

4/11/24 @ 2:26 pm



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AN EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY**

***REGULAR MEETING HELD THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2024, HELD AT 2 SCHOOL STREET, HATFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.***

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. with Chairperson John Wilkes presiding.

Roll Call: Chair John Wilkes, Alex Malinowski, Kyle Scott, Judy Schell, Christopher Smith, and Brenna Duquette/Executive Director. See attached 'sign in' sheet for tenants present.

**Citizens Speak:**

Penny Ford addressed the Board on behalf of numerous tenants' opposition of the proposed installation of air source heats pumps (which were referred to by their common, 'mini splits'). Ms. Ford possessed a petition against the installation of mini splits at HHA, which included signatures from thirty-one (31) of the forty-four (44) units. Ms. Ford cited a notable concern of tenants was the lack of temperature control should the mini splits be installed. Ms. Ford was hopeful the Board would take tenants' wishes into consideration when voting on the matter.

Judy Schell made a motion to accept the minutes if the regular meeting held December 19, seconded by Alex Malinowski. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

There was a brief discussion of the December 31, 2023, financial reports, which included Quarterly financial reports. The Director will need to closely monitor contract costs as well as discuss a budget revision with HHA's fee accountant due to the deficit in the water and sewer line item. Judy Schell made a motion to approve the December 31, 2023, financial reports as well as the Quarterly financial reports, seconded by Kyle Scott. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Judy Schell made a motion to review, approve and sign payroll, time sheets, accounts payables, and the January 25, 2024 Warrant, seconded by Kyle Scott. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs): Christopher Smith informed the Board he was recording with his cell phone.

Judy Schell began the discussion of the proposed installation of ASHPs at HHA by passing out a copy of the petition generated by the tenants to all members and the Director. Judy also provided all members with a copy of a list of 'pros', 'cons', and 'unknowns' she created. Judy explained this list was constructed using information gathered by the Director, discussions during Board meetings, information

given by Steve McCarthy and Girard Heating & Air Conditioning, as well as her own personal research. Judy added if the State mandates HHA to install the ASHPs in the future, they will have to fund the project. And until it is mandated, this project can wait.

Christopher Smith contested some of the tenants' concerns as well as items Judy Schell had discussed. With regards to the lack of control of the temperature in the units, he read from Girard Heating & Air Conditioning's quote which states the *"tenants will be able to adjust their thermostats 60° F – 78° F for heating and 68° F – 85° F for cooling"*, Girard Heating & Cooling. Mr. Smith accused Judy Schell of providing tenants with inaccurate information as well as using intimidation tactics to sway their opinions on the ASHPs. Mr. Smith referenced letters of support from Senator Comerford, State Representative Sabadosa, and the Department of Energy. [Neither the Board nor the Director have been provided with the information Mr. Smith refers to from the Department of Energy.] Mr. Smith went on to discuss the positives of ASHPs, including its proven technology and the additional net metering credits to be generated which could be sold and used for improvements at HHA.

Alex Malinowski – addressing Mr. Smith's consistent argument for the ASHPs based on personal experience – stated what works for a personal, single-family home does not necessarily work for the Housing Authority. Kyle Scott agreed with this sentiment.

Chair Wilkes stated he has discussed this potential project with people outside of this entity and all professionals he spoke with highly suggested that HHA moves forward with the installation of the ASHPs. Chair Wilkes added the conversion to ASHPs is in-line with previous upgrades he voted for, such as new roofs, windows, and a new parking lot; the ASHPs are in the best interest of the housing authority, for the long term.

Christopher Smith made a motion to accept the bid from Girard Heating & Air Conditioning, seconded by Chair Wilkes. The motion was moved to a roll call vote: Judy Schell – nay, Christopher Smith – aye, Alex Malinowski – nay, Chair John Wilkes – aye, Kyle Scott – nay. Motion did not pass with a 2-3 vote against.

The Director presented the Board with an updated work order for project #127056: Renovation of Units 6A, 11B, & 11D. The current estimated construction budget for this project is \$150,000. Alex Malinowski made a motion to approve the work order and payment for services for project #127056, seconded by Judy Schell. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Project #127055: ARPA – Painting of Common Hallways – This project has gone out to bid with bids due February 16, 2024.

### **New Business:**

The Director presented the Board with the proposed Affirmative Action Goal for HHA. HHA's goal was calculated based on comparison between the percentage of Minority individuals in the general population of the metropolitan statistical area (Springfield) age 55 or older and the percentage of Minority individuals living at HHA. HHA's Affirmative Action Goal is 14.6% and the placement rate of applicants with at least one Minority household member should be 1 in 5 or 20%. The Board questioned how HHA would strive to meet this goal and the Director explained CHAMP is able to identify those applicants that would assist in meeting this goal when a vacancy is being filled. Judy Schell made a motion to accept the proposed Affirmative Action Goal, seconded by Christopher Smith. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

PHN 2024-02: Requirement to consult residents when entering into Management Agreements

**Report of the Executive Director:**

FYE 2024 Annual Operating Budget Approved

The Director distributed copies of the letter drafted by HHA's attorney to be sent to the abutter of HHA – 65 Main Street – whose fence is encroaching onto HHA's property by 4.6 feet. The goal is to resolve the issue outside of any legal proceedings.

Quarterly Vacancy Report for the quarter ending 12-31-2023: Three (3) vacancies with one (1) leased up on October 1, 2023. No further discussion.

Quarterly Energy Reports for the quarter ending 12-31-2023 were similar of those from previous years. No further discussion.

**OTHER BUSINESS - Consideration of any matter not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen within 48 hours of this meeting.**

Nothing at this time.

**Motion to Adjourn**

Motion to Adjourn was made by Christopher Smith, seconded by Judy Schell. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Brenna Duquette*

Brenna Duquette, Secretary