

CORPORATE MINUTES - BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF MANCHESTER

2020

Wednesday, June 24, 2020

Mayfair Gardens Community Room

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

- I. Meeting Called to Order
Chairman Howroyd called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm
- II. Adoption of Minutes – Meeting of May 21, 2020
Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to accept the minutes of May 21, 2020. Mr. Becker so moved; Mr. Rubin. Motion passed 3-0
- III. Correspondence - None
- IV. Accounts Payable – May 2020 Payment Summary & Detail Report
Mr., D'Ascoli reported MHA all invoices are verified before being processed. Financially everything looks good.
- V. Executive Director's Report
 - A. Financial Statements – May 2020
Mr. D'Ascoli stated we are on budget and MHA looks good.

Mr. Robert Counihan reported to the Board that things are quieter than normal, with COVID-19 invoices are not received as quickly due to slower mail. We are showing a year to date gain with the exception of the Congregate and Section 8 is behind due to HUD sending less. HUD will reimburse all housing authorities for any monies spent on COVID including face-masks, had sanitizer, disposable gloves to mention a few items. MHA is keeping track of these expenses. They have allotted MHA \$140k and must be used by calendar year end. These funds allow MHA to stay open during this pandemic. Chairman Howroyd asked if maintenance expenses are charged to COVID. Mr. Counihan explained HUD will be auditing these expenses.

Mr. D'Ascoli added he has made a number of changes. He has submitted an RFP for computer software upgrade. MHA has added a camera to the office front door along with a buzzer so any outsider that has an appointment with staff can be admitted from the reception desk. He also stated we discovered that all the cell phones do not have unlimited data and we had to pay for the overage on the minutes. Verizon has made the changes to our contract and will see if it we can be reimbursed for the overage. We are also looking into installing Kiosks for the residents to be able do their recertification online. Mr. Don Janelle from the Town of Manchester was a tremendous help with getting MHA maintenance COVID cleaning supplies. Mr. D'Ascoli reiterated his focus is on keeping staff safe. He has had many phone conference calls with other housing authorities, and they share what they are doing to keep everyone safe. The Governor is working on a plan for reopening businesses and keeping the focus on safety. With Housing Court not scheduled to be opened until August 1 landlords are not able to pursue evictions for tenants not paying their rent. MHA

has 2 tenants that were in the eviction process before the COVID shutdown. We have spoken with our attorney Wrona and he stated "our hands are tied" until the court system opens up. Chairman Howroyd noted the BOC may have to call a Special Session to deal with any legal issues that arise.

Mr. Becker voice his concern about the State Elder Housing loss of funds. Mr. D'Ascoli explained there is a deficit from operations. There are two units vacant as they will be used a swing space during the renovations. We also have two tenants who are not paying rent and prior to COVID shutdown we were in the process of evicting. Now that is on hold. Courts want housing authorities to work with the tenants. MHA did have a repayment process in place and the tenant failed to comply with it. Until the Housing Court opens, we cannot send out a sheriff or constable to execute the eviction papers. Mr. Counihan added there is only 4 months left to the fiscal year for Spencer Village and the Congregate fiscal year ends next month. We are watching both these projects and we are spending less and our bottom line should not be too bad. Mr. Becker asked about the COVID funding and Mr. Counihan said the State gave it and then took it away.

B. Vacancy Reports –

Mr. D'Ascoli shared the report reflects January 1 to June 18. We had less turnover due to COVID. Both property managers Martha Bertrand and Steve Itsou have been conducting phone interviews to get units rented. If they want to view the unit an appointment is scheduled for maintenance to open the unit, let them to view it and then lock the unit back up.

Mr. D'Ascoli shared with the Board his plans to have Mr. Becker take pictures, perhaps do a virtual tour of out units and post on our website. New tenants are leery about viewing a unit.

C. General Information

1. Circle of Friends

Mary Ann Murray has continued to do an excellent job with this publication. Next month's issue will be longer due to keeping the residents apprised of COVID updates. Some residents can become complacent during this pandemic and we are looking into have a counselor available for them if needed.

Mr. D'Ascoli wants to commend the staff for keeping up with their participants. He has a great team.

