

December 17, 2014

West Hill Garden

Attending: Chairman Josh Howroyd  
Robert Shanbaum  
Paul Rubin  
Joseph D'Ascoli, Executive Director

Absent Carol Shanley

I. Meeting Called to Order

Chairman Howroyd opened the meeting at 4:35 pm. and introduced the members of the Board. He commented it was nice for the Commissioners to attend the recent Holiday Party and get an opportunity to meet some of the staff. Mr. Tim Burke, Maintenance Supervisor for the Housing Authority introduced the members of the maintenance staff Joe Lange, Bill Darby, Ray Wheaton, David Daigle, Dave Zaremba, Jim Adams, Wilson Ramos and Keith Barnett. Mr. D'Ascoli introduced Ann Walsh from the John D'Amelia Program; Steve Itsou Property Manager; Martha Bertrand Property Manager; Mary Ann Murray RSO and Robert Counihan Fee Accountant.

II. Public Comment – No public comments.

Chairman Howroyd asked for a motion to suspend the rules and take Agenda Item 6A Financial Statements. Mr. Shanbaum moved to suspend the rules and take agenda item 6A. Mr. Rubin seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

Executive Report - Financial Statements

Mr. Robert Counihan addressed the Board. He reviewed the financial statements and explained that a column was added for the subsidy so the Board knows how much of the income that we have coming in that is actually subsidized from either the State or Federal Government. He also added columns for income and expenses for both programs. Overall the programs are close to breaking even with the budget. The Congregate program is running very well right now five months into the new year. We have to watch to be sure that we are following the rules and regulations for this program.

Chairman Howroyd commented about the cover sheet and how it simply outlines the items that the Board needs to be aware of. We do need to keep an eye on the Congregate because we did just finish a repayment agreement for an audit in the past. Mr. Counihan shared he has been working with the state to learn what we are allowed to do and what not. There is always a chance that we will spend more in certain line items that they don't allow and we will have to pay it back. Right now we are in pretty good shape with it. We do have to watch expenses as we go into the winter and Mr. D'Ascoli has made few changes to some of the contracts that we have and the work that is being done.

Mr. Counihan shared that HUD has given us a budget 2015 and it shows how much money is part of the subsidy.

Mr. Rubin shared that the NERC conference has a class for Commissioners on Financials. Mr. Counihan shared he has taught that class in the past.

III. Adoption of Minutes – November 12, 2014

Chairman Howroyd requested a motion to table the minutes of November 10, 2014. Mr. Rubin moved to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2014. Mr. Shanbaum seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

IV. Correspondence

A. Letter from HUD – Close out of PHAS Substandard Management Designation

Mr. D'Ascoli handed out copies of a letter from the Hartford field office regarding PHAS which is our public housing assessment system. We scored 19 out of 25 and MHA has been designated as a "sub-standard" housing authority. It took us from the troubled status to a standard status. Questions were asked as to what we have to do to improve our status. Mr. D'Ascoli explained that we fell short by 2 points on the REAC inspection. We do have a REAC inspection coming up January 16, 2015. REAC looks at the physical plant. One point that we were cited for was "Record Keeping". Mr. D'Ascoli noted that he is very confident we will pick up that extra point with Mr. Counihan working hand in hand with our bookkeeper Cheryl Stout. Maintenance will be going out this week doing their unit inspections to take care of any violations and get them addressed. Chairman Howroyd asked when they do the inspections how is it done. Mr. D'Ascoli explained they pick them randomly. He added we do know the locations will be Mayfair, West Hills Gardens and some of the scattered sites. The inspections are done yearly and that is due to MHA being designated as "troubled and "sub-standard" in the past. Mr. Rubin asked how many of the 25 points were due to the REAC inspection. Mr. D'Ascoli said he did not know but would have that information for the next Board meeting. We missed being a high performer by 2 points. The points were on the physical inspection and record keeping.

Mr. Wayne Madden 28 G Pascal Lane stopped in to the meeting. He shared the outside lighting in the back of Pascal Lane has been out for the last 2 weeks and it is very dark as well as the alcove by the outside electrical panel. A work order was called in for this. Mr. D'Ascoli reported the ballast is worn out and a new one had to be special ordered.

Chairman Howroyd stated that rather than have Public Comments as part of the Board of Directors meetings, the Board will meet separately with residents at each of the locations. They will be more like a round table discussion or informal discussion with residents. A schedule of these meetings will be posted for residents.

