

May 21, 2020

Via Video Conference

Attending: Chairman Josh Howroyd
Paul Rubin – Vice Chairman
Timothy Becker
Lisa O'Neill
Joseph D'Ascoli, Executive Director
Judith Taylor – Tenant Commissioner

I. Meeting Called to Order

Chairman Howroyd called the meeting to order via video conference at 6:31 pm.

Chairman Howroyd called for a suspension of the rules in order to take Item under New Business item #1 Attorney Wrona – Discussion about MERS Opinion Letter and item #2 Presentation of the Final Audit Review FYE 9/30/19 – Jason Geel, Auditor with Maletta & Company. Mr. Becker so moved; Ms. Taylor seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Attorney Wrona discussed MERS Opinion Letter and if it is possible for MHA to withdraw from this program. He said it is possible but not without high financial ramifications. He referenced a case with the Town of Thompson who wanted to partially withdraw some employees from MERS. He went on to explain that the cost would have to be determined by an actuary and the statute would have to be changed. Chairman Howroyd shared he is working with CONN-NAHRO and other housing authorities to get together to change the statute. It would be too much of a financial hardship for one housing to tackle. Attorney Wrona added that the State of Connecticut has never amended the MERS program and the MERS benefits while being very good are very costly. Mr. Becker shared he read the opinion and asked if MHA could get retiree plan of equal value for current employees. Attorney Wrona responded stating MHA would have to get those numbers from an actuary to determine the cost of "getting out" and what the liability is for MHA. Mr. D'Ascoli shared he is president of CONN-NAHRO, and this has been a topic of many discussions in the last few months. He has been speaking with lobbyists about this issue as well. This is an election year and perhaps we could lobby to get a "special session" with the legislature to discuss this topic in more detail.

Mr. Jason Geel from Maletta & Company, and independent auditor reviewed the FYE 9/30/2019 Audit Report with the Board. He stated there are no findings which is very good news from MHA. Staff is managing their expenses very well. Currently MHA has a healthy reserve and if needed would be able to operate confidently without needing funds from HUD. Mr. Geel discussed the pension plan and how changes can and will impact MHA's financial picture. He requested a copy of the Opinion Letter and the information on the Town of Thompson to review from MHA.

Mr. D'Ascoli commended the staff on their hard work making the positive results of the audit report possible. He explained to the Board that he encourages staff to work smarter and not harder. If they need training, he wants to make sure they get it. MHA's success is due to the staff's hard work. He also shared that HUD is moving toward allowing virtual inspections, hoping HA's will not get dinged because of COVID.

II. Adoption of Minutes – Meeting of April 15, 2020

Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to approve the minutes of April 15, 2020. Mr. Becker so moved; Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

III. Correspondence – None

IV. Accounts Payable –April 2020 Payment Summary & Detail Report

Mr. D’Ascoli reported business as usual. Mr. Becker questioned the high water and sewer bills and why they are not paid quarterly. Mr. D’Ascoli shared that AMP I is billed quarterly and AMP II once a year. Chairman Howroyd shared that an energy analysis, which was done by Siemens and we installed low flow toilets, new faucets and shower heads. Mr. D’Ascoli added the fact that the sewer lines are old and low flow and numerous sewer backups. Tenants have been instructed not to flush cat litter, flushable wipes even though these products say they are “flushable”. When we have sewer problems it is difficult to determine which unit has caused the problem. Replacing the sewer pipes is costly and once we get onto RAD, we will be able to look into replacing some of those lines.

V. Executive Director’s Report

A. Financial Statements – April 2020

Mr. Counihan explained we use an accrual basis and some of the expenses do not get counted because we received April bills come in May. So at year end the actuals may go up or down depending on the billing. Mr. Becker asked about the increase in HUD funding. Mr. Counihan explained the increase offset the COVID expenses. Mr. D’Ascoli explained some of the expenses was for computers so staff could work from home. We are planning on adding an intercom to the front door so when we allow participants back into the office by appointment only. How we do business will be changing. Not meeting with participants face to face, getting electronic copies of documents, participants dropping off paperwork to our drop boxes or postal mail as necessary.

B. Vacancy Report – April 2020

Mr. D’Ascoli reported we have a short list. We will be looking at getting videos of units and having prospective tenants looking at pictures of the vacant unit, doing a virtual tour of the unit from our website. We can also look a maintenance or property managers opening the unit, letting the prospective tenant view the unit and then locking the unit back up. Currently we have two units on Pascal Lane we will not be leasing up at this time. We will use those units as swing space starting in August during the renovation process; have gotten HUD approval to take them offline.

