow Michael Guyder from Marcum LLP address the Board at this time.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to suspend the order of the agenda. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the Commissioners' present.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

b. **Review of Audit Financial Statement – September 30, 2019**

Mr. Guyder from Marcum LLP stated that he is here to go over the audit report for the year ending September 30, 2019 and to go over the primary highlights of the 2019 financial statements. There was a discussion regarding the audit for FYE 2019. The Housing Authority is in good financial health and no findings. There was further discussion on OPEB Liability and the fact that the State is behind in the CMERS reporting, which makes EHHA's audit qualified until the State can report in a more timely fashion. The Board agreed that this was a very good audit and thanked Ms. Bouchard and Mr. Pliszka for making this happen.

2. **Approval of Annual Board Meeting Minutes, September 16, 2020**

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve the minutes of the annual meeting of September 16, 2020. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes, October 1, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve the minutes of the special meeting of October 1, 2020. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no one from the public present to address the Board.

4. Request for Additional Agenda Items

There were no additional agenda items.

5. FINANCE REPORTS

a. Payment Voucher, September, 2020

Chairman Kate asked if there were any questions on the September payment voucher. In regards to the payment voucher for September, 2020: #540 Quadient – This is the quarterly payment for the mail machine.

b. Aged Receivables, September, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Aged Receivables Report – September, 2020. Commissioner Stephens seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

c. Aged Payables – September, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Aged Payables – September, 2020. Commissioner Stephens seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

d. Rent Collection Reports – September, 2020

Commissioner Stephens said Scattered Sites is 91.3% and asked if that is due to an empty unit. Ms. Bouchard said it is based on one tenant not paying rent and during this time you cannot evict anyone. Chairman Kate asked if that is the reason Veterans Terrace is at 70.8%. Mr. Pliszka said most of it is due to residents not paying their rent.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Rent Collection Report – September, 2020. Commissioner Stephens seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

d. Quarterly Notice to Quit Count – July – September, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Quarterly Notice to Quit Count – July – September, 2020. Commissioner Stephens seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

e. Quarterly Withdrawals Direct Deposits – July – September, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Quarterly Withdrawals Direct Deposits – July – September, 2020.

There was a brief discussion in regards to this report and its necessity. It was agreed by the Board that they would still like to continue receiving this report quarterly.

Commissioner Stephens seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

f. Monthly Actuals for Period Ending – September, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Monthly Actuals for Period Ending – September 30, 2020. Commissioner Stephens seconded the motion.

Vice Chairman Yamamoto said this is the final budget for 2019-2020 year and it looks very good. She said one item that is concerning is Other Office Expenses and wondered if it is due to COVID. Mr. Pliszka said that is correct. He said that the Housing Authority needed to purchase items so that the office staff could work remotely and other items. He said that the Housing Authority will be using the CARES money for a lot of this but it needs to be charged to the office expense line item. Vice Chairman Yamamoto said the other item is the Water and asked if there was a rate increase after the budget was adopted. Mr. Pliszka said the cost of water went up and we hope it will be more in line next year. Commissioner Cook stated that gas has gone down. Mr. Pliszka said we paid more in water and saved on gas. The Board agreed it was a good report.

The motion made and seconded was unanimously voted by the Commissioners' present.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve the Consent Agenda as follows: a. Capital Fund & Major Maintenance Report (September, 2020); b. Occupancy Report (September, 2020); c. Section 8 Voucher Report (September, 2020); d. Scattered Sites Properties Report (September, 2020); e. Attorney's Reports (October, 2020); f. Unit Turnaround AMP 1, AMP 2, VT (September, 2020) and g. Quarterly Resident Services Coordinator Report (July – September, 2020). Commissioner Stephens seconded the motion.

Chairman Kate asked if there were any questions on the following:

- a. Capital Fund & Major Maintenance Report – September, 2020 – Chairman Kate said under Highlands on page 4 the IFB (BIZNET) is that a site we go to for contractors. Ms. Bouchard said that is where we go to publish all kinds of bids and it goes out to everyone. Chairman Kate was concerned that only one contractor was present for the walk thru and was that the contractor that was awarded the bid. Mr. Pliszka said that any contractor has access to BIZNET and we also sent it to six other companies as well. Chairman Kate said only one showed up. Mr. Pliszka said yes. Ms. Bouchard said it is important for site work that the contractor who is bidding to be out there so they know exactly what needs to be done. Chairman Kate said that his concern is that we automatically give it to that one and not go out to bid again. Mr. Pliszka stated that it does depend on the price that we get and if the price is within our budget and it is reasonable than we don't go out again. Ms. Bouchard said that this bid came in well under budget. Mr. Pliszka said this was the second time that this IFB was put out because the first time it was a different scope and the price was high. Chairman Kate said he understands. Commissioner Stephens said in regards to Hockanum Park is the lead based paint abatement been completed. Ms. Bouchard said there is some outstanding stuff in one unit around the door jamb and it is probably about a day's worth of work but the problem is that the kids are home schooling during the pandemic and it is hard to get them out of the apartment to do the final work.
- b. Occupancy Reports – There were no questions on this report.
- c. Section 8 Housing Voucher – There were no questions on this report.

