



DUBLIN VILLAGE OFFICE 300 LEBANON AVENUE
COLCHESTER, CONNECTICUT 06415
(860) 537-5251
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Minutes

The Colchester Housing Authority met on January 16, 2020 for its monthly business meeting at Dublin Village. In attendance were: Janet LaBella: Chairperson, Marion Spaulding: Vice Chairperson/Secretary, Denise Salmoiraghi: Treasurer, Kate Forcier, Michael Dankiw: Tenant Commissioner and Robert Gustafson Executive Director. Breed Tavern President (Carol) and two Co-Vice Presidents (Angie & Judy) were present to report, E. Palmer and S. Strickland who reside at Ponemah Village were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

The meeting minutes for December 2019 were reviewed: a motion was made by Kate and seconded by Denise to accept the minutes as submitted: the motion passed unanimously.

The financial statements for December 2019 were reviewed: a motion was made by Michael and seconded by Denise to accept the statement as submitted: the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

E. Palmer, who resides at Ponemah Village, was present to explain the events on the evening that lead up to a broken window during an altercation with another resident who she was trying to help from harming herself. She explained that she sustained injuries during the altercation, that she is currently being treated by a physician for, which include back and neck issues, as well as, a torn ligament. Kate asked if the police responded, which they did, but not until the next morning when Rob was contacted. E. Palmer explained that there is no police report but that there was an incident report completed by Officer Brown who responded to the call. E. Palmer explained that she didn't feel that should she have to pay for ½ of the cost to replace the window, since she didn't break the window, she also explained that she has had no interaction with the other resident since the incident.

S. Strickland, who resides at Ponemah Village, was present to complain about the heat pump in his unit, which hasn't been working since November. Rob explained that these heat pumps were a gift to the residents from Eversource, but that the units break down often and are very costly to repair. S. Strickland explained that due to the fact he has to use his baseboard heating for his heat source his electric bill has gone from \$45 monthly to \$85 monthly, he also inquired as to why the solar power at Ponemah Village only provides power to the Community Room and not the entire Village. Kate explained that the solar power program only provides power for common areas of housing authorities. Rob stated that he would contact Eversource to see if they have any programs to repair/replace these units. S. Strickland also complained about not being able to use his exhaust fan, which needs to be repaired, therefore he can't cook because it sets off the smoke alarm. Rob stated that he had contacted a contractor in the fall about getting an estimate to replace the exhaust fan, the units are outdated and there are no replacement parts made anymore in order to repair them. Rob will follow up with the contractor. Jan thanked both residents for coming, she told S. Strickland that she will work with Rob to try and resolve his issues with the heat pump and exhaust fan in his unit.

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Additions to the agenda – none.

Communications

Gearing up for Phase 2. Submittals from DEF, who have made a marked improvement in the way they conduct their business from the most recent experience on the last construction project CHA had with them, are being received by the architect via Procore which Rob can monitor and respond through. A Siding Contractor was onsite for a review/walk through, as the siding portion of the upcoming project is to be subcontracted. Rob attended the Colchester Zoning Commission meeting; Southeastern Council of Government gave a presentation with some suggestions on ways to allow Colchester to meet the 10% affordable housing criteria that is set by the state. Rob said that some towns Land Trusts have acquired grant funding to renovate existing housing in order to meet that set aside.

Report of the Executive Director

On the 20th of December we were once again honored with the privilege of helping deliver gifts from the Jack Jackter school children to senior citizens, Rob said this act of kindness is definitely a highlight of his position at CHA each year. The court hearing on 1-8-20 resulted in a stipulated agreement for a Ponemah resident, 3 acts of non compliance and they will be out. The court hearing on 1-15-20, also resulted in a stipulated agreement with that resident who agreed to pay December thru February and be out on or before March 10th 2020.

At Breeds Tavern:

The E Board meeting was held here at Dublin Village on 1-6-20. The financial statement was reviewed. The annual mandatory meeting for the election of officers was held here at Dublin Village on 1-13-20, 15 of 21 members were present. The member who has contacted the DOH, thought tonight's meeting was to vote on the co-op remaining a co-op or to have it become rental housing. This member also thought there was a second reserve account. Rob explained that this question was resolved at a previous meeting and if everyone attended meetings regularly, we wouldn't be wasting time on this subject. This member was extremely adamant that the CHA nor State can dissolve the Co-op stating that "Lawyers will be involved and it cannot be done." In actuality, at the September regular meeting, it was discovered that the amount in question was the retained earnings at the beginning of the 2016 fiscal year and that there was a typo in the minutes that was misconstrued. Documentation of this is available at CHA office. As we have been informed by the state, there is no truth to the claim that the co-op cannot be dissolved, in truth many have failed due to similar circumstance. There was some discussion all at once with most members stating their opinions about trying to remain as a co-op or to let it become rental housing. From what Rob could pick out from the chaos, were comments like "is he stoned?" "I'm so done with this BS" "I'll be out within two years anyway" "Who in their right mind would want this job?" One of the newest residents to move in took the floor and actually scolded the members for the way they were handling everything! There was no agenda. There were no minutes to review and approve. The meeting was not actually called to order and there wasn't any order throughout the meeting. The election of officers consisted of the current officers explaining what they thought their duties are and who ever would reluctantly volunteer was accepted. The result was that Carol will remain President with Angie and Judy as co-President(s). Angie will remain as Vice president with Judy as co Vice President. Patience will remain Secretary with Katrina and Soledad as co Secretaries. Cory will head maintenance with the help of Justin, Chris S. and Kevin. Selection, Donna and Jenny volunteered for but that committee doesn't currently exist.





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President, Carol and Co-VP's Angie and Judy were present and reported, that they had their annual meeting Monday, January 13 (see Rob's report above), the officers present stated that they "begged" residents to serve but that no one stepped up. The budget was presented to the CHA members, which was reviewed by all present and comments were made. Rob stated that the annual vacancy loss should be higher than \$1,800; the water/sewer and the fuel/gas line items looked on the low side. The contracts line item was discussed, this line item is a very high cost to the property, as the units are older and there tends to be a lot of maintenance needed for the hot water heaters and the furnaces. The water pressure regulators, which tend to cause a lot of problems, where they operate at 100 when the norm is 40 – 60 are very costly to repair/replace. Kate asked if the difference between their income and expense is scheduled to go into reserves, Angie said yes. There was some discussion regarding the resident who attended the annual meeting who talked about contacting DOH, members agreed that he was belligerent and wrongly informed. There was discussion regarding the members who did not attend this mandatory annual meeting, as well as, members who are required to serve on committees as part of their co-op lease agreement and do not. Jan stated that if members are not attending meetings or serving on committees, as required, they should be fined, or they can pay a fee in lieu of serving on a committee. Kate stated that there needs to be oversight enforcement of these policies. Members discussed creating a form letter that gets mailed to each resident outlining the policy, the enforcement of the policy and fee schedule that will be created if residents don't adhere to the policies. There was discussion regarding the outstanding rents and the residents who are severely behind, Angie stated that, as was the agreement last year, residents have until March 11, 2020 to get their rents caught up. Many residents fall behind at the end of the year, around the holidays, and then bank on their tax return refund, which can be quite high, to catch up on their rent. If their tax refund is late for any reason, residents can submit a letter from the IRS to have their time extended past March 11, otherwise residents will be served a notice to quit. Kate explained that an attorney is not needed to serve a notice to quit, which can be a form, signed by the President, and delivered by a Marshal for a fee. Jan suggested that they sit down, as the e-board, and create a policy and a schedule of fines for certain thresholds, and bring it to CHA to review, to be incorporated into their house rules and distributed to residents. Kate asked if Breeds Tavern has an atty who will represent them and suggested they contact Atty. Loo Dahlke of Uncasville, to see if she would represent them with the eviction process, and provided Angie with the phone number, Kate said Atty Dahlke is very reasonable. There was closing discussion regarding having the residents do the landscaping; previously a resident had offered to do it, but didn't have insurance. Kate suggested BT contact the current insurance agent to see if that would be covered under the liability policy for the complex, Rob to contact the agent. Jan commented that it sounds like the e-board has done a lot of work to get organized, and that this is a good plan to move forward, suggesting that they stay focused and keep working hard to move forward.

Report of the Tenant Commissioner:

Michael reported that things are "still quiet".

Unfinished Business - None






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New Business

There was discussion regarding E. Palmer's request to be relieved from paying her portion of the broken window, members agreed that she can be allowed to reimburse the CHA over time, but that she must be held responsible, along with the other resident involved, for reimbursing for the broken window. Rob presented the draft 2018 Audit from Costello and Company, there was discussion, Rob pointed out some errors and will be contacting C. Costello to review/revise and re-issue the 2018 audit report.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Kate and seconded by Michael, meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM – unanimously accepted.

Respectfully submitted, *Marion Spaulding* 

Marion Spaulding
Vice Chairperson/Secretary
CC: Town Clerk