B. Letter from the Town of Manchester – Reappointment for Josh Howroyd for 5 year term

Mr. D'Ascoli shared he received letter from the Town reappointing Josh Howroyd for another five year term.

C. Resignation of Carol Shanley from the Board of Commissioners effective immediately

Mr. D'Ascoli reported receiving a letter of resignation from Carol Shanley effective immediately. Chairman Howroyd shared he will write a letter of thanks to Carol for her service on the Board.

He also shared he would like to acknowledge Carols' service on the Board of Commissioners but also her years of service as Executive Director of the Manchester Housing Authority. Appointment of a new Commissioner must be made by the Town Board of Directors and this would be a Republican appointment. Mr. Shanbaum shared minority representation is a bit of a conundrum when there are two absentees. We don't know what the tenant Commissioner position will end up being. Chairman Howroyd commented that we would have to take that off the plate because there is no provision for that. Perhaps when it kicks in would be when we know who the appointed authority is. If we appointed a democrat and the tenant commissioner happens to be a democrat then there may be a problem. Either position is unaffiliated then there would be no issue. Chairman Howroyd said that Carols' term expires in 2017 and he will notify the town of the acceptance of the letter.

D. Resignation of Donna Oliver – Congregate effective January 30, 2015

Mr. D'Ascoli shared he received a letter from Donna Oliver who works the second shift, 4 – 12, shift at the Congregate. She will retire as of January 30, 2015. Mr. D'Ascoli will speak and meet with other ED's from surrounding housing authorities as to how they manage their congregate housing units. Mr. D'Ascoli shared that Donna purchased as a gift a new stainless steel charcoal grill for the Congregate.

V. Accounts Payable

Mr. Rubin asked about the bill for Rome McGuigan. Mr. D'Ascoli explained some of that was for two issues brought against MHA. One is for a resident that is claiming a Reasonable Accommodation request that was denied by the previous ED. The resident has claustrophobia and when she initially moved in she was given an efficiency unit. The note from her physician did not specify square footage that is needed. A second physician has noted the needed square footage, we have a second floor unit available and the resident has accepted it. This is a fair housing issue. Another case is a fair housing issue with Section 8. Our attorney reported the tenant wanted \$5,000 for moving expenses. Mr. D'Ascoli said based on the information presented at this hearing he suggested to our Mr. Holding that we make an offer starting at \$250 up to a limit of \$1,000. The previous ED followed up that the tenant forged a doctor's note and CHRO knows that she did this. She was talking about mold issues and moved but she was looking for \$5,000 for moving expense and new furniture. Mr. Rubin asked if the Rome McGuigan expenses were for one or both of these cases. Mr. D'Ascoli said the charges were for both cases and he is comfortable with the billing amount.

Another question was asked about the charges to Dubaldo Electric. Mr. D'Ascoli explained after an inspection by the fire marshal it was determined that the fire panels were out of date and needed to be replaced. Now all the systems are hooked up directly to the fire department and they will be serviced by Dubaldo Electric. This was an unforeseen expense.

Mr. Rubin asked about the charge at North Elm. Chairman Howroyd explained that the Town recommended we use Fire Association to do the Capital needs assessment. We agreed to do this to get a more comprehensive picture of what is needed at the North Elm complex. It has proven to have a positive impact to get the Town to realize this complex is owned by them and needs a great deal of maintenance.

VI. Executive Director's Report

A. Financial Statements – see above

B. Vacancy Reports

Mr. D'Ascoli reviewed the latest vacancy reports. One unit on Case Drive may be another law suit pending. There was extensive damage to the unit and we took pictures and sent them to our lawyer. The former tenant is upset that he is being charged; stating that in years past our maintenance department never went into the unit to make repairs. We had to get Serve Pro to go in and take care of some of the repairs.

Mr. D'Ascoli explained one page shows the breakdown of all the units we have by location. We are at 98% occupied, which is a good thing. Mr. Itsou did a history of what the occupancy rates were from 2004 to the present. Mr. Shanbaum asked about one unit that has been down for 94 days and Mr. D'Ascoli said the unit required replacement of cabinetry among other items. He also mentioned that we have had an outside contractor sanding and refinishing the floors of units and it would be more cost effective if we purchased our own equipment and trained the maintenance staff to do the sanding and polyurethane. Mr. D'Ascoli explained that his goal is to look at getting training for our maintenance staff so that we can do some of the work that we have been contracting out. In the long run it would save MHA money and give the staff an opportunity to learn a new trade.

