

Trumbull Housing Authority – October 27, 2020

Trumbull Housing Authority Virtual Meeting
October 27, 2020
4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Chairman Paul Niebuhr, Suzanne Donofrio, Maureen Bova, Laurel Anderson and Kathleen McGannon

Also Present: Executive Director Harriet Polansky; Jason Geel, Accountant (4:55pm), George Wiles from Wiles Architects and Kent Lewis

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Niebuhr at 4:35 pm followed by Roll Call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Past Minutes

Ms. Polansky noted there was one change to the minutes noted by the Clerk. The motion should read - Seconded by Mrs. Bova and approved with one abstention from Mrs. McGannon. Motion was made by Mrs. Donofrio to approve the minutes of September 22, 2020 as amended by the clerk. Seconded by Mrs. Bova and approved with one abstention from Mr. Niebuhr.

Treasurer's Report

Mrs. Bova presented the financial narrative for July 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020. The overall gain of the Housing Authority was \$158,074, which includes all rental income, services income and Capital Grant Funding provided for the redevelopment – rehabilitation - remodeling efforts.

If the Capital related items are removed, the Housing Authority has an operating gain, before depreciation, of \$53,425 of which \$49,424 is attributable to the Village and \$4,001 is attributable to the Congregate.

The current month's operating gain for Stern Village is \$7,961 compared to the budgeted gain of \$4,578. The gain is despite a five-week month of payroll resulting in a higher than usual payroll cost. Overall, expenses are lower due to lower seasonal maintenance fees.

The current month's operating loss for the Congregate is \$3,883 compared to the budgeted gain of \$292. This is primarily due to a five week month of payroll as noted in the Village as well as a three billing period for security services. Despite the higher than average monthly costs, year-to-date costs for payroll and security are on budget. In addition, wellness costs were recognized in the current period totaling approximately \$12,000 in COVID costs which was applied to DOH funding received during the year. It is noted that the Congregate continues to operate with higher than sustainable vacancies which could have a negative impact on these results if grant funding is exhausted prior to the end of the year. As a result of this trend and as a recommendation of DOH, management has submitted a revised budget whereby heating contract savings will be used to fund the higher than anticipated vacancy loss. The budget revision resulted in no overall change to program results and was formally approved by DOH.

The overall cash position of the Authority, including reserves is \$958,830 which includes \$308,133 reserved for renovation costs for Stern Village. Construction payables totaled \$30,202. The website has a snap shot of the program. Congregate payment to Village increased as Congregate is awaiting

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budgetary approval and receipt of subsidies from DOH. Management expects to receive funding by November. Monthly subsidy is approximately \$10,000. It is anticipated that receipt of approximately \$30,000 in funding, plus a portion of accumulated cash noted above, \$17684, will be sufficient to pay the current year loan increase.

Ms. Polansky noted that DOH did pass the budget and that the subsidy should be received any day.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Polansky noted the following:

1. There have been no reported cases of COVID-19 for the past eight months. Optimus Healthcare will be providing COVID-19 testing for residents October 28, 2020 and through the end of the year. These tests will be conducted outside.
2. Grants were being considered for the purchase of an outdoor heater for the Congregate. In discussion with Mrs. McGannon, she was able to purchase heaters through the Mustard Seed Foundation. They have been placed outside of the Community Room and the Congregate and residents have been able to enjoy them and sit outside longer. Thank you Mrs. McGannon for helping with the purchase of the heaters.
3. The rehab of Stern Village vacancies continues. They have leased units to 15 new residents and have another 7 units to be occupied between now and December 1 thanks to the 2019 HCCT funding award.
4. All heat pump units and condensers have been sanitized and any issues were handled.
5. The laundry room is open in the Community Room. Residents need to reserve the time to come in to use the facility.
6. Additional handicap spaces will be added on each side of the parking lots for the ADA units. Additional spaces have also been added to the parking lot near the second circle.
7. They are still finding clogged toilets and sewer lines with items that should not be flushed. Letters have been distributed to all residents.
8. Additional cameras have been installed by the laundry room and outside Ms. Polansky's office. She is looking for grants for additional security cameras.
9. A business coach has been hired to work with Ms. Polansky and staff to help them grow as leaders and managers. Ms. Polansky is paying for this personally as she feels it will benefit all staff to help them learn to become highly accountable and success orientated, understand the business and learn how to communicate effectively.

Mrs. Anderson reviewed the vacancies and asked if they was still on target for filling. Ms. Polansky noted they are on target but there was a delay due to difficulty getting some supplies such as shower heads.

Discussion was held regarding the Certificate of Occupancy. Ms. Polansky noted one has not been received as there are minor items that need to be completed and the rehab of the units has taken preference. They are only using the laundry room and the offices. Ms. Polansky will check to see if a temporary CO has been given. Millennium stated that the Community Room would be completed by this time in their report at the last meeting.

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Congregate Report and Updates

Ms. Polansky highlighted the following from her distributed report:

1. The Congregate has a base rent of \$425 and support services of \$800 bringing total fees to \$1,225. DOH provides subsidies for those based on rent. Many residents do receive this subsidy. The Congregate allows residents to live independently with some supportive services, which keeps them out of nursing homes and allows residents to age in place especially those who move from the Village to the Congregate. Criteria includes 62 years of age and must have one or more temporary or permanent physical difficulties with daily living.
2. Move in-move out dates were reviewed with regard to vacancies and their causes.
3. Not everyone is eligible for the Congregate if they cannot live independently due to the level of care they need and the Congregate cannot provide. Ms. Torres and Paulette screen applicants but due to HIPAA laws cannot request any medical history or health status. However, they are both able to determine if applicants meet the criteria for the Congregate.
4. The median age for the Congregate is 82 and the median age for the Village is 82. DOH noted that when the Congregate was first developed, the median age was in the 60s.
5. A CNN report was discussed which noted seniors, due to the pandemic, are having second thoughts about communal living settings.
6. There were high vacancy levels in most of the Congregates throughout most of the State. Now they are better able to fill the vacancies but not like before.
7. The turnover time for the Congregate was agreed upon to be 45 days. All residents must provide, according to their signed lease, a 30 days' notice if they are leaving whether they are in the Congregate or the Village. This is not always possible. It typically takes 7-10 days to sanitize an apartment although it may take longer depending on the condition. They strive to have a 30 day limit for sanitization of the units.
8. As of October 15, there were four people on the waiting list. They are advertising in the CT Post, on social media and promoting to target markets such as veterans.
9. Currently there are two vacancies which will be filled soon.

Mrs. Anderson thanked Ms. Polansky for the comprehensive report. Discussion was held regarding the number of vacancies each month and the previous discussion with Mr. Geel regarding the revenue report associated with high vacancies. Reasons for the vacancies were residents being deceased, needs of the residents changed or families took them in. This information will be reported next month.

Mr. Geel entered the meeting at 4:55 pm.

Further discussion was held with Mr. Geel and his report regarding the financial impact of the vacancies. Mrs. Anderson questioned if there was a way in the screening process to put together a questionnaire to be filled out by the resident's doctor that does not ask about the medical condition of the applicant but would address whether this applicant is able to live in the Congregate. This would take the onus off of Ms. Torres and Paulette to make these decisions. Ms. Polansky noted the residents have aides, nurses or family members to help them. It was noted most residents are in the Congregate for considerable time before leaving for various reasons. Mr. Niebuhr felt that the screening process is working well. Ms. Polansky noted she will look into higher level questions that can be asked without getting into medical issues. Residents returning from the hospital do not have to provide any information as to their

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capability to return to the Congregate and perhaps this is the time to ask such questions of the medical provider. Mr. Geel noted that in the program regulations, there are questions that were used to screen applicants but they were abandoned as a requirement because of HIPAA regulations. Perhaps they could be used as a point of reference. Ms. Polansky will discuss this with DOH to see what might be acceptable to use.

Unfinished Business

No Unfinished Business.

New Business

1. Overview, Discussion and Consideration of a Motion to Approve AIA Agreement for Congregate Upgrades between PAC and THA - Mr. Niebuhr noted this is an agreement with the contractor doing the contracting work with the Small Cities funding for the Congregate improvements. The AIA agreement is a comprehensive document discussing all facets of work to be followed. Mr. Niebuhr read the following motion:

Motion - to approve the AIA Agreement for PAC Group as required by the 2019 Small Cities funding. The Trumbull Housing Authority Board of Commissioners approves the AIA Agreement for the PAC Group. Moved by Mrs. Donofrio and seconded by Mrs. Bova.

