

COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

The Commissioners of the East Hartford Housing Authority held its regular meeting on Wednesday, February 17, 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 1:34 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, January 20, 2021**

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 20, 2021. Commissioner Cook 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**

Chairman Kate stated he would like to add an item under Executive Session – Personnel Matter.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to add under Executive Session – Personnel Matter. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

5. **FINANCE REPORTS**

- a. **Payment Vouchers, January, 2021**

Chairman Kate asked if there were any questions on the January, 2021 payment vouchers. In regards to the payment voucher for January, 2021: #61634 Gengras Ford – Mr. Pliszka said we needed a new dump truck for one of our family sites where there is always a lot of trash and we often have to clean out a lot of units and the old truck was beyond repair. Commissioner Cook asked if when the Housing Authority is going to purchase a vehicle if the Board can be made aware of it a month or two before it would be appreciated. #598 L E Whitford Company Inc. - Mr. Pliszka said that check included one month's work and work done on the central office door and that is why this is a larger amount. #61668 UConn Health Center – Ms. Bouchard stated that is for our Employee Assistance Program.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Payment Vouchers, January, 2021. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

b. Aged Receivables, January, 2021

Vice Chairman Yamamoto said it will not improve until the pandemic is over. Commissioner Cook said she was in a meeting with Conn Nahro and all the housing authorities are having the same problem and no one knows what is going to happen. Chairman Kate asked when the moratorium will be ending. Ms. Bouchard said it looks like it will end March 31, 2021, but heard that it might not end until September.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Aged Receivables January, 2021. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

c. Rent Collection Reports – January, 2021

The motion was made by Commissioner Cook to accept the Rent Collection Report – January, 2021. Vice Chairman Yamamoto seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

d. Monthly Actuals for Period Ending – January 31, 2021

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to accept the Monthly Actuals for Period Ending – January 31, 2021. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present.

Mr. Pliszka said there was a question asked last month regarding interest income and stated the reason the interest income is so much lower than the budgeted amount is because much of our reserves was held by CHFA and we were receiving a much higher interest rate but at the same time we were unable to take the money out when we needed it. The Housing Authority now has all the money and it is in our bank account and we are receiving less interest but the money is now available. Commissioner Cook said it is very important to have that money available. Ms. Bouchard explained that HUD was the overseer of that account held at CHFA and the original escrow agreement was set up when we were in troubled status and now we have been high performer now for several years and explained further we need the funds for the Veterans Terrace redevelopment.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to approve the Consent Agenda as follows: a. Capital Fund & Major Maintenance Report (January, 2021); b. Occupancy Report (January, 2021); c. Section 8 Voucher Report (January, 2021); d. Scattered Sites Properties Report (January, 2021); e. Attorney's Report (February, 2021) and f. Unit Turnaround AMP 1, AMP 2, VT (January, 2021). Commissioner Carella seconded the motion.

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

- a. Capital Fund & Major Maintenance Report – January, 2021 – There was discussion regarding the lead based paint unit that we are unable to access at this time. The health department is fully aware of the situation and has been documented. Chairman Kate said under Meadow Hill how old are those boilers. Ms. Bouchard said they are old and back in 2011-12 we did some upgrades on piping on one of them. Mr. Pliszka said he believes that system has been there for 20 years. Ms. Bouchard said that we are now having some issues with the boilers and she feels it is important to take care of it all at one time and get something that is energy efficient.
- b. Occupancy Reports – Vice Chairman Yamamoto questioned the amount of vacant units at Hockanum Park. Mr. Pliszka stated that something is not right with Hockanum. Vice Chairman Yamamoto said at Meadow Hill there are two move-ins and still have four vacancies. Mr. Pliszka said there were six vacancies there and we had two move-ins and now there are only four vacancies. Vice Chairman Yamamoto is confident that staff is doing the very best they can.
- c. Section 8 Housing Voucher – Vice Chairman Yamamoto said she questioned that we are allocated 431 vouchers and we have 434 leased up. Ms. Bouchard said she explained the difficulty in leasing people up but explained it is fine if we over lease as long as throughout the year it is 431 for the average of 12 months.
- d. Scattered Sites Properties Report – Vice Chairman Yamamoto said the tenant at 17 Goodwin Place 2nd Floor is still uncertain if they are going to leave or stay. Ms. Bouchard said we did get a move-in for 232 Burnside and they will be leased up next week.
- e. Attorney's Report – Chairman Kate asked a few questions on the notations and Attorney Alexander answered his questions.
- f. Unit Turnaround AMP 1, AMP 2, VT – 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 this was through the Cares Act and we applied for 40 vouchers and were awarded 40 extra vouchers to assist in helping house 40 additional families. The 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. Internally, when we opened our waitlist last time there were over 5,000 applicants and as we have been going through the list we have been going in order and looking for the applicants who are disabled. At this time, we have 20 applicants that we have set aside and we will begin our Section 8 briefings to issue vouchers on March 4 & 5. We have already received our funding from HUD, which was approximately \$35,750. As we go through the vouchers, we will determine how much we will need to support those vouchers. There was a brief discussion regarding who can receive the mainstream vouchers and the time involved in getting paperwork and actually leasing a unit, which that can take between 60 and 90 days. Ms. Bouchard did state that we cannot move anyone that is currently in our property or currently on our program, the applicants need to be issued from our waitlist. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Ms. Bouchard said the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the Town of East Hartford was out and the Housing

Authority did apply for that at the end of January. She stated that she put in a \$30,000 request to support a lighting pole project that we have at Elms Village. Currently, we have some security cameras over there but there is not a full-blown security system there. There are some problems over there with previous tenants that keep coming back along with some squatters and some break-ins. The hope is to eventually put in a nice camera system but in the meantime, it would be nice to get some extra security lights out there in the back-parking lot at a height not to block the cameras. She believes the entire project will cost \$119,000 and asking the Town for \$30,000 to help support that project. Veterans Terrace Redevelopment - Phase 1 – Ms. Bouchard said there is really not much to update the Board on. Our relocation is totally complete for Phase 1. At this time, we are waiting to close. She reached out to the developers to see when we would be closing and the attorney said hopefully by the first week in March. Phase 2 – Ms. Bouchard said for Phase 2 we have no movement there. Obviously, she said we are working through Phase 1 and once that is closed we will begin working on Phase 2 and start the relocation of all the tenants offsite somewhere in East Hartford if that is feasible. Our relocation specialist will have to begin working on that plan as buildings come down, which tenants to move first and there may be some opportunity for people in Phase 2 or 3 who can move into Phase 1 when those buildings go up so there may be less that we have to move offsite. Phase 3 – Ms. Bouchard said we will not be applying for funding until January, 2022 if they shift the timeline from November of this year to January. There was a brief discussion regarding school aged children if they have to move off site.

Ms. Bouchard said that she needs to get out the Attorney's bid for our general counsel as well as our labor attorney.

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

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to go into Executive Session for the purpose of a Personnel Matter Regarding Retiree. Commissioner Carella seconded the motion; it was carried by the unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present to go into Executive Session at 2:11 p.m. Also in attendance were: Debra Bouchard, Executive Director; Christopher Pliszka, Finance Director; Brenda Pliszka, Executive Secretary/HR Director and Attorney Ralph Alexander, Legal Counsel.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to come out of Executive Session and Commissioner Cook seconded the motion; it was carried by the unanimous vote of the Commissioners' present to come out of Executive Session at 2:19 p.m.

The motion was made by Vice Chairman Yamamoto to recognize A. Christine Paisley-Corrigan for her long-time service above and beyond the call of duty for the East Hartford Housing Authority. Commissioner Cook 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 Cook said motion being carried by the unanimous vote of the commissioners' present and the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



James Kate
Chairman of the Board

ATTESTED BY:



Debra Bouchard
Executive Director