2. Update on COVID-19 Expenditures

Mr. D'Ascoli reported our bookkeeper, Cheryl Stout, is keeping track of all expenses related to COVID. We will be making improvements with our phone system; purchasing furniture, creating a common workspace with plexi-glass should our staff need to meet with participants. All our offices are COVIC compliant. We had Manchester Safe and Lock install a buzzer system whereby the receptionist can open a door for a participant that has a scheduled appointment with staff.

Mr. D'Ascoli reported we have \$220k funds available from HUD for COVID expenses. The Inspector General's office will be auditing these expenditures. He reiterated he wants his staff to be safe so no one will be allowed in the office without a face mask. We

will have masks available for anyone with a schedule appointment that does not have a mask.

Chairman Howroyd shared in the long term we may be changing the way we do business, less direct client contact, perhaps digitalizing our records so that staff can work from remote locations. These changes can benefit the agency in the long term.

Mr. D'Ascoli added plans for obtaining digital signatures from participants, being able to have our orientation for new participants via ZOOM rather than face to face. Mr. Becker shared he is happy with the investments made in new technologies, camera at the front and allowing people to state their business with staff and buzzed in. He asked about the Verizon overages. Mr. D'Ascoli shared it was discovered that not all of our cell phones had unlimited data and with COVID there were several overages including his IPAD. We discussed this with Verizon and gotten a better plan so that all phones have unlimited data.

3. Return to Work Policy – Addendum to MHA Personnel Policy

Mr. D'Ascoli shared he has been working with Attorney Wrona on updated our employee policy. While he does not want to deny any employee vacation. He does want to maintain safety for all employees. The CDC has reported hot spot states such as New York, New Jersey, Atlanta, Florida, North and South Carolina. He wants a policy in place, so it is the responsibility of employees to let him know if they are going out of state. Upon return if they have been to any of the hot spots, they will work from home for 14 days afterwards. Another option is to take a temperature reading of staff every day. He wants the staff to read this policy and sign off on it. This would be an addendum to the Employ policy. Attorney Rubin shared he reviewed this policy and commended Mr. D 'Ascoli for a good job in a short amount of time. They hit all the major points.

Mr. D'Ascoli asked Mr. Rubin should MHA implement this now or wait for feedback from the commissioners. Mr. Rubin responded that this policy protects MHA and also the employees. If staff has a pre-existing medical condition the staff has something place from the boss to have their backs. Mr. D'Ascoli added as the Executive Director he wants the Board to know what he is doing and having all bases covered.

Mr. Becker requested this document be carefully proofread before sending out as he has found typos.

Question was asked about a comment on page 4 about asking the employee the status of their health. Mr. D'Ascoli stated he has a right to ask an employee is feeling OK without violating HIPPA laws. He shared he would rather have an employee work from home if they are not feeling well rather than expose anyone. Mr. Rubin commented it reads through ok "How are you feeling or "how is your health" does not pose an issue. This is really proactive for the employee because the ED has a plan in place.

Mr. Becker asked for a point of order to have a motion to fine tune the final document of the Return to Work Policy Addendum to MHA Personnel Policy before it gets passed to the employees. Mr. D'Ascoli shared he wants the endorsement from the Board on any questions from employees. He wants to protect the employees and wants their

signature that they have read and understand the policy. If they have traveled to a "hot spot" he does not want to risk the health of anyone.

4. Memo – Update to Revitalization of Westhill Congregate

Mr. D'Ascoli reported we are in the final stages of getting this project completed. He had a conference call with the Architect Tom Arcari and CHFA we are trying to get the project going but there are problems with NE Builders. We still need an end date. NE Builders through a cure ball adding \$30k to the project. The problem is there is no breakdown for the increase. The asphalt for the driveway has increased \$7 per yard from the original quote. We will be having a conference call on Friday to get his expense justified. The options we have are to terminate the contract with NE Builders for not adhering to the signed contract and they could come back to MHA for non-payment. We could pull the Bond but be subject to \$50 to \$00k in legal fees or work with CHFA to get a budget revision. MH could move some line items around. Attorney Wrona said those changes would only incur no more than \$1k.

