

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF WATERBURY

REGULAR BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2014

Chairman Jim Lawlor called the Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** James J. Lawlor, Chairman  
James Welcome, Vice Chairman  
Sandra Roosa, Commissioner  
Tawana Gibbs, Assistant Treasurer

**STAFF PRESENT:** Vin Sica, Acting Executive Director, Alan Cashmore, Director of Finance & MIS, Joseph Macneil, Director of Housing Redevelopment, Dana Serra, Director of Client Service, Gina Worth, Procurement Coordinator, Kate Noble, Executive Secretary

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Minutes of the Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting held on March 25, 2014 were presented to the Board.

Commissioner Welcome moved to accept the Regular Board of Commissioner meeting minutes dated March 25, 2014, seconded by Commissioner Gibbs. No discussion. A vote was called:

<u>Ayes:</u>	<u>Nays:</u>	<u>Abstain:</u>
Commissioner Sandra Roosa		
Commissioner James Welcome		
Commissioner Tawana Gibbs		
Chairman Jim Lawlor		

Motion carries.

**4. APPROVAL OF BILLS:**

Commissioner Welcome moved to accept the Accounts Payable Report dated 04/22/14 and authorize payment, seconded by Commissioner Gibbs.

Discussion: Chairman Lawlor questioned several payments for vacant rehabs.

Acting Director Vin Sica answered the payment for \$4200 was a vacant unit that was a possible unknown move-out. The pipes froze which resulted in four cracked pipes.

Purchasing Coordinator Gina Worth answered the payment for \$7,120 was a vacant unit that had rotted wall studs which required new sheetrock and reframing, the floors needed to be stripped, cabinetry work and a repair of a roof leak. This project was bid out.

Ms. Worth went on to say the payment to Connecticut Bathworks was for two units that had cracked acrylic liners and tub and shower enclosures replaced.

Commissioner Welcome suggested we use temp maintenance workers and assign them to vacant rehab work. Acting Director Sica agreed it's a great idea but it had been researched and the temp agencies have not been able to provide that type of skill. Commissioner Welcome said perhaps we could use one full time staff and bring in some temp laborers to fulfill their duties.

Commissioner Welcome asked Acting Director Sica if he thought it was cost effective. Acting Director Sica answered typically we do about \$150,000 a year for unit turnover, averaging about 5 units a month. We are close to that now with another two months to go in the fiscal year. It's difficult to predict how many move-outs we might have. Normally there are a few more move-outs in summer but there were a lot of move-outs this past winter.

Chairman Lawlor asked Commissioner Welcome and Acting Director Sica to report back at the next meeting with an overview of rehab costs, causes of increases, etc.

Chairman Lawlor reported that Director Cashmore and he had some discussions on the payment of the bills.

Director Alan Cashmore proposed paying the bills on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Chairman Lawlor said the Board doesn't have to authorize payment, but I think the Board needs to know and it'd be sufficient for me if you submitted a list. The key to it from the Board's point of view is that it's within budget, it's an amount that was properly bid, the work was done, and certain other elements. I would feel good if I had a certification that all of the bills were within budget, properly authorized, the work was done and so forth, and I would see that just being attached to a collection of bills and still submitted to us but paid.

A vote was called:

Ayes:

Commissioner Sandra Roosa  
Commissioner James Welcome  
Commissioner Tawana Gibbs  
Chairman Jim Lawlor

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carries and the invoices on the Accounts Payable Report dated 04/22/2014 were approved for payment.

## **5. CHAIRMAN'S REMARK'S**

Chairman Lawlor reported he met with Senator Hartley and some residents at Bergin Apartments. The residents presented a list of issues and we (Vin and I) have followed through on them. They range from simple things like parked cars. If they're not owned by the tenants, they are getting towed. The biggest issue is pests, and many comments were made at the meeting. We know that we have a bedbug problem and I think we need to do something proactive as a Board. To treat for bedbugs they've got to empty the apartment, they put intense heat on it getting into the mattresses, shoes, wall sockets, everywhere. Another thing we know is we have A & A Pest Control. One thing that struck me is we've had A & A Pest Control for seven years and it would seem to me that if we hire somebody to get rid of the bugs why do we still have bugs? Maybe it's time to look at another pest control company. That's a conclusion which is way down the road as far as I'm concerned, but I think we need to have a discussion with A & A Pest Control. Some of the residents say they come in, they do a sloppy job, they spray the walls, they get goo all over the carpets and maybe we're just not getting service from them, but I think that after seven years of paying A & A, maybe it's time for the Board to get serious about this.