Mr. D'Ascoli shared he has been working with Martha Bertrand and Steve Itsou coming up with policies for getting out the 14 days notices for late rent. Chairman Howroyd shared it is a lot better than it was five years ago. Mr. D'Ascoli said that during his first few months with MHA he worked with the Section 8 staff updating and changing some of the policies. Now he would like to focus on the Public Housing side and re-write the admissions for both the state and federal sides. We have revamped the leases and now want to get policies in place for security deposits and 14 day notices. Whom ever we have for our attorney fees we will probably be seeing and increase in the attorney fees when we start going by the books and if we have to start the eviction process. He added it may

look at the cost effectiveness of having an in-house attorney. May be we can share attorney expenses with other housing authorities. Mr. Rubin suggested looking at what MHA has spent over the last few years on attorney fees and then we can see if having an in-house attorney is feasible.

C. General information

1. NERC-NAHRO – Conference February 1 - 4, 2015 to be held at Foxwoods

Mr. D'Ascoli mentioned the upcoming conference and asked commissioners to let him know if they are interested in attending.

2. NAHRO 2015 Legislative Conference – Washington DC March 15-18, 2015

We are members of FADA and their conference is January 25 – 28, 2015 and he would like to attend with the Boards permission. Chairman Howroyd explained this conference is slated for Executive Directors. Mr. Rubin commented that if Mr. D'Ascoli can manage from a remote location and attending would benefit his role here at MHA.

3. Modernization Update

Mr. D'Ascoli received good news from HUD today. He has been working with Gary Sweet on the Energy Performance Contract (EPC) we are looking at fuel cells for this development since we own the power grids here. HUD has accepted our proposal. We put out and RFQ have had several discussions with fuel cell people to get some ideas about a way to save energy. MHA would install fuel cells and any excess power we would sell back to the Town. All the lines would be underground. We also got news from CHFA and the State of Connecticut that they awarded us our architect Tag Associates to get our proposal for Spencer Village to the Governor by June 2015 deadline.

Mr. D'Ascoli also reported the emergency generator is being installed at Pascal Lane.

4. RFP – Legal Counsel

Mr. Rubin commented that he looked this over and suggested it be two separate RFP's. We have two different job descriptions and two different pay structures if we don't go with an in-house counsel. Eviction attorneys as a rule to not operate hourly, they operate per job. Mr. D'Ascoli shared he appreciates any assistance with this RFP because he is not familiar with CT law. Our current attorney contract is good through April. Chairman Howroyd added that one law firm could apply to two separate RFP's.

VII. Chairman's Report - None

VIII. Old Business - None

IX. New Business

A. Resolution 2014 - 21 – Updated Personnel Policy Manual

Mr. D'Ascoli gave a copy of the personnel policy to Andrew Holding and he gave us his blessing. Mr. Shanbaum moved to accept Resolution 2014-21 Updated Personnel Policy Manual. Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

B. Resolution 2014-23 – Listing of the Upcoming BOC for Calendar year 2015

Mr. Rubin moved to accept Resolution 2014-23 BOC Calendar for year 2015 as amended. Mr. Shanbaum seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

C. Resolution 2014-24 – Award 3 year contract for Audit Service for FYE 2014-2016

The BOD discussed several of the companies that responded to the RFP. Mr. Rubin moved to approve Resolution 2014-24 Award a 3 year contract to Roy & Associates for FYE 2014-2016. Mr. Shanbaum seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

D. Resolution 2014-25 – MHA By-Laws Amendment

Chairman Howroyd explained we are removing the public comments from the regular business meetings and will post to the tenants a comments schedule and two members of the Commission. He will post several meetings and not the entire year. Mr. Shanbaum asked about the Tenant commissioner process. Mr. D'Ascoli shared that the notice will go out next week and we are in the 90 day process. He will try to schedule a meeting with the Resident Advisory Board and discuss this with them as well.

E. Election of Vice-Chairperson

Mr. Rubin moved to nominate Robert Shanbaum as Vice-Chairperson. Mr. Shanbaum accepted the nomination and seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.

X. Items for Future Agenda

A. Tenants Accounts Receivable Collection Policy

XI. Executive Session

A. Discussion of Evaluation of the Executive Director

Mr. Rubin moved to go into Executive Session to discuss the Evaluation of the Executive Director. Mr. Shanbaum seconded. Motion passed 3-0 at 6:01 pm.

Mr. Rubin moved to end Executive Session at 6:17 pm. Mr. Shanbaum seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Rubin moved to end the Board meeting at 6:18 pm. Mr. Shanbaum seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

---