

COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING, AUGUST 19, 2020

The Commissioners of the East Hartford Housing Authority held its regular meeting on Wednesday, August 19, 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 1:34 p.m.

- 1. **ROLL CALL:** Commissioner John Carella
 Vice Chairman Prescille Yamamoto
 Chairman James Kate

Absent were: Commissioner Hazelann Cook and Commissioner Kathleen Stephens.

Also present were: Debra Bouchard, Executive Director; Christopher Pliszka, Finance Director; Brenda Pliszka, Executive Secretary/HR Director and Esther Clarke, Town Council Liaison.

- 2. **Approval of Regular Board Meeting Minutes, June 17, 2020**

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 17, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners present.

- Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes, June 26, 2020**

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve the minutes of the special meeting of June 26, 2020. Commissioner Carella 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 Vouchers, June & July, 2020**

Chairman Kate asked if there were any questions on the June & July, 2020 payment vouchers. In regards to the payment vouchers for June and July, 2020: #60957 Cofiells Sport & Power Equipment – Mr. Pliszka said this is for replacement parts for the lawn mowers to repair them. #60993 Kaz Equipment LLC – Mr. Pliszka said over the winter the Housing Authority purchased a couple Ventrac snow blowers and we were never sent an invoice for the two windshields at that time.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Payment Vouchers – June and July, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners present.

- b. **Aged Receivables, June & July, 2020**

Vice Chairman Yamamoto said for July AMP 2, Veterans Terrace and Scattered Sites we are down and she believes that is totally amazing and a lot of that should be credited to Ms. Rosa and thanks her

profusely. Mr. Pliszka said that every month letters go out to residents stating how much they owe and she gets calls in regards to those letters as well as making calls to other residents.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Aged Receivables Reports – June & July, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners present.

Commissioner Carella said when he used to go in the office in that department he would hear Ms. Rosa on calls and she makes it a point to listen well and does an outstanding job. Chairman Kate agrees he listened to how pleasant she was when dealing with the residents and that is not always easy. Vice Chairman Yamamoto would like a letter to come from the Board of Commissioners thanking Ms. Rosa for her work during these difficult times.

c. Aged Payables – July, 2020

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

d. Rent Collection Reports – June & July, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Rent Collection Reports – June & July, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion.

There was a discussion about rent collection and cares money. Commissioner Carella asked if the residents of Veterans Terrace are not paying their rent can that be a reason for them not to be allowed to go into the new units when they are complete. Ms. Bouchard said they will not be residents in good standing if they owe us back rent and would not be eligible at that point. Commissioner Carella asked if this point is being made clear to them. Ms. Bouchard said that we have sent out letters letting everyone know they are still obligated to pay their rent and Ms. Rosa runs our aged receivables every 30 days to see what people owe and puts a letter together and sends it out to everyone not just public housing but also Veterans Terrace as well. They are notified that if they have a change in income they should contact us since their rent is income based and they can do an interim change to lower their rent. Commissioner Carella said that being a high performer there are expectations such as: the way rent is paid, filling vacancies, etc. and are they going to change the guidelines. Ms. Bouchard said there are a lot of the waivers, some are through October 31 and some are through the end of the year. She said what we had for a PHAS score this year will remain our PHAS score for next year because they cannot come out and do a physical inspection. HUD understands that there will be occupancy issues related to the pandemic and they also know that the rent collection receivables will be high. Ms. Bouchard explained there were a few months when staff was not showing units. We are now doing actual on-site recertifications and staff is behind plexiglass and everyone is practicing the best precautions they can.

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

d. Quarterly Notice to Quit Count – April – August, 2020

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

e. Quarterly Withdrawals Direct Deposits – April – June, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Quarterly Withdrawals Direct Deposits – April – June, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners present.

f. Monthly Actuals for Period Ending – June 30, 2020 & July 31, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Monthly Actuals for Period Ending – June 30, 2020 & July 31, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners present.

There was a brief discussion regarding the budget for the remainder of the fiscal year.

There was also a discussion regarding the Veterans Terrace redevelopment and the role the East Hartford Housing Authority will play when the development is completed and the funds that we will receive from that project.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

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

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

- a. Capital Fund & Major Maintenance Report – June & July, 2020 – Vice Chairman Yamamoto asked Ms. Bouchard why the redundant boiler was dropped from Hockanum Park. Ms. Bouchard advised her it was due to the Housing Authority dropping the project. Vice Chairman Yamamoto said her only other concern is that we are planning to begin a lot of sidewalk work and it looks like we are still working with Capital Studios to get the scope of work and drawings and is concerned because it is the end of August. She stated that Ms. Bouchard assured her that we have until the end of November. Mr. Pliszka said the bids are already out and it closes next week and we will do our analysis and pick our contractor. He stated that Elms Village is taken off the list for a year because our worse site is Rochambeau and that is what we are focusing on. Ms. Bouchard said they will do as much as they can then stop at a good breaking point and finish up in the spring next year and this is where the redundant boiler money is being spent because

we realized the boilers are not the right ones for that development. Mr. Pliszka said there are more safety issues at Rochambeau. Ms. Bouchard said due to the pandemic many of the vendors did not even want to come out in the open air and do a walk through and this is something that in order to bid on it they needed to see what actually needed to be done. Chairman Kate asked who is Louise Benjamin. Ms. Bouchard said she is from the Town's Health Department.

- b. Occupancy Reports – Vice Chairman Yamamoto said it looks pretty stable to her. She stated at Miller Gardens there were two moveouts and asked if there was any particular reason. Mr. Pliszka said that one went to a convalescent home and one was a deceased tenant.
- c. Section 8 Housing Voucher – There were no questions on this report.
- d. Scattered Sites Properties Report – Ms. Bouchard said that we only have one unoccupied unit and that is at 83-85 Connecticut Boulevard, 3rd Floor, which we do have a difficult time renting and we do advertise with other Housing Authorities and there is a for rent sign out front. She said that Ms. Paisley sent out two applications but has not received anything at this time. There was a discussion regarding 83/85 Connecticut Boulevard.
- e. Attorney's Report – There were no questions on this report. Ms. Bouchard said she does check in with Attorney Alexander weekly to see what the status is when the court will be opening up.
- f. Unit Turnaround AMP 1, AMP 2, VT – There were no questions on this report.
- g. Quarterly Resident Services Coordinator Report – Vice Chairman Yamamoto asked what the Resident Services Coordinator is doing during this pandemic. Ms. Bouchard explained she does come into the office and she had her going out to a couple of developments to pass out PPEs when Mr. Pliszka and herself could not do it. Ms. Aberle is also assisting with on-site recertifications because we have been having problems with the mail and emails. Lately, Ms. Aberle has been going with the Mobile van who is doing the COVID testing at our sites to make sure they are all set. Ms. Aberle has been assisting us with mailings and other things.

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 we partnered with First Choice Health Care Centers and they started to do the COVID Testing at our properties and they should have by now reached all 10 properties. All testing was free for our residents or anyone that was visiting or passing by as well as anyone from our staff could be tested. Chairman Kate asked if we had any positive cases at our properties. Ms. Bouchard said that we cannot get that information but some people are self-reporting or we get information from other residents and we did have some positive cases at a few of our developments. **Fire Training** – Ms. Bouchard said the Fire Department reached out to her wanting to do some training over at Veterans Terrace because we are vacating some buildings and she worked it out with the developer that it would be a good thing to allow them to come in and do training, which will help out the residents of East Hartford. Ms. Bouchard explained what she worked out with

the Fire Department. The Fire Department posted notices that they would be doing training and also fliers were sent out to all the residents of that development. **Veterans Terrace Redevelopment - Phase 1** – Ms. Bouchard said we were hoping to close on Phase 1 this summer. She said we did close on the National Housing Trust Fund. Ms. Bouchard said the problem that we are facing now is that the State of Connecticut has reached their cap in bond allocations. She said what this means for the Housing Authority is that there is no other additional bond funds until probably January of next year when new bonds are out. Ms. Bouchard said we are hoping that CHFA is willing to do is a letter stating we are guaranteed to get bonds at the beginning of the year and we could start working on the demolition and abatement using some of the Housing Authority's national housing trust fund money and other money from reserves, etc. to get the project started. The development team needs to go back to the investor and see if they will accept not having a bond allocation until January, 2021. If they do accept that, Ms. Bouchard said, then we have to go to M & T Bank and see if they will give us a bridge loan until such time we can get the bonds. Ms. Bouchard said that we have our Attorney Gregg Burton involved from Carmody & Torrence and he is now more involved in the whole process making sure everyone meets their deadlines and will put a milestone chart together and make sure we are moving towards close.

Phase 2 – Ms. Bouchard said we have Phase 2 that we are working on and hopefully will close that the spring of next year. **Phase 3** – Ms. Bouchard said we will not apply this year for funding of Phase 3. She stated if you have two sources of funding open CHFA would probably not award funding for that Phase because we are still working on the other two phases. She said there are a lot of moving pieces and explained this further. **Storm Isaias** – Ms. Bouchard said most of our issues were trees that came down mostly at that central office. Fortunately, a week or two before the storm Mr. Grier contracted out to have our property line trimmed around the fencing so nothing came down on the existing fences. Unfortunately, in the back where we just put up our new fence trees came down on that fence. Ms. Bouchard said we had a few trees come down at Heritage Gardens on the property line and worked with the neighbor to have them removed. Ms. Bouchard said at Rochambeau one tree did come down on one of our resident's unit and there was minor damage to the unit and it was just some shingles, a gutter and flashing that needed to be repaired. She said overall we had minimal damage from that storm. **Staff** – Ms. Bouchard said that we hired, Bryan Dixon, as a Site Assistant and he seems to be a great addition to our staff. Ms. Bouchard said that we have started Zoom meeting interviews for the Housing Programs Manager position, since Ms. Paisley will be retiring at the end of the year. We will be sad to see her go because she has a lot of housing knowledge and that will be a hard one to replace since she has been in the industry for almost 28 years. She stated we are trying to get someone in by October 1, 2020 to train with Ms. Paisley as we did with Mr. Dumas's position. **Relocation Chart** – Ms. Bouchard said that she attached a relocation chart that shows we are moving people and are waiting for a couple of units to be flipped. Vice Chairman Yamamoto noticed that two people are pending eviction and asked if the Housing Authority moved them. Ms. Bouchard said that you cannot move them because the eviction is tied to their unit and until we can actually evict them they need to stay in those units. Mr. Pliszka said one of them is supposed to turn in her keys on Monday. Ms. Bouchard did state that once the courts are open we should be able to move forward and get the execution.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review and Approval of the Vacated Tenant Accounts Receivable Write-off for Federal Developments

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve Resolution No. CT013-182-08-2020 to authorize the Vacated Tenant Accounts Receivable Write-off for Federal Developments in the amount of \$34,955.93. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners present.

b. Review and Approval of the Vacated Tenant Accounts Receivable Write-off for Veterans Terrace

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve Resolution No. CT013-183-08-2020 to approve the Vacated Tenant Accounts Receivable Write-off for Veterans Terrace in the amount of \$6,533.08. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion.

Commissioner Carella said that the Housing Authority has had issues in regards to rent collection at Veterans Terrace and the amount we are charging off is \$6,533.08. Mr. Pliszka said the resident needs to be vacated for at least one year and that they are currently not paying on a repayment agreement. Commissioner Carella said that you have some level of delinquencies where it was greater than any of the other developments. Ms. Bouchard said that Mr. Carella is stating that the receivables for Veterans Terrace are high but the receivables are high because the residents are still living there and they need to move out and be gone a year before we can write-it off. These are only write-offs for people that have vacated the property for at least a year. Mr. Pliszka said they are being reported to collections before they are written off. There was a discussion about reporting them to collections when balances are high.

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

9. OLD BUSINESS

There was nothing to discuss under this heading.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Personnel Matter Regarding Cares Money

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to go into Executive Session for the purpose of Personnel Matter Regarding Cares Money. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion; it was carried by the unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present to go into Executive Session at 2:32 p.m. Also in attendance were: Debra Bouchard, Executive Director; Christopher Pliszka, Finance Director and Brenda Pliszka, Executive Secretary/HR Director.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to come out of Executive Session and Commissioner Carella seconded the motion; it was carried by the unanimous vote of the Commissioners present to come out of Executive Session at 2:48 p.m.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Cares Grant report as presented. Commissioner Carella 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 Carella said motion being carried by the unanimous vote of the commissioners present and the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Kate". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K" at the end.

James Kate
Chairman of the Board

ATTESTED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Debra Bouchard". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Debra Bouchard
Executive Director