Acting Director Sica stated the contract they have is for any pest, except termites. That is a separate contract. There have been conversations with Pest Control and they state they follow the prescribed treatment listed by the State of Connecticut Department of Pest Control.

Acting Director Sica went on to say that there have been cases where tenants have reported that the visiting nurse brought them to their homes from other places they're visiting. One of the problems we see at the building is there are elderly residents who have difficulty in prepping. There has been discussion with the exterminators and they do assist to some degree.

The new treatment plan is going to basically carpet bomb the entire building from top to bottom within the next 30 days and they only need the closet cleaned out with this new process. Our

maintenance staff went in and caulked and closed all openings in every apartment so that the pests couldn't travel through the piping from one apartment to another.

One last thing to consider is hiring bed bug dogs. They walk them apartment to apartment and the dog will react when a unit is active. To do the Begg Building we would need two dogs. Commissioner Roosa inquired on the price. Acting Director Sica answered about \$2,000 per dog.

Chairman Lawlor asked Commissioner Gibbs to follow up on the pest control process, seeing what has worked or not worked. Also to see what current conditions are and how we're going to manage it.

Acting Director Sica said that A&A Pest Control has volunteered in the past to come out and meet with the Bergin residents.

Chairman Lawlor continued with his remarks. We had pending Legislation with the Begg Apartments. The legislation was going to relieve us of the need to get state approval to give up the apartment units. It was passed in the Senate. I don't know if it's gone up yet in the House. We provided a good deal of supportive material to Larry Butler, so the ball's in his pocket. We'll see what happens.

44 Willow Street - there was a quote from Georgia, Mississippi and New Orleans. It turns out they are people from each of those places that are working to buy 44 Willow and get approval of 1% tax credit to renovate it. We thought they were going to fail, and we thought that Ted Lazarus was going to be the successful bidder. We had worked with Lazarus for a while until it became clear that this other bidder was viable and we didn't expect based on all of the information we were given that they were going to be successful but they were. I met with them today at the Mayor's office and will meet with them again tomorrow here. They're going to look for some Section 8 vouchers. It's a big project and a big building. There are 36 one and two bedroom rental units which means they'll have kids which will require a lot of city services that just go along with the renovation of 44 Willow Street. There's parking issues and law enforcement issues, transportation issues. It's a tough neighborhood. There are already several buildings around, all with multiple tenants. I guess where this applies to us is I've been advocating for a plan on the part of the City, a decision as to how they ought to be managing that part of Waterbury, and not only that but to include all the way over to Freight Street and to the highway between the train tracks and the river. I think that it's open space that will never be open again in the next hundred years. This is an opportunity for us to do some real improvements to Waterbury and if we don't plan and if we're not proactive then what we'll do is we'll react to others, which in this case is what we're doing. We've got Mississippi, Georgia, and New Orleans coming in here with a plan, dropping it on the table that says here's what we're

going to do, and by all accounts they're going to be able to do it because there's no zoning in that district that can stop them. So we end up with the City having to wrestle with probably 25 units including about 50 kids, which means 2 new classrooms, 2 teachers, as well as increased population in a neighborhood that already has a heavy population. We'll be asked tomorrow to give them vouchers. Joe seems to think that they'll be looking for seven or eight. I think we need to be proactive and right now no one else is stepping up. There is some real activity in that part of town. Chemtura is a company that I think came out of Uniroyal and that's just been acquired by the parent of MacDermid Chemical, and the thought is that they will be building a new office and technical center on Freight Street which will employ a couple hundred people so that's why it's important. We have to make sure that everything else that we do there is of equal quality and usefulness. I guess my issue with 44 Willow is that they can't just come in and park themselves there. They've got to be an improvement to the community and they have to contribute something rather than just draw from it.