Chairman Howroyd concerned about litigation fees. If we have to pull the bond or terminate the contract, we would have to call a special meeting. Mr. D'Ascoli said he would keep the Board informed. Mr. Becker asked if it would be a lump sum payment or what is owed on the contract. Mr. D'Ascoli explained the money due on the contract is \$250k but now NE Builders is claiming the price on the asphalt has gone up \$7 a yard. They are holding MHA hostage. He will talk with CHFA ad Attorney Wrona. We need a breakdown of the additional \$30k in fees. We also need a completion date.

5. Memo – Update to Revitalization of Spencer Village

Mr. D'Ascoli shared HUD has signed off on the 25 project-based vouchers. We hope to get signed tax credit from CHFA by July 15. He met with the residents two weeks ago and has another meeting scheduled with them on Thursday. The management company DeMarco will also be at the meeting along with our resident service coordinator MaryAnn Murray. Mr. D'Ascoli explained he will meet with the Hawthorn Hotel which is just behind Spencer Village about tenants staying there while their unit is being renovated.

The start date for the Spencer Village project is September 1. We have hired a part time MOD Coordinator from the Jon D'Amelia program Niles Scala, who will be managing the project.

MHA will transfer the ownership to DeMarco Management. We will lease the land for 98 years. DeMarco Management will be responsible for the day to day operations. This will include maintenance, pay bills, making repairs, collecting rent, and dealing with lease violations, maintaining the waiting list. This is a Tax Credit project and MHA does not anyone who is tax credit certified. DeMarco will manage this project for 5 years and if at that time we get someone tax credit certified we will manage the property and the 25 project-based vouchers.

VI. Chairman's Report

Chairman Howroyd mentioned the NAHRO virtual 2-day on-line conference is coming up. Please let Joe know if you are interested in participating.

VII. Old Business - None

VIII. New Business

- A. Resolution 2020-7 - Resolution and Consent to Enter an Agreement and Promissory Note with CHFA
Chairman Howroyd asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2020-7 - Resolution and Consent to Enter an Agreement and Promissory Note with CHFA. Mr. Rubin so moved; Mr. Becker seconded. Motion passed 3-0.
- B. Resolution 2020-8 – Resolution and Consent to enter an Agreement and Promissory Note with DOH
Chairman Howroyd asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2020-7 - Resolution and Consent to Enter an Agreement and Promissory Note with DOH. Mr. Becker so moved; Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 3-0.
- C. Resolution 2020-9 – Resolution and Consent to enter an Agreement and Promissory Note with Spencer Village LLC
Chairman Howroyd asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2020-9 - Resolution and Consent to Enter an Agreement and Promissory Note Spencer Village LLC. Mr. Becker so moved; Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 3-0.
- D. Resolution 2020-10 – Resolution and Consent to enter an Agreement and Promissory Note with Eversource
Chairman Howroyd asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2020-10 - Resolution and Consent to Enter an Agreement and Promissory Note with Eversource. Mr. Rubin so moved; Mr. Becker seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to suspend the rules and add to the agenda under New Business item 5 Adoption of Return to Work Policy Addendum to MHA Personnel Policy. Mr. Becker so moved. Mr. Rubin seconded, and motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Becker moved to give the Executive Direct permission to fine tune and make any changes to the Adoption of Policy Addendum. Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

IX. Items for Future Agenda

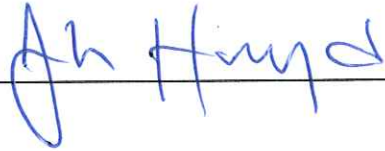
A. MERS Plan

Mr. D'Ascoli reported he has been talking with our lobbyist to work on getting this item on the legislative Agenda for early next year. This is not something MHA wants to take on alone, get other housing authorities and municipalities in this together to share the expense. The issue is the State did not fund this account properly and the expense of those employees coming near retirement.

X. Executive Session - None

XI. Adjournment

Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Becker so moved; Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed to 3-0 to adjourn at 8:14 pm



7/15/2020

CHAIRMAN



7-15-20

ATTEST