

COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING, JANUARY 20, 2021

The Commissioners of the East Hartford Housing Authority held its regular meeting on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 by a Zoom Meeting pursuant to Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 7B. The meeting was called to order by Chairman James Kate at 1:33 p.m.

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

Absent was Commissioner Kathleen Stephens.

Also present were: Debra Bouchard, Executive Director; Christopher Pliszka, Finance Director; Brenda Pliszka, Executive Secretary/HR Director; Ralph Alexander, Legal Counsel; Esther Clarke and Connor Martin, Town Council Liaisons.

2. **Approval of Regular Board Meeting Minutes, November 18, 2020**

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 18, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes, December 2, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve the minutes of the special meeting of December 2, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present with one abstention (Commissioner Cook).

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, November & December, 2020**

Chairman Kate asked if there were any questions on the November & December, 2020 payment vouchers. In regards to the payment voucher for November, 2020: #61572 David A. Belcher – Mr. Pliszka said that he does our HAP Requisitions and he is paid hourly so depending on what needs to be done for the month the amount charged to the Housing Authority will be different.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Payment Vouchers, November & December, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

b. Aged Receivables, November & December, 2020

Vice Chairman Yamamoto said the receivable keep going up but doesn't believe there is anything we can do about it. Ms. Bouchard said that is correct due to the pandemic there is a moratorium on evictions. She explained that we are still doing interims if their income goes down. She stated that we still are only charging 30% of the income. Mr. Pliszka stated that we are regularly reaching out to the tenants reminding them that once the moratorium is lifted they will have to come current with all the rent. Monthly reminder notices are being sent to the residents instead of Notices to Quit to let them know exactly how much they owe. Vice Chairman Yamamoto asked how much longer is the eviction moratorium been extended too. Ms. Bouchard said she believes it is going to be extended until September, 2021.

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

c. Aged Payables – December, 2020

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

d. Rent Collection Reports – November & December, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Rent Collection Report – November & December, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion.

Chairman Kate asked under Scattered Sites for November, 2020 it was down to 79.8% but went up in December and asked what caused that. Mr. Pliszka said that there are a couple of tenants that are market rent and they could have lost their job but it could be multiple factors. Ms. Bouchard said there are a couple of individuals on our scattered site program who are going to be applying for the state assistance and are eligible for up to \$4,000 for unsubsidized units to assist with paying towards their balance. She said we have been in contact with these people and they are working on the applications.

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

d. Quarterly Notice to Quit Count – October – December, 2020

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

e. Quarterly Withdrawals Direct Deposits – October – December, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Quarterly Withdrawals Direct Deposits – October – December, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion.

Chairman Kate asked who is Quadiant Leasing USA. Mr. Pliszka said this is for the rental of the mail machine, which is paid quarterly.

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

f. Monthly Actuals for Period Ending – November 30, 2020 & December 31, 2020

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Monthly Actuals for Period Ending – November 30, 2020 & December 31, 2020. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion.

Vice Chairman Yamamoto said in December the insurance is over about \$14,883. Mr. Pliszka said the insurance is the one above and that is over by \$4,191 due to the premium being a little higher than expected or due to claims. The Interest Expense is over by \$14,883 and this is on all the loans. Commissioner Carella said in regards to the interest, it is down quite a bit and it looks like we only received \$35 in interest for the month of December. Mr. Pliszka said he believes we are just receiving less from the bank but he will look into this and see why we are receiving so much less this year. He stated that their fees did go up a little and our fees are taken out of what we get in interest and the remainder is split.

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 Reports (November & December, 2020); b. Occupancy Reports (November & December, 2020); c. Section 8 Voucher Reports (November & December, 2020); d. Scattered Sites Properties Reports (November & December, 2020); e. Attorney's Reports (January, 2021); f. Unit Turnaround AMP 1, AMP 2, VT (December, 2020) and g. Quarterly Resident Services Coordinator Report (October – December, 2020). Commissioner Carella seconded the motion.

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

- a. Capital Fund & Major Maintenance Reports – November & December, 2020 – There were no questions on this report.
- 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 asked why the December rents went up as much as they did. Mr. Pliszka said 232 Burnside went up \$50.00 and we are asking for more on 232 Burnside 2nd floor.
- e. Attorney's Report – Commissioner Carella said for 92 Columbus Circle it is \$10,043.50 and asked what does that represent. Attorney Alexander said it is for back rent. Commissioner Carella said we issue notices to quit when a resident gets behind and asked what was the rent there. Ms. Bouchard said she is at contract rent.
- f. Unit Turnaround AMP 1, AMP 2, VT – Ms. Bouchard said there are a lot of vacancies. She said our maintenance department have been slammed with them. Unfortunately, we have had a harder time because some of our staff has gotten COVID and we were down a month without

being able to process background checks and now everyone is back and we are working hard to try to lease people up as soon as possible.