Improvement Plan - We had a conference with HUD last week, and I think we're getting to a point where it's been refined, there are 44 items and while it's being kicked around we're solving the issues so those 44 items are now down to probably 24. Through this kicking around process we've affixed reasonable timetables and completion dates and I think we're fast approaching the point where we should sign it. We'll probably have it out to you for next week or for the next month's meeting.

The budget you've seen and we should talk about it. Let me say it first, there has been an interagency agreement developed between Waterbury and Meriden. It's a sharing of Rob Cappelletti who is their Executive Director and it's just been very important for us in solving problems. He's a person that we've been able to call upon to come in to help us with issues that we're facing. That agreement will come out to you in the coming weeks, and we should address it at our next meeting. The budget is in the process of being developed and will come out to us probably in time for our May meeting to be approved.

Audit Report - The audit report was circulated at the end of last week and Sandy and I had a chance to go through it. I'm interested in your thoughts on it.

Commissioner Roosa noted the finding that was related to one program in program files.

Acting Director Cashmore stated the finding is still in the report but it doesn't reflect a dollar amount. We proved to them that there was nothing wrong with how the calculations were done so they dropped the dollar amount. The finding still states we had issues with losing the files.

Chairman Lawlor said we have an option to talk with the Auditors. We can schedule a special meeting and have them go through this with us.

Chairman Lawlor instructed Kate to find out when the Auditor was available and then find the best day for all Commissioners to meet.

Acting Director Sica said we agreed with their findings. Alan and I have discussed it and we can come up with a written policy. It's not something WHA does often. In fact, it's probably the first time we've ever shredded and it kind of backfired on us in this case. We do make a lot of files. We're always looking for storage space so we were just trying to get rid of the old stuff, and we were actually able to provide other files. When a tenant has been here for a long time, you'll have a first file and a second file because it gets bigger and bigger. We couldn't present them with the first file, but we were able to produce second and third files, and they still found the need to make it a formal finding. They issued a qualified opinion, which is not desirable, but it's one item.

Chairman Lawlor suggested we consider scanning our files.

Director Alan Cashmore said the issue is cost on scanning, scanning software, the person to do it, and the hardware to store it.

Chairman Lawlor said the records in the probate system were scanned and he was surprised that the cost was less than he thought it would be.

Director Alan Cashmore said it's the hardware and software that could be expensive. You're probably talking \$50,000 in hardware costs.

Acting Director Sica said it's possible that you would find scanning services on the State of Connecticut contracting portal. Several years ago WHA looked into it and the cost was about \$130,000.

Director Cashmore said he would look into it.

## **6. ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT**

Acting Director Vin Sica reported Public Housing occupancy is above 98%.

The PHA plan and capital fund submission that was discussed and voted on at the last meeting has been submitted to HUD for approval.

Berkeley Heights stair landings and electrical upgrades are in the early stages of commencement. The Kitchen exhaust fan replacement project at Springbrook is well underway.

The Authority has received back proposals in response to the baking service which will be reviewed by the selection committee.

The 2013 audit report has been received and given to the Commissioners for review.

## **7. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **a. Director of Finance Report**

Director Alan Cashmore suggested a meeting with the Finance Committee to go over the budget before it's brought to the May meeting.

Chairman Lawlor said we could incorporate it with a discussion at the special meeting to be scheduled with the auditor.

Director Cashmore said in July at our first meeting of the new year he hoped to have a better analysis of actual expenses to the budget.

### **b. Director of Client Service Report**

Director Dana Serra reported HUD has released the funding for 2014. We'll be okay through the end of the year funding-wise.

We added six project based vouchers for 52 Burton Street and 238-248 Walnut Street. 248 Walnut is the only one not filled yet. Discussion followed on reasoning why there is difficulty filling the unit.

Other housing authorities are absorbing our port-outs so the result is a vacancy for us. At some point we'll need to discuss if we'll need to lease up some units. WHA has been absorbing port in's.