C. General Information

1. Modernization Report

Mr. D’Ascoli will be meeting with Nyles from the John D’Amelia & Associates office who will be working with MHA as the new modernization coordinator. We will review projects on our list and determine what projects to move forward with and what need RFP’s. At Mayfair we still have five buildings that need electrical upgrades and we are looking at those items that can be completed outside. Due to COVID 19 the Capital Funds deadline has been extended to next year.

2. Memo – Update to RAD

Mr. D’Ascoli reported he spoke with Nathan Bonder, our RAD Consultant and will be having a conversation with Lisa Schoonerman from Siemens to discuss the possibility of a RAD conversation and would it have an impact on the projected savings that are guaranteed to the HA.

3. Memo – Update to Revitalization of Congregate

Mr. D’Ascoli shared he has been talking with Tom Arcari on a conference call with the Owner of NE Builders and CHFA as to what the plans are for completing the Congregate project. NE Builders may have legal issues and we will need to go after their Bond in order to get this settled. The job needs to be finished. They have forwarded bills but we are not confident they are valid fees or proof of actual expenses.

Chairman Howroyd requested Mr. D’Ascoli keep the Board informed regarding this issue. If necessary, a special meeting can be called.

4. Memo – Update to Revitalization of Spencer Village

Mr. D’Ascoli reported there is one issue from the CT-DEEP regarding possible ground contamination. At 171 Spencer there used to be a dry-cleaning establishment. There was soil testing done and there is evidence of a chemical discharge that has entered the ground water. In order to move forward with the renovation of Spencer Village, the MHA will have to install a water monitoring well on this property. If discharge results do show up then the MHA will have to send soil samples for testing and possible remediation that could cost up to \$200k to clean it up. MHA will need to disclose findings to CHFA and DOH and this could mean a delay in moving forward with construction.

Chairman Howroyd shared MHA needs to keep the project going and handle the environmental remediation. Mr. Becker asked why the owner of the building is not responsible for the environmental cleanup. The MHA would have to prove the liability. MHA could try to recoup monies spent cleaning up the environmental damage. Chairman Howroyd stated our first step is the monitoring of the well to satisfy syndicators. When asked about where the funds will come from to pay for this Mr. D’Ascoli reported it will be paid by the COCC and then reimbursed from the Spencer Project.

Mr. D’Ascoli also wanted the Board to be aware of the assistance MHA has gotten from Don Jenell from the Town of Manchester Emergency Management Department. Don has provided MHA with a laundry list of items for our maintenance department through FEMA. He has provided us with infra thermometers, I95 Masks, Tyvek suits and other safety health products

VI. Chairman’s Report – None

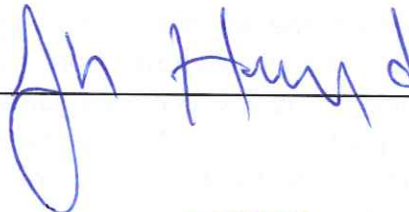
VII. Old Business - None

VIII. New Business

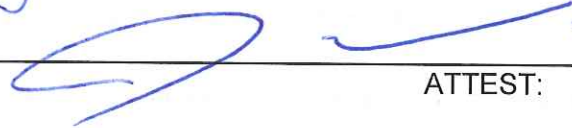
1. Attorney Michael Wrona – Discussion about MERS Opinion Letter – See Above
2. Jason Geel, Auditor – Maletta and Co. Presentation of Final Audit Review FYE 9/30/19 – See above
3. Resolution 2020-6 - Updated Section 8 HCV Utility Allowance Schedule

Joseph D'Ascoli reported yearly we get an updated Utility allowance schedule from the John D'Amelia program that has been approved by HUD and the State. The effective date is the first of June. Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to approve Resolution 2020-6 Updated section 8 HCV Utility Allowance Schedule. Mr. Rubin so moved; Mr. Becker seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

- IX. Items for Future Agenda – Please send items to either Chairman Howroyd to Mr. D'Ascoli. Mr. Becker requested their e further discussion about MERS. Chairman Howroyd stated he will keep the discussion going with our lobbyists of CONNNAHRO. Perhaps MHA will go it alone or get other housing authorities to join the fight. Down the road we may utilize the non-profit.
- X. Executive Session – None
- XI. Adjournment
Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Rubin so moved; Ms. O'Neill seconded. Motion to adjourn passed 5-0 at 8:10 pm



CHAIRMAN: 6/24/2020



ATTEST: 6/24/20