

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
Of  
The Board of Commissioners  
Of  
The Housing Authority of the City of Hartford**

**May 12, 2020  
5:30 p.m.**

The Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority (“Authority”) of the City of Hartford held a Regular Board meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 via teleconference in accordance with Governor Lamont’s Executive Order 7B dated as of March 14, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 5:31pm by Chairperson Jeffrey Stewart.

Commissioners, staff and the public participated in the meeting by dialing in to the following conference call number 866-390-5250 and using access code: 2614983

The call was recorded and made available to the public at  
<https://www.hartfordhousing.org/HACHBOCMtg12May2020.wav>

**I. Roll Call**

Upon roll call, the following members were in attendance: Chairperson Jeffrey Stewart; Vice-Chairperson Laura Settlemeyer; and Commissioner Patricia LeShane

**II. Consideration of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of April 14, 2020**

A motion was made (Commissioner Settlemeyer) and seconded (Commissioner LeShane) to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of April 14, 2020. The motion was unanimously approved.

**III. Report of the Chairperson**

Chairperson Jeffrey Stewart welcomed everyone to today’s Board of Commissioners meeting. He thanked the Executive Staff for their good job during this pandemic.

**IV. Report of the Executive Director**

Ms. Annette Sanderson, Executive Director, welcomed everybody and thanked the Commissioners for making the time for the Board meeting this evening. She discussed how there were no resolutions, but focused on the Executive team’s monthly standard reporting.

She discussed how HACH is closely monitoring federal state and municipal leaders to ensure we operate in tandem with them, as we deal with the crisis and contemplate how our world will look like with reopening. *Approved on June 2, 2020*

Most important is health, safety and welfare of staff and residents.

Thanked the Executive team and staff for working above and beyond to make sure the agency is operating smoothly

#### V. Public Comment Period

Miquel Birbrau a resident from Smith Towers apartment thanked HACH for distributing masks to residents, however more are needed approximately 15-20 specially for disabled residents. Ms. Sanderson stated that these masks were donated from an outside source and would try to obtain additional masks for residents through donations. Currents available masks supplies are reserved for field operations staff. Commissioner Stewart stated that residents could also call 311 and obtain a mask this way.

#### VI. Staff Reports

##### *Financial & Information Technology – Joshua Bird, Chief Financial Officer*

- Rent Collection in March and April started fast, but petered out a little by the end. March was strong with a 98.7% collection rate. April started out strong, and at the mid-point of the month collections were running ahead of the prior year. The 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the month was slower as various eviction moratoriums were announced and the economy slowed. April finished with an 89.7% collection rate coming in at \$324,361, a \$16k decrease in collections as compared to April of 2019. Overall, last 12 months, the Authority has collected approximately \$53k in rent more than the 12 months before that.
- The LIPH program had a net loss for the month of \$503k. This is mostly due to the way HUD funded us this year. HUD provided Jan-Feb funding and then in March HUD provided only a partial month's funding. On the expense side, the few snow clearing invoices and heating season utilities were paid in March, which pushed it above budget for the month. Despite that, the program for the year has only a \$45k deficit for the year vs a budget of \$191k loss, so the program has stayed better than budget for the year to date
- The HCV department ran a profit in March of \$15.8k. Revenues were slightly below budget, but the department's administrative expenses stayed under budget as well. For the year, the department is running a \$63k profit.
- The COCC had a net loss for the month of April of \$48,682. Revenue for the department was under budget, but that was offset slightly but expenses coming in under budget as well. For the year, the Central Office is running a \$51k profit, well above the budgeted loss of \$93k.
- Grant Balances are reported through the 1<sup>st</sup> week of May. LIPH Operating Subsidy has now been funded through June. The CARES Act funding has now been made available to the Authority. Hartford has been allocated \$767,537 in Funding for the LIPH program and \$345,160 in HCV Administrative Fees. The 2020 CFP grant has been funded now as well. The Authority was allocated \$2,838,767

- March work orders changed in operations due to COVID-19. Limited to emergencies, common areas deep cleaning, required trash duties, quarterly pest control service performed on common areas only. In the month of April, we continue adjusting operations duties based on local, state and federal guidance. Currently working on developing a plan for vacancy turnover and routine workorders during outbreak.
- HACH responds to the HUD Hartford Field office on a monthly or quarterly basis with an Occupancy Action Plan (OAP) due to rate being below 96%, under HUD minimum threshold.
- Property Managers are the first line of contact for the residents. Since February 2020, managers are establishing a more consistent line of communication with residents on the matters of rent collection, services requests, maintenance charges, summary process, property incidents, among others in an attempt to improve resident's awareness and response on the areas that has been overlooked in the past. The purpose of this effort is to build up a stronger relationship between the authority and the resident by sharing the authority's concerns and to assist and/or provide support in areas of needs that the resident identifies by the individual assessment.
- Change HACH administrative facilities are closed to the public as are development community rooms
- Due to COVID-19 outbreak, unit showing and leasing efforts were postponed at the end of March. On April, it was determined that the HACH will continue to work on application processing, eligibility, unit turnovers, showings and leasing during this outbreak taking additional steps to ensure the health and safety of all. Which means that it will be done on a slower pace without affecting the integrity of the program.
- Resident Service Coordinators continue to make and received "Wellness Check" phone calls to residents. Assisted the Hartford Police Department Cadets in distributing breakfast & lunch to the residents of Betty Knox, Kent Apartments & Mary Mahoney Village & took pictures of the process.

