

Stonington Housing Authority

Board Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2023

Final

**Call To Order:**

Meeting Called to order at 4:34 pm

Roll Call: Those in attendance were Chair, Kate Careb, Vice Chair, Julie Savin, Commissioner Kevin Beverly, Commissioner, Beth Leamon, Commissioner, Debora Lee, Executive Director, Marcia Sullivan and Property and Services Manager Laura Davies.

**Approval of the Minutes of the January 12 meeting:**

) A  
motion was made by Debora Lee to approve January meeting minutes as corrected. Kevin Beverly seconded and the motion passed.

**Reading of the Treasurer's Report:**

Commissioner Leamon presented the Treasurer's report showing a balance of \$102,234.78 in Berkshire Bank Checking, \$9,652.23 in Berkshire Bank CD, \$180,437.68 in Berkshire Bank Money Market, \$23,389.19 in Liberty Security Deposit Escrow, \$152,574.08 in Westerly Credit Union 36 Month CD and \$7.05 in Westerly Credit Union Savings. Commissioner Savin asked when the Berkshire CD expires. Marcia stated that she would find out.

**Maintenance and Asset Management Report:**

Marcia read Ron's report for the first two months of the year. In January, he had 15 maintenance requests and in February he had 5 maintenance requests. None of the maintenance requests were urgent. Noted that he has been working on punch lists from last annual inspection, removed Christmas decorations, repaired and painted walls in laundry room hallway, set up for Young Adults Social meetings and unloaded food delivery in January. Commissioner Savin asked why dollar amounts in the report were not filled out. Marcia stated that Ron has not made any capital investments on the property. He ordered a stove which will show up in next month's report. Only money spent thus far has been on supplies. Commissioner Leamon asked about snow removal bills. No removal bills from January/February. There will be a removal bill for March.

**Report of the Executive Director:**

Marcia stated that she has tried several times to connect with the auditor. The 2020-2021 audit still has not been completed. Auditor states he is very busy and

doesn't know when he will get to it. Marcia is reluctant to switch auditors because those are years she was not here. Julie stated that not having a completed audit would disrupt ability to obtain funding. Marcia checked with HTCC and says they don't require an audit. Marcia stated that she will have to give them financials by way of 990 tax returns. She is on schedule to get 2022 taxes completed. Commissioner Leamon asked if one of the Board members should reach out to the company because we had been using them for years. Marcia asked that she be given another opportunity before they intervened. Marcia agreed to respond to the email from the auditor and to copy board members so that we can get the audit completed.

Laura has been working on 2023 recertifications. At this point, we only have five residents who have not returned documentation. We must give residents a 30 day notice of rent changes. We have also started to purge our current waitlist. We have 22 applicants on our current waitlist. We have approximately 46 applications that will be processed and added to the bottom of the current waitlist. We have had twice the number of applicants than we did a year ago.

Marcia stated she is working on budgets and estimates for capital improvements to apply for funding in June. Received a price for pond renovation and meeting with a contractor next week to get a price on finishing sidewalks. Landscape architect will be getting us a proposal to do plans which will be concept drawings because they are less expensive.

Marcia and Laura attended via Zoom a class on the use of recreational marijuana. Kate mentioned that we are still nonsmoking and Marcia stated that smoking is only allowed at designated smoking areas. Marijuana is legal if people want to ingest or use in a way other than smoking. We have not had an issue with smoking marijuana at the smoking areas, but will address that if it becomes an issue.

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

Bingo was held every other Tuesday at 1:00pm.

Art Therapy was held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 4:30pm. A light meal was served after. Sign up requested for this event.

Music Therapy, an acoustic band Fish Outta Water performed on January 13 and February 24 at 4:00pm.

The band plays a variety of jazz, rock and folk songs.

Art Therapy and Music Therapy are supported by the Senior Resources Agency on Aging with Title III.

Funds made available under the Older Americans Act.

Crafting was held on January 26 at 1:00pm.

EKR Food Pantry was available to residents on January 31 from 12:00-2:30pm.

Residents gathered on February 14 at 1:00pm for coffee, tea and sweets to celebrate Valentine's Day.

We welcome Chaplain Rev. Fr. Mark Clark to our community. Mark moved here in January and will be offering Mass and Communion on Saturdays at 3:30pm in the Community Room. The Most Rev. Christopher Carpenter will preside along with Mark. All are welcome to worship and receive communion.

#### March Events

3/7/23 Art Therapy @ 4:30pm

3/7/23 Bingo @ 1:00pm

3/15/23 Birthday Celebration @ 1:00pm

3/17/23 Music Therapy @ 4:00pm

3/21/23 Art Therapy @ 4:30pm

3/21/23 Bingo @ 1:00pm

3/23/23 Crafting @ 1:00pm

3/29/23 Community Garden Meeting @ 1:00pm

Debora Lee stated that Rev. Mark Clark has named our property The Church of St. Luke. Marcia emphasized that although this is a Catholic Mass, all residents are welcome and no one is turned away from receiving Communion. We have also reached out to residents letting them know that they can contact us if they have an interest in any other religious services being offered.

