

REGULAR MEETING – March 10, 2022

Chairperson Karen Roy-Guglielmi called the January Regular Meeting of the Housing Authority to order at 1:02 pm. Attendance upon roll call:

PRESENT: Chairperson Karen Roy-Guglielmi, Commissioners; Susan Bannon, Kathleen McCarthy, Carl Shaffer, Sean Hadden, Executive Director, Betsy R. Soto, Finance Manager, Wendy Ng, Facility Manager Michael Patrick, Public Housing / HCV Programs Manager Debra Hedger & Attorney Michael Wrona

ABSENT: NONE

Public Comment: NONE

Executive Session: A motion was made by Commissioner Susan Bannon to enter Executive Session. Commissioner Kathleen McCarthy seconded. All present voted for the approval of the motion. Motion carried. The purpose of the Executive Session was to review a list of questions regarding to the Executive Director from the Board of Commissioners and for the Executive Director to provide her responses to the questions. started at 1:02 pm. Executive Director, Betsy R. Soto & Attorney Michael Wrona invited to stay. Finance Manager, Wendy Ng, Facility Manager Michael Patrick & Public Housing / HCV Programs Supervisor Debra Hedger were not invited. At 2:30 pm Executive Director, Betsy R. Soto & Attorney Michael Wrona were asked to leave the Executive Session. At 2:56 pm, Executive Director, Betsy R. Soto, Attorney Michael Wrona, Finance Manager, Wendy Ng, Facility Manager Michael Patrick & Public Housing / HCV Programs Supervisor Debra Hedger were invited back to the meeting.

MINUTES: A motion was made by Commissioner Kathleen McCarthy to adopt the February 2022 Regular Meeting minutes as offered. Commissioner Susan Bannon seconded. Commission Carl Shaffer asked this sentence “Note January minutes-modified to reflect budget as revisited not revised” in February 2022 minutes. All present voted for the approval of the motion. Motion carried.

BILLS: After review and discussion of the invoices paid, Commissioner Susan Bannon made a motion to approve the payments. Commissioner Kathleen McCarthy seconded the motion. All present voted for the approval of the motion. Motion carried. The checks approved were: Revolving #68052-68088; Federal #25220-25245; Franklin Park East #1681-1683; Windermere Court #1855-1862; State #15263-15276; Congregate #12954-12980; HCV# none and Local #3402-3406. The Housing Authority’s credit card invoice was reviewed and approved along with the bills. Commissioner Carl Shaffer had question on check # 25222. It was explained that that a maintenance vehicle required service. Question answered no follow up required. Commissioner Susan Bannon had questions on check#12958 and #12977. It was explained that frequent calls for service orders are made for the Congregate Facility to clean the sewer pump. Question answered no follow up required.

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

Occupancy Report: The occupancy report was reviewed with the Board of Commissioners by Executive Director, Betsy R. Soto.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT: Presented by Ms. Betsy R. Soto

Grove Court Major Renovation –Request for Qualifications from Architects/ Engineers have been received and scored. *In Progress.*

Grove Court VMS (Camera) Project – Wiring complete and Cameras Installed. *In progress.*

Grove Court Project Major Renovations - ALTA Survey 90% complete. *In progress.*

Grove Court Project Major Renovations - Environmental Survey 100% complete.

Congregate-Replacement of Gazebo – Project commencing in May. *In progress.*

Franklin Park East, West and Windermere: Signage and Sign Lighting A&E (Design Services) Pre-Proposal conference will be held on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 @1:00pm. Proposals are due prior to 2:00pm on March 18th, 2022.

Franklin Park West and East: Roof Replacement A & E (Design Services) Pre-Proposal conference will be held on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 @1:30pm. Proposals are due prior to 2:00pm on March 18th, 2022.

Court Towers: Structural Assessment-Proposal were due on 2/4/2022-Proposals received from Antinozzi Associates Architecture & Interiors for \$4,800, Silver Petrucelli & Associates \$3,900, Szeker Engineering \$12,360, and William M. LaPoint PE LLC \$18,500. The lower bidder Silver/Petrucelli was awarded the agreement for \$3,900.

Becker Place: Abatement complete, garage demolished and roof complete. Contractor has terminated sub-contractor plumbing and heating contract due to schedule conflicts and availability. Project is progress.

Local Section 8: The department ended March with a count of 315 HCV, which is the same from the previous month. The Section 8 HCV program staff are working diligently towards increasing the program to maximize the number of participants on the program.

State of Connecticut DOH-Housing Choice Voucher and Rental Assistance Programs: The Department ended March with a count of 1,138 vouchers and RAP state certificates, 1 more than the previous month. The program staff are working towards accuracy in both programs and getting full participation from clients.

Francis Pitkat Congregate Living Center: The Vernon Housing Authority continues to follow all CDC rules and Governor's Executive Orders by providing quality and safe services to all residents. Residents and their visitors are required to wear masks and remain at least 6 ft. apart. All common areas in the building continues to be sanitized on a regular basis and before and after scheduled activities. The residents were entertained by Duncan, Sandy Robinson, John Grundstrom and Alex Lentini. As of September 2021, the entertainers are required to provide us with their Covid vaccination information, which they have abided by. In February a representative from Vernon Social Services met with the residents to discuss the energy rebate program. Residents continue to receive pet therapy, afternoon movies, Nintendo Wii Bowling, BINGO and "Winner or Loser." Our Bulletin Board area is the "Communication Gateway" to the Pitkat Residents to keep them informed regarding pertinent information, Pitkat & Community

Activities, Monthly menu provided by Glendale Senior Dining, Weekly Bus Schedules, Monthly Vernon Senior Center Newsletter and interesting articles, games and puzzles, the weekly lunch menu and activity calendars. The staff celebrates and acknowledges the residents by giving them a birthday, get-well or sympathy card and receive a birthday cake.