***Development and Capital Improvements – Elisa Hobbs, Development Director***

- **Westbrook Development (Village at Park River)**

The demolition of Phases I, II and III is complete, and the demolition of Phase IV is well underway. As of May 30<sup>th</sup>, eleven buildings remain standing. It is anticipated that the demolition of the remaining buildings will be completed by the end of May. Construction of the residential buildings on Phase I, which commenced in June 2019, is progressing and is on schedule to be completed this Summer/Fall. Phase II construction, which began this past January, is also well underway. The construction financing for Phase III was recently awarded, allowing for the final design and construction of Phase III to proceed.

A lottery selection process will be utilized for the initial occupancy of the affordable units. Applications will be available at various public locations and online. **Approved on June 2, 2020**  
Prospective residents will be able to call a designated application line that will be operated by Pennrose Management Company (“Pennrose”) for assistance. Once preliminary eligibility has been determined, Pennrose will enter applicants into a Master Lottery Log based on the unit size desired. Lottery drawings will result in each applicant being given a ranking among other applicants with a preference given to former residents of Westbrook Village who were relocated for the redevelopment. More information regarding the proposed lottery process will be provided in the coming months as Phase I construction nears completion.

- **Smith Towers**

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, a bid opening for the elevator replacement project at Smith Towers took place. There were four respondents to HACH’s Request for Proposals for the project. An award to Pioneer Builders of Newington, Inc. (“Pioneer”) was approved at the April 14<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. A contract signing conference with Pioneer was later held on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Work will commence within the next two weeks with the installation of a trench drain at the site to eliminate water infiltration issues at the basement level of the elevator shaft. The elevator components will be ordered and manufactured with installation anticipated later this Fall.

- **110 Kensington Street**

The rehabilitation of the vacant homeownership unit at 110 Kensington Street is complete. The unit has undergone substantial renovation to its interior. HACH is hopeful that it can begin to market the property in late Spring/early Summer. The proceeds will be used to fund the rehabilitation of other LIPH properties.

***HCV/Section 8- Katrina Ortiz, Housing Choice Voucher Program Manager***

- The staff continues to work remotely as all are deemed essential. Employees were approved by leadership to take their computers home to continue to perform functions such as interims, recerts and moves. Forms were posted online so that participants and applicants would have the ability to complete and submit via email, fax, usps without having to come into the office for services.
- The agency also installed another drop box at the main office for those families that would rather bring their information to the agency. HCV Staff come to the office twice a week on a schedule to sort mail, print documentation, and send out letters.
- The IT Department continues to work with the Department access to all necessary systems, folders, and communication tools in order to allow us to work from home. We participated in the HUD sponsored webinar which focused on education and outreach strategies for retaining and recruiting landlords.
- The HCV Management Assistant continues to contact families and individuals that reach the top of our waitlist. In April 30 family letters have gone out to applicants who have reached the top of the waitlist. We have currently 547 families on or

Regular HCV waitlist. In the next couple of months, the authority will implement a landlord portal.

- Our contractor Nan McKay Inspection Services continues to perform a Reinspection on previously failed units, Initial, and Special inspections. At this time Annual inspections have been moved to a biannual schedule. Once social distancing orders have ceased, we will go back to conducting inspections on an annual basis.
- Due to the COVID-19 crisis many families have lost their employment, and Interim reexaminations are being conducted to make adjustments to their portion of rents. The breakdown below shows the comparison of Interims completed from 2019 and 2020.
- The HUD-VASH program is administered to assist homeless veterans. We were allocated initially 50 vouchers in 2008 and has increased almost every year. Currently HACH is allocated 168 of HUD-VASH to date. We have partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs which is responsible to refer families to the agency. HACH then proceeds with the necessary steps to determine eligibility.
- Mainstream vouchers were awarded 45 vouchers May 2019. These vouchers are specific to those families that are non-elderly disabled, homeless, at risk of homelessness, at risk of becoming institutionalized, or leaving an institution.

***Contract and Compliance Registry – Ben Bare, General Counsel***

- I have been keeping up with all of the various state, local and federal guidance on response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Incorporating much of the guidance HACH has created a COVID -19 Business Plan to help guide its operational response to the pandemic. A copy of that plan is attached in its current form. HACH is generally exempted from the Governor's orders as it falls outside the business and non-profit category, but is following the Governor's orders and associated guidance where practicable.
- NEWDAY is classified as an essential business and is complying fully with the Governor's orders.
- HACH has also developed quick reference folders in its document management system cataloging all orders, public housing notices, etc. This is an ongoing effort as guidance from various governmental levels is being constantly updated.
- Worth pointing out in the guidance received to date are the eviction moratoria. There are moratoria prohibiting eviction from HUD through the CARES Act and from the State through executive order. The two do not generally conflict and together they prohibit eviction for failure to pay rent or any other cause except serious nuisance. During the pendency of these moratoria our summary process counsel continues to clean up cases which started prior to the pandemic and to work on the serious nuisance cases we have pop up from time to time. He is also assisting operations in efforts to collect outstanding rent balances.

- Procurement remains busy with contracting for our instrumentalities and also soliciting or preparing to solicit for several services including Procurement Software, On Call Architects and Engineers, On Call Environmental Services, Insurance Brokerage Services, etc.

**VIII. Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

**IX. Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made (Commissioner LeShane) and seconded (Commissioner Settlemyer) to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Annette Sanderson  
Secretary/Executive Director