

# **Fitchburg Housing Authority Minutes – Regular Meeting**

*CJ Durkin Community Room, Fitchburg, MA*

April 15, 2015

## **PRESENT:**

**Paul Fontaine, Chair**

**Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair**

**Linda Byrne, Treasurer**

**David Rousseau, Assistant Treasurer**

## **ALSO PRESENT:**

**Peter Proulx, Secretary**

**Denise Ivaldi, Recording Secretary**

There were tenants present with the following comments:

- a. William Davis, #322, asked why we were focusing on new locks for doors when there are so many other problems. We need new windows, the wind is coming through the doors. People are dying; one woman was found in her apartment after three weeks. Another person had passed for a week before anyone realized it. He would like to move but is being told it's too costly. We don't need locks, who's in charge? *Peter replied that Mr. Davis should call in a work order so we can follow up on the window issue. Janel Hebert is the lease enforcement/housing manager and gave her number to Mr. Davis.*
- b. A gentleman, Ron Varney, introduced himself and stated he lived on Clinton St. He wanted to know what was going on at 95 Clinton St. (property owned by FHA). *Peter replied that we were working with DHCD to get permission to sell properties for rehab by other agencies.*
- c. A tenant asked about the status of the community room updates. *Peter replied that this was still in the CIP plans. DHCD said the kitchen has to be upgraded with other things. Costs will be higher; we will have to wait until next year. He added that the lounge area will happen this year.*
- d. A tenant said they were still waiting to hear if they could have a pizza party (it was a political party). *Peter replied that they should be going through the proper channels to reserve the community room.*

1. The Chair declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.
2. David Rousseau made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 18, 2015 meeting. Linda Byrne seconded the motion; all in favor; the motion passed unanimously.
3. The Executive Director Report:
  - a. The Recertification Clerk has resigned. We are interviewing and hope to have a new hire within two-three weeks. Janel is working with Cindy to stay on top of the recertifications.
  - b. No new modernization at this time.
  - c. Green Acres project – surveying is on-going. We are three months from concept approval. Mary Giannetti asked if it will be similar to Leominster’s Learning Center. Peter replied yes.
  - d. Ben Gold has formally accepted the Assistant Executive Director position. He will start May 4<sup>th</sup>. He has previously worked with the Danbury and New Haven housing authorities.
4. Financial Report:
  - a. Reserves are at 19.66%; DHCD likes to see reserves at 20%.
  - b. We are still awaiting budget approval from DHCD. Leominster received theirs yesterday, hopefully soon.
  - c. We are doing well on revenue, rents are higher than anticipated.
  - d. We are in very good condition, \$17,905 to the positive.
  - e. Contract costs for maintenance. Mary Giannetti asked why they seemed higher. Peter replied due to carpeting issues, costs are higher.

Paul Fontaine asked if we could get a statement analysis on how we are moving on sale of the single family house. Linda Byrne and Mary Giannetti agreed; Mary offered to make phone calls, etc. if needed. Peter stated that the Senate may be approving an ‘early retirement’ which 30 out of 90 employees at DHCD could take. We will lose many top level, experienced individuals. Peter added that we would have to rebuild a unit for each property sold; one for one development. There was some discussion on the back building. Peter stated it was a federal building; one and two bedroom units. Mass Housing is deciding on whether to forgive the \$400,000 mortgage. We have \$179,000 to be used for renovations. Paul Fontaine asked about the CDC as they acquire property and turn them over to family housing. Peter said he would contact the subcommittee to see when hearings will be held. Mary made a motion to accept the financials. Linda Byrne seconded; all were in favor.

5. Facilities Report:

- a. There were a number of move-outs and evictions during the month.
- b. Briefings were held for elderly and Canton Valley a couple weeks ago.
- c. We are doing a thorough process for recertification. Some tenants were not happy with the new rent (some income not used by previous administration, which should have been).

There was some discussion to follow. David Rousseau asked if there were rent limits (market rent). Peter replied that rent is based on 30% of income for the elderly and 27% for family. Mr. Rousseau asked if there was no ceiling for rent. Paul Fontaine said he wasn't sure that would be a good thing. Peter added that even if the board approved a rent limit, it would still have to be approved by DHCD.

- d. Work orders at 72+ hours will be increasing as they will now include routine maintenance and grounds.

David Rousseau asked if the floors at Day/Wallace were going to be waxed. Peter replied they would be.

Paul Fontaine asked about wellness checks; wondering how someone passes away in their apartment without the housing authority knowing. Peter replied that with a phone call to the housing authority to check on a tenant, we will respond. David Rousseau stated that with the sun out now, people are congregating at the front of the building again. He asked if a fence could be installed. Peter said yes, we are working on it. Mr. Rousseau also inquired about the cameras/lock-sets. Peter said yes, it is on-going and we will be putting it out to bid in 2-3 weeks. Possibly we will have a contract by next meeting. He added that the front door has to be ADA compliant.

6. State Housing Report: No discussion.

7. Section 8 Report: No discussion.

8. New Business:

The following resolutions were presented by the Chair:

## RESOLUTION FOR ACCOUNTING SERVICES

### Resolution 2015-04-01

Whereas: The Fitchburg Housing Authority requires a fee accountant to assist the agency in maintaining compliance with both State and Federal financial requirements and,

Whereas: The Fitchburg Housing Authority has used the firm of Fenton, Ewald & Associates, P.C. for a number of years and,

Whereas: The Fitchburg Housing Authority is satisfied with the performance of Fenton, Ewald & Associates, P.C.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

That the Fitchburg Housing Authority enter into a contract for Accounting services with Fenton, Ewald & Associates, P.C. for the period January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

RESOLVED, Motion made by Mary Giannetti to enter into contract for accounting services.

SECONDED, Linda Byrne seconded the motion, and the motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

The 667-A year-end certification also needed the board's approval and signature. On a motion by David Rousseau and seconded by Linda Byrne, the board signed the 667-A year-end certification.

At this time, the Executive Director asked if there were any personnel issues. Linda Byrne made a motion to go into Executive Session David Rousseau seconded and roll call was taken as follows: Paul Fontaine – yes, Mary Giannetti – yes, Linda Byrne – yes, David Rousseau – yes. The board went into Executive Session at 9:20 a.m.

On a motion by David Rousseau, seconded by Linda Byrne the board reconvened to regular session at 9:32 a.m. to discuss the smoking policy.

The Executive Director informed the board that Anna Phillips is working on meeting notices to all complexes. There has already been a meeting at Daniels Heights. Cessation workshops are also being offered to all tenants.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 a.m. was made by David Rousseau. Linda Byrne seconded; all were in favor.

