

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners sought to comply with the directive of Executive Order 7B-1 issued by Governor Ned Lamont on March 14, 2020, together with any Executive Orders subsequently issued which pertain to such meetings.

To participate in the meeting the Board of Commissioners, staff and public used the Go To Meeting Conference phone number 1-866-899-4679 and access code 153-392-693 as noted on the Agenda for the meeting.

The Board of Commissioners ("Board") of the Vernon Housing Authority ("Authority") met in a regular session through the Go To Meeting conference call at 1:00 PM, Thursday, June 11, 2020.

Chairperson Karen Roy-Guglielmi called the June Regular Meeting of the Housing Authority to order at 1:01 pm. Attendance upon roll call:

PRESENT: Chairperson Karen Roy-Guglielmi, Vice-Chairperson Glenn Tarro, Commissioners Peter Olson, Executive Director Betsy Soto and Finance Manager Wendy Ng. There were 2 other callers on the call. Caller #1 Ian Mills, Caller #2 did not identify.

ABSENT: Commissioner Judy Hany

PUBLIC COMMENT: Chairperson Karen Roy-Guglielmi called out three times for Public Comment, but there were no comments. While on agenda for approval of Annual Report Minutes, a person identified as Ian Mills-resident at Franklin Park East stated that he wants to say something. He requested updated information on the tenant commissioner's position since the current Commissioner's term will expire this year. Chairperson Roy-Guglielmi stated that the election will be coming soon and that further down on the agenda there will be information provided on the upcoming tenant commissioner election. VHA must follow the CT General Statutes and recent Executive Orders from the Governor.

MINUTES: Commissioner Peter Olson made a motion to approve the minutes of the June Regular meeting as read. Vice-Chairperson Glenn Tarro seconded with the vote being 3 ayes. Motion carries. Vice-Chairperson Glenn Tarro made a motion to approve the minutes of the Annual Regular meeting as read. Commissioner Peter Olson seconded with the vote being 3 ayes. Motion carries.

Chairperson Karen Roy-Guglielmi called to add the Executive Director's Review in Executive Session to the Regular June Meeting Agenda. Vice-Chairperson Glenn Tarro made a motion to approve the said motion. Commissioner Peter Olson seconded with the vote being 3 ayes. Motion carries.

BILLS: After review and discussion of the invoices paid, Vice-Chairperson Glenn Tarro made a motion to approve the payments. Commissioner Peter Olson seconded the motion with the vote being 3 ayes. The checks approved were: Revolving #67217-67265; Federal #24726-24748; Franklin Park East #1589-1590; Windermere Court #1718-1721; State #15146-15151; Congregate #12579-12598; Voucher -none; and Local #3304-3306 and the Housing Authority's credit card invoice.

Cash Report: The Cash Balances was reviewed with the Board of Commissioners.

Occupancy Report: The Occupancy report was reviewed with the Board of Commissioners. The Public Housing Department broke record with 99% occupancy. This had never been done in the history of VHA. The department continues to flourish and succeed with keeping all units leased up.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Construction is 99% complete. There is an update on the notification received from CHFA stating that we may not be able to use all of our construction contingency funds on the project and that it may have to be used to pay back the pre-development loan that they previously said we did not have to repay. Department of Housing has informed me that it's their intent to convert the loan to a grant, and an official notification will be forthcoming. Since then a letter was received from Department Housing stating that the loan had to be paid back. After reaching out to our field officer, I was informed not to take further actions. We are still on hold and will wait for the final decision. After inspection they were misinformed on the signage on a few signs and missing signage. Corrected signage and missing signage reordered. There are minor items to be addressed prior to closing of project. Signage completed on March 20, 2020. Project is now ready for closing with CHFA. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic everything continues to be on hold to further notice.

Local Section 8: The department ended May with 316 no changes from the previous month. The section 8 program is working towards continuing to grow the program numbers to maximize the number of participants on the program.

State of Connecticut DOH-Housing Choice Voucher and Rental Assistance Programs: The Department finished April with 1,153 vouchers and RAP state certificates, nine up from the previous month. The program continuous to work towards regaining a combination of 40 HCV and RAP certificates it has lost in the last year. In addition to assuring accuracy in both programs and getting full participation from clients.

Becker Place: Architectural and Engineering walk through pre-proposal accepted on April 12th. Walk through and scope review completed on 5/29/2019. Scope review to be determined and work schedule to be determined. The design drawings phase has begun, in progress and to be continued until final drawings are approved. Next the cost of scope of work to be done and an Environmental Review Report (ERR) both in the beginning stages of process. Meeting was held onsite on 1/6/2020 to discuss designs with SHPO. SHPO scope of work was approved on 1/30/2020. VHA-request to HUD to rescind the request to demolition in 2015 was approved on 1/16/2020. Becker Place will no longer be demolished and its now in the process of rehabilitation. Environmental Review is now complete.

Windermere Camera Project: A camera design professional has been hired to work on this project. A walk through of the property has been conducted. Camera designs have begun and its final design to be determined. Drawings have been finalized and bid opening was conducted on 11/6/19. Due to only receiving one bid, the bid was rejected. New Bid re-advertising and re-opening dates to be selected. Second bid opening was held on January 31, 2020 and the lower bidder Intellibeam was awarded the contract. Contracts signed on April 10, 2020. Currently on hold awaiting Windermere Exterior Site Improvement Project.

Windermere Exterior Site Improvement Project: Walk through of the property has been conducted and Proposals accepted. Architect has been selected and contracts signed. The design drawings phase has begun, in progress and to be continued until final drawings are approved. Town of Vernon has approved minor parking modification. Pre-bid walkthrough was conducted on 3/30/2020. Bid opening was held April 16, 2020. 2 out of 4 were incomplete and bids were over budget. All bids were rejected. Drawings in the process of being reviewed. Second Bid opening was conducted on June 4 2020. Contract approval pending.