- d. Scattered Sites Properties Report – Vice Chairman Yamamoto said on 19 Goodwin Place there was a pending move out and she asked if that happened. Ms. Bouchard said no and it does not appear that that tenant will be moving out. She said that we do have a potential move out for the second floor at 232 Burnside Avenue, which we have a rental sign out front and we are advertising to other Housing Authorities and marketing to our own Section 8 as well. It was noted that it is not easy to fill rentals at this time.
- e. Attorney's Report – There were no questions on this report.
- f. Unit Turnaround AMP 1, AMP 2, VT – There were no questions on this report.
- g. Quarterly Resident Services Coordinator Report – There were no questions on this report.

The motion previously made and seconded was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT/COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Executive Director's Report

COVID-19 Testing – Ms. Bouchard said that more COVID testing will be done at our developments and that will begin tomorrow at Veterans Terrace and then at Hockanum Park/Shea Gardens on Friday. This time we are using InterCommunity Health Care. At the same time, Ms. Aberle will be out at each development distributing PPEs to anyone that would like to go and get some and that was also included in the notices that went out to every resident. **Mainstream Vouchers** – Ms. Bouchard said the Mainstream Vouchers were announced on September 20, 2020 and the deadline for application submission is December 31, 2020. She said that we did receive notice to apply as soon as possible because as soon as applications are received they are getting awarded and it is non-competitive. Ms. Bouchard explained the application process for the housing authority. She stated that we just opened our Section 8 waitlist and received over 5,000 applications and currently our allocation is 431 and we are trying to add another 40 and she has already submitted the application and is waiting to hear back if we will get those. **Veterans Terrace Redevelopment - Phase 1** – Ms. Bouchard said it is still moving along. She said she attached a letter from the State of Connecticut – OPM that the Housing Authority received allocation for \$9.5 million in bond funding for Phase 1 and we should receive that in January, 2021. Ms. Bouchard said we will know more about the closing on this Friday. As it stands right now, we will begin construction in November doing tear downs and abatement. Ms. Bouchard explained the relocation of the residents and stated there are only two residents that we do not have units for and will probably do a pass-thru and take their current assistance in Veterans Terrace and move it to the private market if we can find units for them or if another unit becomes available at Veterans Terrace we will flip it and get them in those units. She gave a status on evictions. Hopefully, Phase 1 will close sometime in January or February, 2021. **Phase 2** – Ms. Bouchard said for Phase 2 we have been working on the trifurcation of the Section 8 HAP contract, which we have been doing with the multi-family director out of Boston. She said we are also working on getting some pass-through assistance for Phase 2 for relocation to house them somewhere in the private market in East Hartford because we will not have the units like we did in Phase 1 to be able to move the residents on the property. Ms. Bouchard said that we are still working on our checklist. **Phase 3** – Ms. Bouchard said we are not sure if we are going to apply for Phase 3 this

year but she feels that we should be focusing on closing Phase 1 and Phase 2. Ms. Bouchard explained her concern about applying for Phase 3 this year.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review and Approval of the Change in the Section 8 Payment Standards FYE September 30, 2021

Ms. Bouchard said these are new payment standards that come out once a year and because East Hartford has two zip codes we have to deal with both, 06118 and 06108. When the payment standards come out, they put the fair market rents out and you have to be between 90 and 110%. If they are kept at 90%, the Housing Authority will have a hard time leasing up. Commissioner Cook agreed and she put hers at 100% this year. Ms. Bouchard said she is proposing the changes that are set in the table and those changes are made during their annual recertification and we need Board approval to keep in compliance with HUD. She stated if we don't do this we will be below the 90%, which we cannot do.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve to authorize the change in the Section 8 Payment Standards FYE September 30, 2021. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

9. OLD BUSINESS

There was nothing to discuss under this heading.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Discussion of Veterans Terrace Real Estate Transactions Document S7270880

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Veterans Terrace Real Estate Transactions Document S7270880. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion; it was carried by the unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present to go into Executive Session at 2:11 p.m. Also in attendance were: Debra Bouchard, Executive Director; Christopher Pliszka, Finance Director; Brenda Pliszka, Executive Secretary/HR Director and Attorney Ralph Alexander, Legal Counsel.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to come out of Executive Session and Commissioner Stephens seconded the motion; it was carried by the unanimous vote of the Commissioners present to come out of Executive Session at 2:18 p.m.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to authorize the Veterans Terrace Real Estate Transactions Document S7270880 Resolution No. CT013-184-10-2020. Commissioner Stephens seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

There being no further business to come before the Board of Commissioners, Chairman Kate entertained a motion to adjourn which was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto and seconded by

Commissioner Stephens said motion being carried by the unanimous vote of the commissioners' present and the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James Kate
Chairman of the Board

ATTESTED BY:

Debra Bouchard
Executive Director