

Trumbull Housing Authority – April 27, 2021

Trumbull Housing Authority Virtual Meeting
April 27, 2021
4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Chairman Kathleen McGannon, Laurel Anderson, Suzanne Donofrio and Charlene Pederson

Also Present: Executive Director Harriet Polansky, Jason Geel, Accountant and Kent Lewis, Consultant

Absent: Maureen Bova

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. McGannon at 4:32 pm. The Clerk took Roll Call noting Mrs. McGannon, Laurel Anderson, Suzanne Donofrio and Charlene Pederson were present. Maureen Bova was unable to attend. Roll Call was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Resident Comments

No resident comments.

Past Minutes

Motion was made by Ms. Pederson to approve the minutes of March 23, 2021 as written. Seconded by Mrs. Anderson and approved by unanimous consent.

Treasurer's Report and Discussion of Financials

Ms. Polansky reported the financials for July 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021 for Mrs. Bova. The overall gain of the Housing Authority was \$179,404. The operating gain, before capital grants and depreciation, was \$79,613, of which \$87,067 is attributable to the Village and \$(7,454) to Congregate.

The current month's operating gain for Stern Village was \$3,468 compared to the budgeted gain of \$4,578. The slightly lower than projected gain is due to five weeks of payroll in March. Rent revenues continue to exceed expectations, now \$20,000 over budgeted amounts.

The current month's operating loss for the Congregate was (\$2,191) compared to the budgeted gain of \$301. Five weeks of March payroll, along with three bi-weekly security guard billings, contributed to the current month deficit.

The overall cash position of the Authority, including reserves, is \$1,206,690 which includes \$582,477, reserved for renovations costs at Stern Village. Construction payables total \$30,202.

A snapshot of program balances are as follows:

Stern Village	6/30/2020	2/28/21	3/31/21	YTD Change
Cash	\$ 87,630	\$107,220	\$103,355	\$ 15,725
Accounts Payable	\$ 57,117	\$ 46,568	\$ 42,560	\$ 14,557
Interprogram Loan	\$322,823	\$345,281	\$337,770	\$ 14,947
Reserves	\$506,321	\$506,695	\$506,750	\$ 429
Excess Cash	\$ (3,665)	27,097	17,741	

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Congregate

Cash	\$ 42,376	\$ 29,816	\$ 4,238	\$ (38,138)
Accounts Payable	\$ 22,993	\$ 3,410	\$ 3,647	\$ 19,346
Interprogram Loan	\$322,823	\$345,281	\$337,770	\$ (14,947)
Reserves	\$ 9,462	\$ 9,469	\$ 9,470	\$ 8

Congregate payable to Village increase represents March’s cost share to be paid in April, pending receipt of DOH Subsidy. In addition, THA requested and was approved additional subsidy to offset the effects of vacant units totaling \$43,767. The additional grant amount should offset losses incurred through the end of the year.

Tenant Accounts Receivable balances as follows:

Stern Village	6/30/2020	Tenants	3/31/21	Tenants
One Month or Less	\$ (674)	39	\$ (9,028)	49
Over One Month Rent	\$ 1,433	4	\$ 4,171	6
Inactive AR	\$ 7,220	34	\$ 15,011	50
Total	\$ 7,989	77	\$ 10,154	105

Congregate

One Month or Less	\$ 425	8	\$ (5,076)	8
Over One Month Rent	\$ -	0	\$ 7,720	1
Inactive AR	\$ 2,406	8	\$ 7,001	17
Total	\$ 2,831	16	\$ 9,645	26

The above balances show increases to tenant delinquent accounts from the beginning of the year, primarily by those that have since vacated the respective property. March 2021 balances include credits due to pre-payment of April rents (rents posted March 31st for April). The average amount due upon vacating the unit was \$300 for the Village and \$412 for Congregate as of March 31, 2021.

Mrs. Anderson questioned Account #36.20. Amount has increased to \$9,000. Mr. Geel noted the money to be removed, as discussed at the last meeting, was done in April so it will show in April’s report. He also noted more donations have been received.

Accounts Receivables were discussed. Mrs. Anderson questioned if was appropriate to be at the end of the year writing off the \$15,000. Mr. Geel discussed the process and will present a document for next month’s meeting for review.