Discussion was held with input from Ms. Polansky, Mr. Wiles and Mr. Lewis, consultant for the Town of Trumbull on this initiative, noting the specific details of the improvements. The technical side of the project is still in development as to a schedule for the program implementation. It was noted they are working on a plan that will limit disruption to residents when their apartments are being updated and the boiler is being replaced.

Grant money received was \$1,072,000. The contract is \$814,000. There is also contingency money and money for architectural activities. This is a fairly standard contract requiring prevailing wages. It was bid by the town through their procurement policies. They are also working through alternate facilities when residents are displaced when their bathrooms are being updated.

A meeting is scheduled for October 29 with residents of the Congregate to review the information.

Mrs. Anderson questioned what the remainder of the funding will be used for. Mr. Lewis will provide a budget with this information. She also questioned Exhibit E which notes the Town of Trumbull shall be named as additional obligee. Does the Commission need to secure something in writing from the Town that authorizes us to sign a contract that obligates the Town? Mr. Lewis noted they are an obligee on the bond. If the contractor walks away and they have to pull the bond, because the grant is passed through the Town and the THA is a sub-recipient to the Town to obtain the grant, they need to be available because the Town is ultimately responsible for the grant. Mr. Lewis noted nothing more is needed. Should the contractor pull away, the bonding authority is required to pay for the job for the Town and the Housing Authority. Mr.

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Wiles noted this clause is new to this agreement. Mrs. McGannon will bring this up at the Town Attorney meeting on October 28, 2020 for clarification.

Mrs. Anderson noted there is \$28,000 for maintenance and questioned what this covered and who would do the maintenance. Mr. Wiles noted this is an extended warrantee beyond the one year warrantee which will help the Housing Authority not use their operating budget for repairs. It covers the hydronics system. The contractor may sub out this warrantee work.

Mr. Wiles noted there is a payment procedure in the specifications noting the review process, how the costs are determined and eventual payment on the values of the requisition. The payment is 95% of the values on the requisition so every month 5% is withheld.

Change orders (CO) were discussed. Mr. Wiles noted there are only three ways the contract can be altered. 1) an increase in project scope 2) unforeseen situations not in the contractor documents and 3) document deficiency. They will initiate a request for a proposal, the contractor will provide a proposed change order (PCO), they will review the validity of it and will present it to Ms. Polansky or if it is a substantial change, to the Commission. Once it is approved, they will issue a change order. These will be fully transparent with Mr. Lewis providing budgetary impact. Mr. Niebuhr suggested that anything over \$1,000 come before the Board. Mr. Lewis noted most COs would be over that limit. Mrs. Anderson noted that change orders are very indicative of how the contractor is doing. With the Police Building Committee, all change orders come before the committee. Mr. Lewis noted it should be all change orders are reviewed or set a higher limit. After discussion, they will provide the Board with any change orders.

Mr. Niebuhr re-read the motion with the change discussed – The Trumbull Housing Authority Board of Commissioners approves the AID Agreement for the PAC Group contingent on the review and approval of the town attorney. Approved unanimously.

2. Discussion of Revision to THA Bylaws Regarding Election of Officers – Mr. Niebuhr noted this was a change to Article 3, Section 2 regarding election of officers which reads - The Board of Commissioners shall elect officers from among its members. The officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Authority and shall hold office for a term of one year or until a successor is elected and qualified, except for the office of Chairman whose term shall be for three years or until a successor is elected.

Motion - The officers shall be elected at the December meeting of the Authority and shall hold office for a term of one year or until a successor is elected and qualified, except the office of Chairman whose term shall be for three years or until a successor is elected. Motion made by Mrs. Bova and seconded by Mrs. Donofrio.

Mr. Niebuhr noted that Attorney Cody felt a new commissioner should not hold the office of Chairman or Vice-Chairman for six months after appointment in order for them to become familiar with the THA. Discussion.

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Motion was approved with one abstention by Mrs. McGannon.

Resident Comments

Mrs. Bova noted they had two Halloween costume parades. One hundred bags of goodies were given out. The Boy Scouts also came dressed for Halloween and provided a program for the residents outdoors. The heaters were appreciated by the residents who participated. She is looking forward to the Community Room being completed so they can plan some holiday programs.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Mrs. Donofrio to adjourn the meeting at 5:38 pm. Seconded by Mrs. Bova and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk