

Trumbull Housing Authority – December 22, 2020

Trumbull Housing Authority Virtual Meeting
December 22, 2020
4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Vice-Chairman Suzanne Donofrio, Maureen Bova, Laurel Anderson, Kathleen McGannon, Mary Beth Thornton

Also Present: Executive Director Harriet Polansky; Jason Geel, Accountant and Bruce Whitaker, Millennium

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Donofrio at 4:40 pm followed by Roll Call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Past Minutes

Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to approve the minutes of November 24, 2020 as written. Seconded by Mrs. McGannon. Minutes were approved with abstentions from Mrs. Donofrio and Mrs. Thornton.

Addition of Agenda Item to New Business

Mrs. McGannon motioned to add the purchase of a new snow plow to the agenda. Seconded by Mrs. Thornton and approved unanimously.

Election of Officers

Mrs. Donofrio moved that the Board act as a committee of the whole for the purpose of nominating to fill the positions for 2021. Second by Mrs. McGannon and approved unanimously. The following nominations were made:

Chairman: Laurel Anderson nominated Kathleen McGannon; seconded by Mrs. Bova
Vice-Chairman: Maureen Bova nominated Suzanne Donofrio; no second
Mary Beth Thornton nominated Laurel Anderson; seconded by Kathleen McGannon
Treasurer: Suzanne Donofrio nominated Maureen Bova; seconded by Laurel Anderson
Vice-Treasurer: Laurel Anderson nominated Mary Beth Thornton; seconded by Kathleen McGannon
Secretary: Laurel Anderson nominated Suzanne Donofrio; seconded by Kathleen McGannon

Slate of Officers for 2021: Chairman: Kathleen McGannon
Vice-Chairman: Laurel Anderson
Treasurer: Maureen Bova
Vice-Treasurer: Mary Beth Thornton
Secretary: Suzanne Donofrio

The slate was voted in unanimously by the Board members.

Mrs. McGannon made a motion to adjourn as a committee of the whole. Seconded by Mrs. Donofrio and approved unanimously. Mrs. Anderson moved to approve the slate as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Donofrio and approved unanimously.

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Treasurer’s Report

Mrs. Bova presented the financial narrative for July 1, 2020 through November 30, 2020. The overall gain of the Housing Authority was \$145,979, 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 \$47,239 of which \$49,769 is attributable to the Village and \$(2,530) is attributable to Congregate.

The current month’s operating gain for the Village is \$8,309 compared to budgeted gain of \$4,578. The higher than projected gain is due to lower payroll costs, some of which will be spent in December due to finalizing the new collective bargaining agreement. Overall, revenues and expenses are in line with expectations.

The current month’s operating loss for the Congregate is (\$9,222) compared to budgeted gain of \$301. This is primarily due to \$12,067 in COVID related costs which are over the monthly budget by \$9,692. The costs included cleaning and 24-hr security coverage required due to the instance of COVID. All costs were covered by DOH funding. There is only \$1,662 left in funds for the remainder of the year.

The overall cash position of the Authority, including reserves, is \$1,171,647 which includes \$568,052 reserved for renovations costs at Stern Village. Construction payables total \$30,202.

A snapshot of program balances are as follows: YTD

Stern Village	6/30/2020	10/31/2020	11/30/2020	Change
Cash	\$ 87,630	\$ 54,355	\$ 96,850	\$ 9,220
Accounts Payable	\$ 57,117	\$ 70,873	\$ 54,140	\$ 2,977
Interprogram Loan	\$322,823	\$375,853	\$334,390	\$11,567
Reserves	\$506,321	\$506,553	\$506,545	\$ 224
Excess Cash	\$ (3,665)		\$ 8,012	
Congregate				
Cash	\$ 42,376	\$ 59,580	\$ 57,821	\$ 15,445
Accounts Payable	\$ 22,993	\$ 22,697	\$ 27,484	\$(4,491) 296
Interprogram Loan	\$322,823	\$375,853	\$334,390	\$(11,567)
Reserves	\$ 9,462	\$ 9,466	\$ 9,466	\$ 4

Congregate payable to Village was paid down and the \$11,567 year to date increase represents November’s cost share to be paid in December. Beginning 06/30/2020, Stern Village is required to remit a portion of excess cash to DOH as defined in the assistance agreement relating to the Stern Village Redevelopment. As noted in the above table, no excess cash was available as of the beginning of the year and \$8,012 was generated this year and would be subject to recapture if not spent by year end. Management intends to utilize these funds to continue rehabbing units at Stern Village.