Executive Director’s Report

Ms. Polansky reported the following:

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1. There currently 15 applications for Stern Village. Applications will be available until June 15 at the THA office, the Congregate, on the website or can be requested by mailing in a self-addressed stamped envelope and one will be mailed to the requester.
2. There are two hotel units on site to be used for residents while their apartments are rehabbed.
3. GE appliances are backordered for several weeks. They have enough to get through six rehabs before additional appliances will be required.
4. Community Room will have a soft opening on June 1. There will be a limit of 15 residents and they must sign up.
5. Bingo, Men's Club and other resident activities will resume soon.
6. Monthly meetings with the residents are back. The first meetings since COVID were held in the Community Room on Friday and meetings will continue through the rest of the year. They will follow CDC guidelines. Heather and Paulette are working on a handout for Community Room Use.
7. In order to continue their mission to provide affordable housing and a safe and sanitary place to live, the residents must be mindful of the rules in their lease agreement. Behaviors demonstrated that are not compliant with the lease agreement will not be tolerated.
8. Heather is working on Tenant Charge list based on what other CT Housing Authorities are charging residents for damages. These charges are for damages caused by the resident such as altering or removing the smoke detectors, oven damage, etc. This will be provided to the residents at least thirty (30) calendar days before Board approval and they will have meetings to provide the residents with an opportunity to present written comments.
9. Spring clean-up is here. Residents who have an abundance of items on their porch or side of their apartment have received letters to dispose of the items. We are starting inspections on all apartments the middle of May.
10. Mr. Geel and Ms. Polansky are working on the budgets for the new fiscal year and hope to have them approved by the Board next month.
11. The HTCC 2021 Application is due June 1. Ms. Polansky would like to apply for additional enhancements for the Congregate. The amount, if approved, is for \$500,000. Recommendations for upgrades include a new elevator, replacement of A/Cs, recovery air ventilation for the first floor, replacement of ceilings, new fire doors for dining room and kitchen, new floors throughout the building, new windows, new energy-efficient refrigerators for 36 units, new energy-efficient lighting and new windows for the dining room, units, offices, community den, and arts and crafts room. She also hopes to get energy rebates from United Illuminating. She is getting proposals and would like to have a special board meeting next week to select a consultant for this project noting the application is very involved. Ms. Polansky does not currently anticipate they will need an architect for these projects.

Congregate Updates and Congregate Energy Enhancements-2019 Small Cities

Ms. Polansky noted the following:

1. There are currently three vacancies in the Congregate. These apartments all have the new bathrooms and they are working to get them back on line. May 15 and June 5 are the anticipated occupancy dates.
2. Meetings were held with the residents regarding the work to be done with the boiler and water systems.
3. The dining room will be opened on June 1.

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4. Only one resident has not received a COVID vaccine.
5. Entertainment is being planned.
6. Jullian is doing a great job and is working around everyone's schedule to accommodate the residents. Mr. Lewis noted they are very good with communications to residents or administration on the project.
7. This week, they are working on the last bathrooms to be rehabbed. On May 3, they will start work on the boilers. There will be no heat during this process but it is hoped that the temperatures will cooperate for the short duration. Water will be provided to the residents during this time.

Unfinished Business

1. Expenditure of Approximately \$45,000 on Stern Village – Remaining grant money is approximately \$45,000. Ms. Polansky recommended this money be used for additional radon mitigation units. The funds must be used within the program limits and radon mitigation units would be an appropriate expenditure. The SSHP funds are approximately \$75,000 and have a much narrower scope for expenditure. Expenses for this money must be incurred by June 30 but a check does not have to be written by that time. Recommendations for use of this funding included rehab of two additional units or security cameras. It was noted that a second server would use a majority of the funding for the cameras. Mr. Geel recommended that the Board develop a capital needs list to spend down funding so there is not a rush at the end of the fiscal year to make a decision. It was noted the two units could be added directly to the current work being done without any additional expenses. Mrs. Anderson requested Ms. Polansky secure a quote for the camera system for next year. Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to commit \$45,000 to the rehab of two additional units. Seconded by Ms. Pederson and approved by unanimous consent.
2. THA Smoking Policy – Mrs. McGannon noted she has a concern regarding the medical marijuana portion. She does not want residents outside to take medications. Mrs. McGannon will forward a link from the DPH to the commissioners for review before making a decision on the policy. Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to table this discussion to the next meeting. Seconded by Mrs. Donofrio and approved by unanimous consent.
3. Security Deposit for Incoming Residents to Stern Village – Ms. Polansky noted resident's families often have a difficult time paying owed rent when the units are vacated by the resident for various reasons. Discussion was held regarding the funds, interest paid and damages. Mrs. McGannon felt there should be statements included regarding 1) photos to be taken on move-in day to document condition of the units and 2) damages outside of normal wear and tear are not the responsibility of the resident. The move-in process was described which includes an inspection form for the unit that is signed by the in-coming resident. Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to approve the concept of one month's rent for a security deposit for new tenants with the policy to be approved at a later date. Seconded by Mrs. Donofrio and approved by unanimous consent. It was noted the policy will be for the Village residents only at this time; the Congregate will be on the next meeting agenda. Mr. Geel noted if it is applied to the Congregate, it would only be for the resident portion of the base rent.

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New Business

1. Discussion of Change Orders for the Congregate Energy Efficient Project. Mr. Lewis presented the following:
 - a. Change Order for additional blocking that was not installed in the initial ten bathrooms due to a change in the seat in the shower. Discussion. Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to approve PCO6 for \$1650. Seconded by Ms. Pederson and approved by unanimous consent.
 - b. Change order for a time extension on the installation of the boilers. Since the project was moved from the fall to the spring by the administration, the contract needs to be extended to June 30 to provide ample time for completion of the project. Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to approve PCO8. Seconded by Mrs. Donofrio and approved by unanimous consent.
 - c. Change Order to repair and move a broken electrical conduit outside the boiler room. This was discovered during a walk-through of the project and will fix a code issue. Discussion. Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to approve PCO9 for \$2,373.70. Seconded by Ms. Pederson. Discussion was held regarding a discrepancy in the amount of the Change Order submitted to Ms. Polansky which was \$2,723.70. Mrs. Anderson withdrew her motion and motioned to approve PCO9 in the corrected amount of \$2,723.70. Seconded by Mrs. Donofrio and approved by unanimous consent.
 - d. The last item was not a change order but a pre-approval to move forward in a not-to-exceed approval. To complete the hot water/boiler work, the contractor is asking for an additional eight hours at a cost of \$2,693.41 so they can complete the work in one day. This will eliminate the possibility of having the residents without water for more than one day. Mr. Lewis felt the project would be completed in less than that time with an estimate of approximately \$1,300 and they may not need additional time if everything goes as planned in which case, the cost would be \$0. Any additional time over the eight hours would be on the contractor. A Change Order would not be requested until after the work was completed and a final figure could be determined. Discussion. Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to approve, on a not-to-exceed basis, possible overtime costs for the hot water heater replacement and the not-to-exceed total be \$2,693.41. Seconded by Ms. Pederson and approved by unanimous consent. Ms. Polansky noted heaters and blankets are available should the residents request them.
2. Discussion to Authorize Harriet Polansky, Executive Director, to Approve Change Orders Based on a Monetary Amount – It was felt that Ms. Polansky and Mr. Lewis have a good working relationship with the contractor and this would give them the flexibility to act on the Board's behalf to keep the project moving. Mrs. Anderson moved in order to expedite the current renovation work under the Congregate Energy Efficient Project, that the Board allow Executive Director Harriet Polansky, after consultation with and written agreement from Kent Lewis, to approve Change Orders on this project of less than \$2,000 up to a maximum combined total of \$5,000 per month. Change orders over \$2,000, or those coming in after the \$5,000 limit is reached, must be presented to and approved by the Board prior to commencement of the work. The Board will expedite review and approve of those Change Orders at emergency meetings called for that purpose only. Seconded by Ms. Pederson. Mrs. McGannon will check regarding the rules for emergencies meetings. Approved by unanimous consent.

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3. Discussion of a Base Rent Increase of \$15 for the Congregate – Motion made by Ms. Pederson to discuss. Seconded by Mrs. Donofrio. The DOH has indicated a base rent increase is necessary this year to have the Congregate budget approved. Resident meetings were held and specifics were discussed. This increase would take effect July 1, 2021. Discussion was held on the reserve account and it was noted at the current level, the Congregate is not able to cover its operating budget. Rent increase would be beneficial to increase this account. Discussion. The neediest residents will not be affected by this increase. Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to approve the base rent increase of \$15 for the Congregate effective July 1, 2021. Seconded by Ms. Pederson and approved by unanimous consent. Residents will be notified of the Board's decision.
4. Discussion of a Base Rent Increase of \$10 for Stern Village Affecting Base Rents Under \$500 and a 1% Increase for Calculating Adjusted Gross Income for Those Currently at 27% -- Motion made by Mrs. Anderson to discuss. Seconded by Ms. Pederson. Discussion. It was noted no resident could be "grandfathered in" as that is not accepted. Meetings with residents were held and there were not any issues with this increase or the reason for the increase. Rents have not been increased in the last several years but they have been stratified depending on when residents came in. Competing areas are up to as high as 33% for their calculations. The THA is only at 27% which is very low in comparison. Base rents should cover expenses. These increases will be effective July 1, 2021. Motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Mrs. Anderson questioned raising the rent for incoming new tenants this year \$50. Ms. Polansky noted the market will bear \$600 rents and suggested the efficiencies be \$550 and the one bedrooms be \$600 for new residents. Mr. Geel noted he will be presenting his budget forecast at the May meeting which will include some level of rent increase. Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to add to the agenda the discussion of rent increase for incoming tenants, not current tenants. Seconded by Ms. Pederson and approved by unanimous consent. Discussion. Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to authorize the increase of \$50 to the base rent of new incoming tenants effective April 27, 2021. Seconded by Ms. Pederson. Ms. Polansky reiterated that the mission is to provide affordable housing for low income residents. Mr. Geel has data that supports the increase and discussed the diversity of income in the housing community. Motion was approved by unanimous consent.

5. Mrs. McGannon and Mrs. Anderson are having weekly meetings with Ms. Polansky and she will discuss with the town attorney if she is able to disseminate to the commissioners, as an internal document, topics discussed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 pm. Seconded by Ms. Pederson and approved by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk