

April 28, 2021

ZOOM Meeting

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

I. Meeting Called to Order

Chairman Howroyd called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to suspend the rules and take items under item C General Information #2 Secure Energy Presentation and item #1 RAD Update. Mr. Becker so moved; Ms. O'Neill seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Secure Energy Presentation

Mr. D'Ascoli introduced Ms. Jodi Maurer from Secure Energy. Jodi explained to the Board that it is time to renew MHA's contract for electrical rates. Eversource rates change every 6 months and the are now at 8.39. She is suggested to the Board to wait one month to see if the rates drop down before MHA locks in a contract. With the onset of COVID the rates have been very low compared to several years ago. Chairman Howroyd said he is okay with waiting another month to see if MHA can lock in a better rate.

Mr. D'Ascoli asked if this change will affect the RAD deal. Mr. Bonder said no. Ms. Maurer did add that there is another company called Community Solar in Massachusetts that have excellent rates, but they are not available in Connecticut, yet. Several Massachusetts housing authorities have contracts with them. Jodi said she will come back to the May Business meeting and give us an update on the available rates.

Next Jodi spoke of the CNG rates. Last year MHA saved \$2,500 and the rate was 6.2. MHA will not get any better rates than CNG has, they are averaging 5.2 right now. It is better to lock in the rates soon rather than later.

RAD Update

Mr. D'Ascoli introduced Nathan Bonder. Mr. Bonder gave a brief overview of the RAD application. He also stated the since MHA started this process HUD has made some variations to this program. He and Mr. D'Ascoli have been working into how these changes can financially assist MHA.

- MHA ran numbers to present to HUD and HUD approved the proposals 1A and 1B.

HUD is questioning whether Lisa Drive is actually scattered sites. MHA will submit the application to HUD, maybe they will approve and maybe they won't, but it is worth a try. If Lisa Drive is not approved as a scattered site we will add them to the RAD program.

Mr. D'Ascoli shared with the Board we may have to have a special meeting for board approval before we submit the application to the Town of Manchester and then to HUD.

II. Adoption of Minutes – Meeting of March 17, 2021

Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to adopt the minutes of March 17, 2021. Mr. Becker so moved; Ms. O'Neill seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

III. Correspondence – None

IV. Accounts Payable - March 2021 Payment Summary & Detail Report

Mr. D'Ascoli reported MHA is in very good shape. Mr. Becker asked about the expenses for the repair of the streetlights. Mr. D'Ascoli explained MHA owns the Utility poles and Transformers and are responsible for their repair. Mr. Becker asked if there is any documentation stating/showing this ownership. Mr. D'Ascoli said he will check with our attorneys on this.

Mr. D'Ascoli also updated the Board regarding the exceptionally highwater usage at Mayfair Gardens. MHA has been working with the Town, several contractors regarding this issue. The contractors have used several different methods to check to see where this leak could possibly be, the water meter has been replaced, a new shut off valve was installed and various other methods for checking the ground to see if it can be determined where this water is leaking to. The sewer lines have been checked and they are dry indicating the water is not going to them. Mr. D'Ascoli said he will be using the Emergency Capital funds to cover the \$25k cost so far.

V. Executive Director's Report – Financial Statements March 2021

A. Financial Statements – March 2021

Mr. D'Ascoli reported MHA is in good shape. Mr. Coughlin explained that the bills for Spencer Village LLC are a month behind due to the statements from DeMarco management. There are some bills that are paid quarterly, like Insurance and Pilot payments. We have \$637 in retained earnings and that is due to vacation time not being used. The Congregate shows an increase in retained earnings and that is because the State pays us ahead of time.

B. Vacancy Reports – March 2021

Mr. D'Ascoli explained with the onset of COVID there has been a slowdown in getting vacant units leased up. He reports that 9 of the 13 vacant units will be leased up for May 1.

C. General Information

1. RAD Update with Nathan Bonder – see above.

2. Secure Energy Presentation – Jodi Maurer – See above

3. Memo – Update to Spencer Village Revitalization Project

Mr. D'Ascoli reported Phase 1 of Spencer Village is complete. Pioneer Builders are doing an excellent job and has started work on Building 54-60. They should have it completed by May 13. They did experience a slight delay in installing the boilers due to not having enough space because of the water heaters. It will be worked out.