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Mrs. Anderson questioned Mr. Geel regarding the \$30,000 in the budget for heating and the expenditure to date of \$22,381. Mr. Geel noted this was for cleaning of the heat pumps. They budgeted \$30,000 as an amount from the prior year but the actual cost came in around \$20,000 which was substantially less. They do not anticipate much more in the way of expenses in this area and should be on budget. Ms. Polansky stated the cleaning of the units is performed once a year and the contract is put out for bid. The Maintenance Staff changes the filters twice a year. With this complete cleaning, the units should last another five years. Mrs. Bova explained what the cleaning processes included. Ms. Polansky noted there are minimal problems overall but residents who continue to smoke in their apartments cause problems. Residents are not permitted to smoke in the units and designated smoking areas have been established. Some residents have actually quit smoking with the assistance of programs provided by the staff.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Polansky reported the following:

1. They are doing everything they can to keep the pandemic away from the residents.
2. A hands-free temperature scanner is now located in the Community Room and is working great.
3. Plexiglas has been installed on Daisy's desk for safety reasons.
4. The Administrative staff is alternating weeks working from home or coming to the office.
5. Maintenance Staff is social distancing and not working closely together.
6. Calls with the Department of Housing are held once a week. They are hoping to have the vaccine made available for Congregates and staff but the process is unknown.
7. Residents have been encouraged to not attend large gatherings or travel out of town for the holidays.
8. They were prepared for 12-18 inches of light snow but the snow was much heavier. Residents were requested to remove outdoor mats and furniture from the porches. Some outdoor mats were not taken in which caused problems with the snow blowers. Residents were asked to be patient. All residents who needed to be out for appointments were accommodated. Moving forward, they have approached the landscaper used by Stern Village and he will provide additional help if needed.
9. A meeting was held with the Maintenance Staff to see what improvements or changes could be made to help them.
10. The Village currently has two vacancies. One has been rehabbed and a resident will be moving in as a reasonable accommodation. The other unit will be sanitized after the holidays.
11. Residents are signing up to use the laundry room and they use the food pantry. Thank you to everyone who have contributed to the pantry.
12. Over the past three years, HTCC funding has been received, which is the State Housing Tax Credit Contribution program used to rehab apartments in Stern Village. The HTCC program is designed to help build affordable housing in Connecticut. Private businesses can buy tax credits and apply them to their corporate tax. For the past three years, Eversource has purchased tax credits and sent a check for \$500,000 amounting to a total of \$1,500,000. CHFA administers this program and the THA will most likely receive this check in January. Mr. Geel will then set up a separate account for tracking. Three years is the limit for HTCC for a property and they have reached the limit for Stern Village. She is hoping to apply for HTCC funding for the Congregate. She is unsure when the Notice of Funding will be received. Planning has begun for 2021.

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13. Mr. Geel is populating a spread sheet to show details of funding over the past few years. They do not want to give any funds back to the state. This should be available prior to January's meeting.
14. The Capital Needs Assessment has been completed for the Congregate. Ms. Polansky will meet with her staff and Mr. Lewis to discuss. She is working on a CAN for the Village.
15. There are additional opportunities for funding sources. Mr. Lewis, Ms. Polansky and Mrs. Bakalar discussed updates on the current Congregate project and applying for the 2021 Small Cities. They can reapply for enhancements to the fire prevention system for the Village and also include some items for the Congregate such as a new elevator.
16. They are doing everything to promote the Congregate but there has been little interest. They are promoting on social media, Marketplace, SWACA and have a marketing plan.
17. Ms. Polansky thanked the Commissioners for their help and continued support, First Selectman Vicki Tesoro and her staff for what they do for the residents, the Maintenance Staff for all they do on the property and her Administrative staff.

Mrs. Anderson asked Ms. Polansky to review the overtime for the Maintenance Staff and what it might cost for an outside company with all their own equipment. This would be an "in case" scenario.

Mrs. Anderson questioned if the \$1,500,000 was all inclusive. Ms. Polansky stated it was the total funding received for Stern Village over the three years. She is hoping to apply for the Congregate which is a separate entity. Mrs. Anderson had discussed the Congregate vacancies with Ms. Polansky and noted that other assisted living facilities and senior housing are offering incentives to move in. This is not just a problem in our facility. Mr. Geel noted this has been ramping up the last month or two. Larger facilities have federal funds that allow for Special Cares Act funding. They are looking at ways to leverage FEMA dollars to reimburse some funds in this area. One option discussed was a gift certificate to someone who refers an individual as a possible resident and that individual becomes a resident. This is a difficult time to come into a congregate situation.

Mrs. McGannon questioned whether the chef in the Congregate is updated as to who is receiving lunches? Ms. Polansky noted the contract is for 36 resident lunches. The other meals are used in other ways.

Mrs. McGannon noted that the State requires, by February 9, 2021, that employees have sexual harassment training. The administrative staff has completed this training. It was noted that all employees and volunteers are required to take this two hour program.

Congregate Update and Congregate Energy Enhancements – 2019 Small Cities

Ms. Polansky noted the staff gets excited when they rent an apartment in the Congregate. It is a beautiful setting with many things to offer. Daisy thinks they may have 2-3 people interested in renting but oftentimes people change their minds for various reason such as COVID, not ready yet, etc. There is a marketing plan being put into place and hopefully, after the first of the year, things will be better. The THA is more expensive than other congregate facilities.

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Mr. Lewis discussed the Small Cities CDBG Program Financing Plan and Budget for the 2019 award. This was put together approximately one and a half years ago with the application for the program and was approved by the Department of Housing. The Assistance Agreement is closed and they are ready to move forward. Construction has been delayed because of COVID. This consists of \$1,072,234 for the Block Grant. A match was required from the Housing Authority and this money was put towards the planning and engineering activities. Some money is being used from United Illuminating also. The total is \$1,187,187. \$926,000 is identified specifically for the construction activities which includes a construction contract and a contingency. This funding needs to be managed to control early spending but they should have ideas for later in the contract when identifying betterments that can fit into the general scope.

Mr. Lewis discussed the schedule noting it has been changed for many different reasons over time.

1. A walk through was done with individual bidders instead of everyone at the same time and they only went into one unit. Temperatures were taken as a precaution.
2. The bid numbers came in higher than anticipated.
3. Negotiations were conducted. They now have a valid construction contract number where they can get all the bathrooms rehabbed, replace tubs with a walk-in shower unit as well as replace the boilers and hot water tanks, as this is one of the energy drains in the facility. This system currently does not have valves to break down part of the building so the entire building must be shut down to work on one unit in the building.
4. They had hoped to start approximately three weeks ago but COVID cases increased and they delayed. They want to make sure they have all the materials on site before they start because materials have become a very big problem. They have the boiler and hot water tanks in storage. They have the majority of the tubs and surround systems for the shower. There are two types of toilets being used. One is a bottom drain and one is a wall drain. The latter is delayed until late January. Replacement of the domestic hot and cold water valves will begin late January. That way the trades can move right into the bathroom rehabs. One mock-up bathroom will be completed in a vacant unit, if one is available, to see how the project will proceed. The goal is to do the bathroom conversions in February and March. The boiler and hot water tank replacement has been delayed until spring – April through June. The contract has an end date in the spring. They will need to do a no cost time extension to June 30, 2021 to the contract so there are no financial ramifications.
5. They have until the end of 2021 to spend the funds so this should not be an issue. HUD and DOH are giving extensions when necessary due to current circumstances.

Mrs. McGannon questioned about the water spilling out of the showers in prior renovations in the Village. Mr. Lewis noted the units are similar but will have a bigger threshold.

Mrs. Anderson thanked Mr. Lewis for the snapshot of the project and including her in the meetings to learn about the project. Mr. Lewis explained some of the program costs included in the budget. Pre-grant monies spent are not reimbursable with grant funding.

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Unfinished Business

Mrs. McGannon noted that at the last meeting they discussed the contract for Millennium and there were some questions, errors and items that needed clarification and change. She noted there were also concerns about the bid process used.

Mrs. Anderson thanked Ms. Polansky for revising the contract and expressed her concern with the attorney who reviewed the document who did not pick up on some of the mistakes. She also expressed concern about the process and felt the next time there should be more of a discussion about the process and the same organization doing all the work for the grant and then benefiting from the grant.

Motion was made by Mrs. Thornton to approve the new Millennium contract. Seconded by Mrs. Bova. Discussion. Mrs. McGannon shares Mrs. Anderson's concern regarding the process but felt that this contract should be approved in view of the time line. Motion was approved with one abstention from Mrs. Anderson.

New Business

Ms. Polansky met with the Maintenance staff and it was agreed that there is a need for a new John Deere tractor. They currently have two John Deere tractors one of which is eleven years old and needs new tires. The new equipment would include a snow plow and mower attachment. They could trade in the old one and put that value towards a new one. They would also need to purchase two salt spreaders to be more efficient. Ms. Polansky received a quote of \$16,162 that included a \$3,500 trade in for the old tractor and different types of John Deere discounts of approximately \$2,300. Two other quotes were received which were either similar or a bit higher. By ordering now, they would receive the equipment in mid-February. Mrs. Anderson asked if there were any financing plans that could be utilized instead of purchasing outright. Ms. Polansky will look into that possibility or installment payments, if that is an option. Mrs. Thornton moved to approve the purchase of the equipment with Ms. Polansky looking into the financing and make the purchase based on what she finds. Seconded by Mrs. Anderson and approved unanimously.

Resident Comments

Michelle Molnar commented about the cleaning of the heat pumps once a year noting when they are cleaned you can see the dirt accumulated over time. She also noted the Community Room is open to do laundry Monday through Friday and she takes advantage to stay there to avoid the cold air. She also noted the call-in number does not work. Mr. Chin will look into this as others have commented on this problem.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 pm. Seconded by Mrs. Bova and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall, Clerk