Congregate April 2020 Report by Michael Gentile, Housing Programs Manager: All activities, entertainment and providers have been cancelled as of March 13, 2020 and all visitors were limited to medical or personal aid only. Lunches continue to be delivered. Facing covering, gloves and social distancing continue to be implemented to keep all residents and staff safe. Tenants were delivered beautiful flowers on May 8th, 2020 from the Vernon Housing Authority. Rental Rebate was also processed electronically for all tenant that qualify as of 05/22/20. Information delivered to our residents this month: Monthly menu provide by Glendale Senior Dining. Our bulletin board is full of helpful information; including residents weekly bus schedule, the monthly Vernon Senior Center newsletter, calendar, the food pantry schedule, our Pitkat Congregate Newsletter with interesting articles, games and puzzles, the weekly lunch menu and activity calendars. Other postings are frequently added to the bulletin board. Currently in the process of putting together ice cream day and goody bags to be delivered to the residents. We continue to find ways to assist and bring joy to our residents during these hard times.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

CMERS (pension) -employer's contribution rate will increase from 13.73% to 14.95%, employees' contribution rate will increase from 2.75% to 3.25% start 7/1/20. The change implemented from Public Act 19-124 went into law on 6/28/19. The Executive Director recommended a one-time pay increase of 0.5% to offset the pension rate increase effective 7/1/2020. For those employees part of the union due to the union contracts still being negotiated. The Executive Director has requested for the VHA Labor attorneys to negotiate with the Union representatives a mutual agreement so that this increase in their pay does not bind us in the upcoming following years rather an agreement of a one-time increase once the agreement is reached. The agreement must first be reached, signed, and dated prior to increase being given After short discussion Vice-Chairperson Glenn Tarro made a motion to approve the pension pay increase offset as read. Commissioner Peter Olson seconded with the vote being 3 ayes. Motion carries

Fixed Asset Capitalization Policy-Executive Director made a recommendation to adopt a Fixed Asset Capitalization Policy due to VHA never having a formal capitalization policy. The policy would allow VHA to avoid unnecessary cost and work on small office items. Eliminating costly busy work is one way to help us fulfill our mission effectively. The Policy will be effective on 7/1/2020 and capitalize all asset whose individual item cost exceed \$5,000 and have a useful life greater than 1 year. After short discussion, Commissioner Peter Olson made a motion to approve the policy as read. Vice-Chairperson Glenn Tarro seconded with the vote being 3 ayes. Motion carries.

Windermere Exterior & Site improvement project – Item removed from the agenda.

INFORMATIONAL:

Response Letter – To resident Ian Mills from Attorney Michael Wrona pertaining to the tenant election. Explained to Mr. Mills that the decision to hold the election during the COVID19 pandemic was to comply with the Governors Executive Orders and due the uncertainty of the unknown of this deadly virus for the health and safety of our employees and elderly and disabled residents which in this circumstance took precedence the election was placed on hold until further directive from the Governor and when we felt it was safe to conduct such election. It was also explained to Mr. Mills that the Connecticut General Statutes Annotated 8-41 state a commissioner shall hold office until said commissioner's successor is appointed and has qualified. While Judy Hany's term expired 2/28/2020, no tenant commissioner had yet been appointed therefore Judy Hany continued to hold place until a successor is appointed and qualified.

Tenant Commissioner Election- Will be held June 30th, 2020 at 114 Franklin Park West community room from 10am-12pm. VHA will comply with Executive Order 7B and 7OO in accordance to the Governors Orders for the safety of our residents. Measures and procedures in place. League of Women's Voters to conduct election.

CoVID19 Timeline – The Executive Director created a timeline to inform the Board of Commissioners of the actions that were taken in the month of March 2020. Thus, it is only a fraction of what has been done to date. Preparing in advance allowed the director to act quickly in responding to the Governors Orders keeping residents and staff safe. Their health & safety is first and priority. The work continues and will continue until no longer required whenever that may be. Board of Commissioners expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the Executive Director, Betsy Soto for her dedication, loyalty, and everything she has done and continues to do for the Vernon Housing Authority, Staff, and residents.

Flowers Delivered to all Residents -Flowers were delivered to all residents on 5/8/2020 to let them know that we the Vernon HA is thinking of them and we are here for them. Residents were very appreciative, we put a smile on their faces and that was the goal, some got emotional. Many thank you were received and continue to come in. Many residents showed their appreciation to the housing by sending thank you card to tell how grateful and thankful for the Housing Authority's kindness.

Hand Sanitizer Donation-VHA received hand sanitizer from the Vernon Foundation for the Court Tower residents. A thank you message was sent to the foundation by the Executive Director.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 1:41 pm, Vice-Chairperson Glenn Tarro made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the Executive Director's review, which was seconded by Commissioner Peter Olsen, vote being 3 ayes. Ms. Soto was asked to stay and Ms. Ng left meeting at 1:42pm.

At 2:51pm, return to Regular meeting. Ms. Soto and Ms. Ng returned to the meeting.

After some discussion, Vice-Chair Glenn Tarro made a motion to extend the Executive Director's contract and other negotiated items for 5 years from June 4th, 2020 - June 4, 2025; seconded by Commissioner Peter Olson. Motion Carries.

The next meeting will be the combined July/August Regular Meeting which will be held on July 09, 2020 at 21 Court St. at 1:00 pm. Any meeting changes will be noted on VHA's website and Town Clerk will be notified.

The June Regular meeting was adjourned at 2:54 pm on a motion by Vice-Chairperson Glenn Tarro; seconded by Commissioner Peter Olson with all voting in favor. Motion carries.

Executive Director