

**Stonington Housing Authority  
Regular Board Meeting Minutes  
November 9, 2023  
4:30 pm 45 Sisk Drive, Stonington CT**

**Final**

**Call To Order:**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm

**Roll Call:**

Those in attendance were: Chair, Kate Careb, Vice Chair Julie Savin, Commissioner Beth Leamon (Via Phone), Commissioner Kevin Beverly, Resident Commissioner Kathleen Wahl and Executive Director Marcia Sullivan.

**Approval of Minutes of the September 14, 2023 meeting:**

Commissioner Savin made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 14th, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Wahl seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's report:**

Commissioner Leamon read the treasurers report. Liberty Bank Security Deposit \$22,231.86, Berkshire Bank Business Checking \$74,602.18, Berkshire Bank Operating Reserve \$202,138.35, Liberty Bank Repair: Maintenance Reserve \$30,000, Berkshire Bank CD Closed, balance transferred to Berkshire Bank Operating Reserve, Westerly Community Credit Union \$154,495.59, Westerly Credit Union Savings \$7.05. Commissioner Leamon would like to see a grand total added to the regular Treasurer's report.

**Maintenance and Asset Manager's Report:**

In the months of October and November there were a total of 20 work orders. One was urgent – replace alarm battery on fire panel. One capital improvement in the month of September. We installed a lock box with a master key for emergency personnel. Ron completed all of the annual inspections. Ron sat in on meeting with CHFA and answered questions regarding maintenance needs, specifically heat pump replacements. Ron accompanied representative from Mystic Air placing radon test kits in units.

**Report of the Executive Director:**

The HTCC application was approved for \$500,000, conditional on submitting results of radon testing. Funds anticipated by December 31 2023.  
Working on RFP for the first project – restoration of the retention pond. Per the engineer's report, work should commence after March.  
Submitted a proposal to the Chamber of Commerce to support field trips for residents, including bus rentals. Ours was not chosen but we were invited to reapply in January.  
The 2024 budget approved by the Board was accepted by CHFA.  
Working with the accountants (Fenton and Ewald) to prepare items for the on 2022/2023 audit.  
Finalized the Comprehensive Needs Assessment  
Attended a one-day training in Rocky Hill, CT about requirements for updating the agency's fair housing marketing plan  
Submitting annual report of personal property to Town of Stonington

We had two local candidates for public office visit with residents and answer questions in November

Marcia asked the board to consider a rent increase. The last rent increase was in 2022. This would be an increase to the base rent only. Rent increase process needs to start by January to be effective May 1, 2024. Most of our residents receive Social Security income. In 2023 they got an 8.75% increase. In 2024, the increase will be 3.25%. Most residents paying an income-based rent experienced a 2023 rent increase. Tenants paying base rents have not had an increase since 2022.

Commissioner Savin asked for a report detailing how various percentage increases will impact annual rental revenue. Commissioner Leamon asked if we can't already see that information in the budget. Marcia stated that the projected rental income is based on what we were collecting at the time was approved and submitted and that CHFA understands that recertifications in May can change the annual rental revenue projection. Marcia recommends starting the tenant notification process to be ready if the board approves the increase. Commissioners Savin and Leamon are in favor of a lower percentage increase.

Other resident activities and services not listed on the monthly calendar prepared by Laura Davies – some residents are participating in a service from the Stonington Library where books are being delivered and picked up on a monthly basis. Staff encourages any resident interested in participating to contact the office.

On October 18<sup>th</sup>, Tony from McQuade's came and administered flu vaccines to 21 residents and three staff in the community room. The over 65 dose was available.

A street light on Sisk drive is not operating. We own four lights. Predates all current staff, but apparently, a decision to shut off was prompted by a neighbor's complaint. Residents are complaining that it is too dark at night on that section of property. There is also a streetlight out at the corner. Ron has contacted Eversource and we are waiting on a response. Debora Lee stated that it is dangerously dark. Commissioner Careb reminded her we would talk about it during public comment. Commissioner Savin suggested other lighting that does not bother the neighbors.

#### **Report of the Resident Commissioner:**

Commissioner Wahl stated that a resident meeting was held on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Those in attendance were in favor of Resident Commissioner Wahl assuming the role of facilitating communication between residents and the Board of Commissioners. Residents agreed that holding meetings before each board meeting and posting the Resident Commissioners report to the board in the community room would be very helpful. Also discussed upcoming dumpster and pond projects. Tenants would like access to accurate and timely reports on the progress of these projects. Marcia and Kathy have already started discussions about how we will keep tenants informed.

#### **New Business:**

The 2024 meeting schedule is in packets and posted on bulletin board. Commissioners are invited to the Holiday Luncheon. The Selectmen should be invited, the High School Carolers,

Senator Somers and Representative Howard will be invited as well as some of our service partners.

The Chair noted that this is Commissioner Beverly's last meeting. Commissioner Careb thanked him for his service on the Board.

A motion to postpone the appointment of officers until January meeting was made by Commissioner Careb and seconded by Commissioner Savin. Motion was approved unanimously.

**Public Comment:**

Walter Allen commented about the lighting on Sisk Drive. He said that it is particularly dangerous for residents that use mobility chairs. Debora Lee stated that the neighbor could get room darkening curtains and that we are putting his needs above the residents. She stated that there will be loss of life. The Chair restored order shortly after Mr. Allen and Ms. Lee started speaking simultaneously to allow the members to understand each of them.

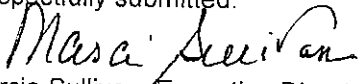
Mr. Allen complained that the neighbor went out of his way to make things difficult for residents during Halloween. Commissioner Careb stated that she has dealt with the neighbor in the past and that she will make sure the issue is resolved. Debora Lee stated that she has been complaining about this issue for years. Jen McEwen stated that she has almost hit people turning onto Sisk Drive at night. She stated that people stand in the middle of the road without moving. Gail Sylvia is concerned about the first corner and would like more lighting. The Chair suggested investigating solar lights in the sidewalks

Commissioner Careb re-stated that the Board had decided on a course of action earlier in the meeting and would certainly follow up as necessary.

Jen McEwen asks about the possibility of getting a van for the community. Commissioners stated that there was a lot more than just buying a van. Insurance, liability, special licenses etc. Jen suggested fundraising for the upkeep of a vehicle. Jen asked about gardening in apartments. Are we allowed? Commissioner Careb stated something small should be ok.

Julie Savin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:25.

Respectfully submitted:

 01/11/2024  
Marcia Sullivan, Executive Director and Clerk