#### **New Business:**

##### *Stonington Housing Authority Resolution 2023-1 Reasonable Accommodation Policy*

Debora Lee made a motion to adopt Resolution 2023-1. Julie Seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the Resolution was signed.

##### *Stonington Housing Authority Resolution 2023-2 Increase Income Limit for Eligibility*

There was a lengthy discussion surrounding increasing the income limits currently on the Stonington Housing Authority application. Current application is \$55,950 for one person with a minimum income requirement of \$10,800 or a demonstrated ability to pay rent. The resolution would raise the income limit to 80% AMI, currently \$62,600 annually for one person and \$71,550 for two people. Eligibility up to 80% AMI is permissible by CHFA. Commissioner Savin is concerned that increasing the limit would move us away from housing lower income households. ED Marcia Sullivan explained that the actual tenancy skews well under 80% AMI and given our tiered rent system we can be challenged to keep our rent affordable at the highest tier. Commissioner Savin

is also not convinced that the ED is using the correct area median income chart. Commissioner Leamon recalls the Board having this discussion in 2019-2020 and suggests that ED review those meeting minutes and any resolutions passed. ED Sullivan suggested the Board consider moving to three waiting lists, aligning base rents with income brackets. ED Sullivan directed to prepare a report showing percent of AMI for all residents and applicants and potential income brackets.

Resolution 2023-2 was tabled.

*Stonington Housing Authority Resolution 2023-3 Unit Transfer Policy*

Commissioner Savin made a motion to adopt Resolution 2023-3. Debora Lee seconded. The motion was passed unanimously and the Resolution was signed.

**Public Comment:**

Louise Bray asked why so many of our bank accounts were at Berkshire Bank. Kate and Julie explained that several years ago they were moved from Chelsea Bank because they had a special interest rate and gave us the check processing machine.

Louise Bray asked what happens to a two person unit if one person moves out or passes away. Does the remaining person still pay the higher rent? ED Sullivan explained that rent is based on 30% of household income and that the remaining person would pay the base rent for the unit or 30% of their income; whichever is higher. Louise stated that as a business, this is not always as profitable as income would go down resulting in lower rent. Kate responded that the Board looks at this as a quality of life issue and it would be very disruptive to ask someone that has lost a loved one to move to a smaller unit.

Louise Bray mentioned the cost of transfer at \$700.00 and that she could not have afforded to do that when she had a neighbor problem and needed to move. What would happen if a person's mental health was being affected by the living situation? Julie Savin explained the Reasonable Accommodation Policy and that there is no charge for a transfer under this policy. ED Marcia explained the process involved in obtaining a Reasonable Accommodation. Beth Leamon reiterated that not liking your neighbor was not a situation where you could get a Reasonable Accommodation under the ADA. Louise stated that some neighbors can be so negative that it becomes harmful to a person's mental health. ED Sullivan explained the process of contacting staff about problems with neighbors. She stated that there are many things the management can do to help alleviate the problems.

Joan Driscoll mentioned that she went to ED Sullivan with a problem that was very difficult and she resolved the problem very quickly.

Joan Driscoll asked for enclosures around our dumpsters. She believes they would enhance the property. Beth Leamon requested that we get a price quote as it might not be too costly for SHA to pay for. ED Sullivan will get a price quote.

Janice Bogue mentioned that the apartments have inadequate sound insulation and that you can hear everything your neighbor does. Debora Lee mentioned it is not that way in Buildings 11 & 12. Joan Driscoll mentioned it was supposed to be done during the last renovation, but was not. Kate Careb agreed it was frustrating and the Board has been trying to do capital improvements and this would be something kept in mind for the future.

Kate Careb stated that the Board was also currently looking at making improvements in the Community Room to bring it up to date.

Walter Allen asks if they were going to get new mini split units in buildings 11 & 12. He is very loud. ED Sullivan is currently looking at this with Ron to see if it is more reasonable to repair versus replacement.

Louise Bray mentioned that it would be nice to have a Residents meeting because she feels information doesn't get out to people quickly enough and she forgets to sign up for things. A Resident's meeting is being planned for April and we will discuss this there.

Julie Savin stated she had a Comcast connection that would come here and speak to residents about plans and programs for low cost/affordable options.

#### **Executive Session:**

Commissioner Carob made a motion to move into executive session, seconded by Commissioner Savin and approved unanimously.

Commissioner Beverly made a motion to move out of executive session, seconded by Commissioner Savin and approved unanimously.

Commissioner Beverly made a motion to sign and seal the minutes of the executive session, seconded by Commissioner Leamon and approved unanimously.

No votes were taken.

#### **Adjournment:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leamon to adjourn the meeting. Debora Lee seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6.10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Marcia Sullivan* 5/11/2023

Marcia Sullivan  
Executive Director & Clerk