OLD BUSINESS: Continuance of 2022 Federal Budget Revisit-A motion was made by Commissioner Kathleen McCarthy to postpone Federal Budget Revisit to next meeting. Commissioner Susan Bannon seconded. All present voted for the approval of the motion. Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Sean Hadden request to discuss VHA resident repayment-to discuss his client and resident of the Vernon Housing Authority repayment agreement for money owed back to the housing authority. Commissioner Hadden emailed a complaint to the Board of Commissioners and Executive Director Betsy R. Soto for an immediate action to be taken and be added to the regular agenda for further discussion. Executive Director, Betsy R. Soto, explained to Commissioner Hadden that the amount owed back to the Housing Authority was not for an outstanding rent balance, but rather failure to provide the housing authority accurate and current income information during her initial lease-up October of 2020. It was later verified through the Employment Income Verification System (EIV) and Department of Labor (DOL), that the resident had much more income than what she initially reported on the Personal Declaration. Furthermore, it was explained to Commissioner Hadden the purpose of the Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) function. It provides a comprehensive on-line system for the determination and verification of various resident information and income that PHAs use in determining rental subsidy. Additionally, EIV collects supplemental employment and benefit information through data sharing agreements with the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). These agreements, in combination with HUD's PIC system and EIV reports, provide an analysis of income and benefit information that the EIV team monitors in order to assist Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) and HUD Field Offices to identify and resolve certain regulatory deficiencies and to implement proactive measures to effectively mitigate risk and program waste, fraud and abuse. In addition, U.S Department of Labor-Provide PHA's access to verify salary and unemployment. In this case, the resident failed to report accurate income, was not in compliance with the housing program rules, policies, housing federal program regulations and has refused to resolve the required repayment to the housing authority. *PHAs are mandated to identify and resolve deficiencies, implement proactive measures to effectively mitigate risk and program waste, fraud, and abuse.*

3:05pm Commissioners Sean Hadden left meeting for personal reasons.

Drafting of New Conflict of Interest Policy- New Conflict of Interest Policy will be drafted by VHA's attorney. A motion was made by Commissioner Kathleen McCarthy for approval of the drafting of the Conflict-of-Interest Policy. Commissioner Susan Bannon second. All present voted for the approval of motion. Motion carried.

3:26 pm Commissioners Carl Shaffer left meeting for personal reasons.

Change Regular April 14, 2022, Meeting date to a Special Meeting April 13, 2022 – The date change was discussed and rescheduled for April 28, 2022. A motion was made by Commissioner Susan Bannon for approval of the meeting date. Commissioner Kathleen McCarthy second. All present voted for the approval of motion. Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL - Small Cities Grant application letter to Mayor Dan Champagne – Redevelopment Grove Project needs approximately 3 million dollars in funding. There are available small cities grant with which could fund up to 1.5 million dollars from the State of CT. This grant request must come from the Town of Vernon on behalf of the VHA. A meeting with the mayor and associated Town staff was held with the Executive Director and her Team to review the application and relevant paperwork for the Town to apply for the grant.

Resident Letter regarding the 2/5/22 JI Article – Per letter received the residents of the Court Tower Property were very unhappy and were in opposing of the written JI Article. The letter states that several residents were interviewed by the reporter and informed that they never had a cockroach issue nor had ever seen one. Many residents were displeased with the interviewee and the JI Article and were upset that their statements did not make the paper. Tenant wrote, *“Apparently, this did not fit the JI reporter’s narrative because my comment did not make the JI.”* Nor did other comments made to the reporter by residents who did not agree with the accusations being made by the interviewee. The letter also states the following, *“The Court Towers maintenance staff mops and vacuums all common floors, washes elevator walls, glass surfaces in the vestibule area, tables in the community room, spray disinfectant on safety rails five days per week. In addition to any repairs that are needed, freshly painted apartments between tenants. One of the few times that tis takes a backseat to anything that occurs is when snow removal becomes a priority for the safety of the tenants.”*

Free Coat Drive - The coat drive went exceptional! Over 50 coats were given to VHA residents throughout the properties. They were appreciative and happy.

Vaccine Booster Clinic-Vaccines & Boosters were made available for the convenience of our residents. There were 1st timers who came to get their first vaccine dosage and many 1st time boosters as well. Approximately 40-50 Vaccines and Boosters were administered.

Tenant Handbook – All Board of Commissioners were presented with a copy of the Tenant Handbook.

The next meeting will be held on April 28, 2022, at 21 Court St., at 1:00 pm in the Community Room.

The March Regular meeting was adjourned at 3:37pm on a motion by Commissioner Susan Bannon, seconded by Commissioner Kathleen McCarthy. All present voted for the approval of the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betsy R. Soto,
Executive Director, PHM, VEM