4. Hillstown Road
Mr. D'Ascoli shared MHA has \$19K in reserves. The Town of Manchester is paid quarterly rent minus maintenance fees.
5. COVID-19 Expense Report
Mr. D'Ascoli reported the number have not changed much in the last month. We have until December 31, 2021 to use the HUD funds that have been set aside. He did report he is looking into spending some of this money on a filtration system for the Congregate.
6. CDC Eviction Moratorium Extended
Mr. D'Ascoli shared the state has extended the Eviction Moratorium until June 30, 2021. He is hoping this is the last extension so we can start the eviction process to tenants who have not been paying their rent during this time.
7. RFP – Attorney Services
Mr. D'Ascoli shared he has sent out an RFP for new legal representation and the responses are due April 30, 2021.
8. CDBG 2021-2022 CDBG Annual Funds Request
Mr. D'Ascoli reported other years we have used this funding to remove bathtubs and installing walk in showers. He explained to the Board that he is looking to use this funding to make repairs to the sidewalks that lead from the street to each building or unit on Bluefield Drive, Case Drive and House Drive. Some of the sidewalks are the original from when the complex was built while other have been replaced due to having made repairs to water and sewer lines.
9. FY 22 Appropriation Process – Economic Development Initiative (EDI)
Mr. D'Ascoli shared with the Board he and John D'Amelia have had conversations with Representative John Larson and others regarding this program. We have completed a 5-page questionnaire outlining how the funding would be used. MHA owns the utility poles and transformers at the Westhill Garden complex. They have not been repaired or upgraded. Once we have them upgraded/repared we will give them back to Eversource.

Mr. D'Ascoli added some information that he submitted an RFP for Food Services at the Congregate. The current company has gone up on their prices and so we are looking for a new vendor. Mary Ann Murry has been in contact with other housing authorities to see what they are paying.
10. Article from the New Haven Register
Mr. D'Ascoli explained to the Board he was contacted by the New Haven Register as the President of CONNAHRO. There is \$237m available in Emergency Rental Assistance in Connecticut. To date there have only been 2, 000 applications received. This program needs greater publicity to reach those in need of assistance.

VI. Chairman's Report

Chairman Howroyd shared the NERC NARHO conference will be held person July 25 to 28, 2021 at the Equinox Resort in Manchester Vermont. The CONNAHRO conference will be held in person August 22 – 25, 2021 at Mohegan Sun. Those interested should let Mr. D’Ascoli know.

VII. Old Business – Pending Resident Lawsuit

Mr. D’Ascoli shared we received copies of photographs from the insurance company showing the snowbank and the resident’s car. The photographs have no date or time stamps showing when the pictures were taken. Our records show that there was no snow two weeks prior to the incident. Mr. Becker shared that if the photographs were sent electronically there is a way to access the date and time information for the photograph and the insurance investigator should be checking on these details.

VIII. New Business – None

1. Resolution 2021-04 – Emergency Rental for Connecticut Economy

Some residents are behind in their rent due to COVID. Tenants must provide proof of their loss of income. If a tenant is one year behind in their rent the landlord must forgive the first 2 months, take 85% of the second six months and forgive the last 15%. Most of MHA’s residents were not affected by loss of income due to them being on social security; some of our scattered sites could be affected by the loss of income. Some residents just decided not to pay their rent because they thought they could get away with it. According to HUD if a landlord accepts this payment, they cannot go after the resident for the remainder of the rent or evict them for non-payment of rent. Mr. D’Ascoli asked the Board how to handle this. Chairman Howroyd agrees that MHA should decline to participate with this program. HA needs to take a hard line on this. Both property managers, Martha Bertrand and Stephen Itsou, have been working with their tenants to explain to them that they are responsible for paying their rent.

Chairman Howroyd call for a motion to decline Resolution 2021-04 Emergency Rental for Connecticut Economy. Mr. Becker so moved; Ms. O’Neill seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

2. Resolution 2021-05 FY 2021 Income Limits

Mr. D’Ascoli shared with the Board HUD’s new income limits beginning April 1. Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to approve Resolution 2021-05 FY2021 Income limits. Ms. O’Neill so moved; Mr. Becker seconded. Motion passed 3-0


IX. Items for Future Agenda

Chairman Howroyd asked if members have any items, they wish to have put on the agenda to please send them to him or Mr. D’Ascoli.


X. Executive Session – None

XI. Adjournment

Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. O’Neill so moved; seconded by Mr. Becker. Motion passed at 8:21 pm 3-0.



CHAIRMAN



ATTEST:

5/27/2021

5/27/21