### **c. Director of Housing Redevelopment**

Director Joe Macneil reported he was putting together a plan so we're ready to go if we have to go through the disposition process. Additionally, before you today is a resolution for giving priority to displaced persons. That is laying the groundwork for any future development work we do. What it does is leverage a function within the regulations called the special admissions and it allows us to give priority to persons that we may displace via development activity. That would allow us to get priority over the existing waiting list to issue tenant-based vouchers to those displaced persons. The reason why that's in our best interest is that when we get involved

in this type of development activity, if we displace a person, we are required to afford them various rights per the Uniform Relocation Act which includes four years for paying the differential rent and utility costs and various other issues. We're also beginning to see our forecast and what our actual costs are looking like. We're looking to revise up to our budgets to get them more accurate and we have on our project-based vouchers revised standards that we're looking to get approved.

We currently have three applications that we'll need to process—one at 37 Enoch Street, the other at Willow and Chestnut, and one at 85 North Main.

Already approved with Loyola are 20 project-based vouchers for Liberty Commons. Loyola will have ground breaking on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Omni Development has obtained the 9% approval from CHFA for Warner Gardens and soon we will need to go through the environmental review and subsidy layering review so that they can enter into an AHAP agreement with us prior to their closing with CHFA. Omni Development is aware of the requirements the City puts on us for an environmental review.

We have awarded the Executive Director search contract to David Dunn. He has done extensive housing authority work in Connecticut. He will be reporting directly to the Board and also to Tom Casey. June 9<sup>th</sup> is his first deadline to have coordinated and agreed with the board on the job description, package etc., and have advertised and obtained at least 5 qualified candidates.

We also have a banking RFP. We are offering a labor attorney contract to Ryan & Ryan, who is the current labor attorney.

Chairman Lawlor questioned if those have to be approved.

Director Macneil answered by the old procurement policy, yes. By the current procurement policy no, unless the Board would like to see or approve those. The old policy said over \$25,000 the Board had to approve the procurement method as opposed to approving the contract, so the old one didn't actually require Board approval for a contract but procurement method. The new one follows HUD procurement. It'd be the easiest thing in the world to bring whatever level contract you would like to be approved. The policy that was adopted last month was a new policy that met HUD's requirements and the small procurement purchase was actually \$2000, not \$2500.

Chairman Lawlor said he believed the Board would want to see any contracts.



Commissioner Welcome said he wasn't aware that the new procurement policy said we didn't see these contracts. Commissioner Welcome went on to say he remembered discussion regarding changes with procurement but he felt that the Board should still have oversight.

Chairman Lawlor said if we had an executive director who had been here for 20 years and we established an understanding as to a desirable approach to handling business that'd be one thing, but where we don't have an executive director and that's not to discount Vin. I think he knows how to handle things but I think until we have an understanding as to how we should be working I think it should have the approval. We're hiring Dunn who is technically working for us and the next executive director is our hire. I don't know if we've approved the process for hiring and if we haven't, then we haven't approved the process and now we haven't established the standards, and now after approving the hire the guy is working for us. I think until we get a better grip on things, we ought to be signing contracts.

Commissioner Welcome agreed.

Director Macneil said to be clear, the new procurement policy defines when a contract is required and when something can be a purchase order. Director Macneil was uncertain of the amount but thought it to be \$20,000. The procurement policy we currently have is a blend of several different sources combined with HUD and other housing authorities. We have charge cards, accounts with vendors, purchase orders, and contracts. The procurement policy clarified what the rules are when dealing with these things in a HUD-compliant manner.

Commissioner Roosa inquired what is estimate on a monthly basis of how many contracts over \$20,000 was processed through the procurement process.

Director Macneil answered in his five or six months here, he had seen two.

Chairman Lawlor said we'll put it at \$20,000 and if you find out you rather have \$25,000, let us know but we want to catch the important ones.

Commissioner Welcome stated it's more of our understanding of it. Perhaps it is \$20,000 but it may not fit for us here in Waterbury. Commissioner Welcome said he thought it a good idea for the Board to see a contract. The more the Board knows the better we are as a governing Board and as an oversight as well.

Director Macneil said HUD does not make any requirement as to when the Board should approve a contract.

Discussion continued on upcoming contracts that included heating oil and sanitation services.

**8. OLD BUSINESS:**

Resolution #1183 – Authorization to Enter Into a Recovery Agreement Between the Waterbury Housing Authority and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and The City of Waterbury.