- 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

Mainstream Vouchers – Ms. Bouchard explained that HUD provided Cares Act funding for additional Mainstream Vouchers. She stated we did submit an application and found out after the holidays that we were awarded 40, which was the amount we were eligible to apply for. We have been working to make sure we follow all the guidelines. Funding is tentative for February 1, 2021 when we will start receiving money for the Mainstream Vouchers. We are currently using our housing choice voucher waitlist. When we opened the waitlist, the housing authority received 5,000 applications and we only have 431 vouchers and that is the reason we applied for the additional vouchers. The only caveat needed for the Mainstream vouchers is that you need to be between the ages of 18-61 and someone in the household must be disabled. Therefore, we are going to use our housing choice voucher waitlist and if someone is able to apply for the mainstream vouchers we will take them off the waitlist. Obviously, the housing authority will have to skip people who do not have a person with disability in the household.

Summerfield Town House Project – Ms. Bouchard said we are not doing this Project it is through Belveron Vitus development partners. She said we did decide to go ahead and assist them to issue their bonds and when that is done the housing authority will receive a fee for that. They will pay all the attorney fees. Ms. Bouchard said the housing authority is using Marie Phalen from Pullman & Comley who has been helping us and drafted a letter requesting the bond cap allocation. The earliest this project will close is in May if there is bond capital available but she does not believe that will happen and if it doesn't happen this year it will be next year. Ms. Bouchard explained the housing authority's efforts in this project and stated that there is no liability to us in this project. Veterans Terrace

Redevelopment - Phase 1 – Ms. Bouchard said we are getting close to closing, hopefully by the first week in February. Since we received the approval letter, which is in effect until April 4, 2021, we are just waiting for HUD to give us the go ahead. All the households have been relocated except for one. A unit has been completed today and it is ready for lease up and the relocation specialist has to work to get the movers out there to move the household. Once Phase 1 is closed, she explained what they are going to do to secure the property during the redevelopment. Phase 2 – Ms. Bouchard said for Phase 2 we have not relocated anyone since the relocation specialist will have to work on a plan to relocate people off-site since we do not have any more units available since Phase 2 and Phase 3 are completely occupied. Ms. Bouchard did state that as we build Phase 1 we might be able to move some of the individuals in Phase 2 into Phase 1 it will depend how things evolve over time. In the redevelopment for Phase 2, there are 11 units that will become market rent, which was part of the tax credit application and we have some unsubsidized units there. She explained what happens to those subsidized vouchers since they can no longer stay at the Veterans Terrace property. We have been in discussions with Reno & Cavanaugh who we hired a while ago to assist us with any HUD regulations and they are

the experts and know how to navigate through all the different rules that HUD puts out. Ms. Bouchard said we have to do something with the subsidy and talked about adding them to our current housing choice voucher allocation. Ms. Bouchard said what they did suggest is if we could put them in one of our properties. She explained why we did not want to put them in our scattered sites property. Ms. Bouchard said if we had a small property that we thought we could put a total of 22 units what property would be available. She said there was some discussion about Hutt Heights, which is a 28-unit property. We have not gone through all the exercises to see how that will happen but that will be for future conversations. Vice Chairman Yamamoto said her concern is about keeping families in East Hartford because of the school system. Mr. Pliszka said that will not affect families it is just going to be what subsidies are in the unit. Ms. Bouchard said that the subsidy must stay in East Hartford and if we do not use them they would go to a landlord where all the 11 can transfer too. She stated that the housing authority wants to keep them and will try to get them to some property that makes sense. At this time, we could defederalize one of our public housing properties and bring it down to a State level. If we defederalize a property, we will get more income from the project based vouchers that would go to those units versus what we would get from HUD subsidy. Vice Chairman Yamamoto said are those units large enough. Ms. Bouchard said we would have to do some renovations to make them larger units such as townhouse style. She stated it is still a work in progress and there is no set direction at this time. The anticipated close for Phase 2 at this time is June, 2021. Phase 3 – Ms. Bouchard said there has not really been any change. We still have not applied for the 9% award. She stated they were in November and she just heard they are changing the funding round from November to January and if that is the case we will submit in January, 2022. We will be working from October through the end of the year on the application to get it ready for submission in January. Ms. Bouchard went through the attachments to her report.

NERC/NAHRO Mid-Winter Virtual Conference

Ms. Bouchard said NERC\NAHRO will be holding a Virtual Mid-Winter Conference and if anyone is interested in participating in that let Ms. Pliszka know and we will sign you up.

There was a discussion on the impact of the moratorium on evictions and the problems residents will be faced with along with the problems the housing authorities are facing with not being able to collect rent.

Mr. Martin asked in regards to the vaccine roll out has there been any discussion or plans in place to replicate what the Housing Authority did with mobile testing. Ms. Bouchard said not yet but we will have discussions with ICMH and First Choice Healthcare Center.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was nothing to discuss under this heading.

9. OLD BUSINESS

There was nothing to discuss under this heading.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was nothing to discuss under this heading.

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 2:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James Kate
Chairman of the Board

ATTESTED BY:

Debra Bouchard
Executive Director