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the City of Waterbury (WHA) received a total score for the period ending June 30, 2012, of 59 (out of 100) on the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD’s) Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS);

WHEREAS, a score of less than 60% on the PHAS or of any single subsystem results in a public housing authority being designated as “substandard” ;

WHEREAS, by May 13, 2013, WHA, HUD and the City of Waterbury negotiated a Recovery Agreement;

WHEREAS, said Recovery Agreement call for WHA, in cooperation with HUD and the City, to meet certain goals by certain dates;

WHEREAS, the Recovery Agreement provides in Section XI that failure to meet those goals within the set deadlines could subject WHA to severe penalties including, but not limited, to the following either sequentially or simultaneously: Consolidation, Consortia/Joint Venture, Contraction of Operational Activities, Debarment, Delivery of possession and control of projects to HUD, Limited Denial of Participation, Receivership, and/or Suspension;

WHEREAS, HUD is requiring that the Recovery Agreement become effective so that the first report to HUD on progress in reaching said goals is filed no later than August 30, 2013; and,

WHEREAS, it is found that it is in WHA’s best interests to enter into a Recovery Agreement with HUD and the City of Waterbury.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Waterbury, acting at a duly call meeting at which a quorum was present, does hereby resolve:

1. That the Recovery Agreement dated April, 2013 as attached is hereby approved;
2. That the Chairman and Executive Director are authorized to affix their signatures to it;
3. That the Executive Director be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed on behalf of the Authority, to take any and all such action necessary, ancillary and incidental thereto to fulfill the foregoing purpose(s), to engage in any negotiations, and execute any documents that are consistent or adjunct to the purpose and intent of this Resolution; and,

4. That this Resolution shall take effect upon passage.

**The Board did not act on Resolution #1183 - Tabled**

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Resolution #1201 Authorization to Prioritize Displaced Persons for Tenant Based Housing Choice Voucher Assistance**

WHEREAS: Per 24 CFR 982 the Authority operates a Tenant Based Housing Choice Voucher program, and;

WHEREAS: Per 24 CFR 982.204 requires the Authority to operate the Waiting List consistent with the admission policies of its Administration Plan, and;

WHEREAS: It is proposed that the Administration Plan Section 4 shall be revised to allow for Special Admissions Preference to include Persons Displaced by Authority development activity, and;

WHEREAS: Development activities undertaken by the Authority shall include, disposition of public housing, acquisition of non-federal housing for replacement housing, eminent domain, or any activity for which the Authority or its nominee is a developer, co-developer, or has any ownership interest, and;

WHEREAS: If such activities involve displacing persons those displaced persons shall if otherwise eligible be awarded Tenant Based Housing Choice Voucher Assistance under Special Admissions Preference and shall be prioritized ahead of the Waiting List.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Waterbury, acting at a duly call meeting at which a quorum was present, does hereby resolve:

1. Approval of the prioritization of tenant-based Section 8 voucher assistance to persons displaced by Authority development activity, under the Special Admissions Preference if those persons are otherwise eligible for tenant-based assistance.
2. That the Executive Director be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed on behalf of the Authority, to take any and all such action necessary, ancillary and incidental thereto to fulfill the foregoing purpose(s), engage in any negotiations, and execute any documents that are consistent or adjunct to the purpose and intent of this Resolution; and,

3. That this Resolution shall take effect upon passage

Commissioner Roosa moved Resolution #1201, seconded by Commissioner Gibbs. A vote was called.

Ayes:

Commissioner Roosa  
Commissioner Welcome  
Commissioner Gibbs  
Chairman Lawlor

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion was approved and Resolution #1201 passes.

**10. OTHER BUSINESS**     None

Chairman Lawlor reported to the Board that Reagan Moriarty will be appointed to the Board and should be with us for the next meeting.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Roosa moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:13 p.m. Commissioner Gibbs seconded. No discussion. A vote was called.

Ayes:

Commissioner Sandra Roosa  
Commissioner James Welcome  
Commissioner Tawana Gibbs  
Chairman Jim Lawlor

Nays:

Abstain:

Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Vincent Sica, Acting Executive Director