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AN EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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REGULAR MEETING HELD TUESDAY, November 16, 2021, HELD AT 2 SCHOOL STREET, HATFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, and virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Roll Call: Chair John Wilkes, Mike Hogan, Judy Schell, Alex Malinowski, Christopher Smith (virtually) and Brenna Duquette/Executive Director. Tenants present were Roland Laurin, Jackie Courchesne, and Nancy Broussard. Fee accountant Gary DePace was also present (virtually).

Citizens Speak:

Roland Laurin complimented the Board on how nice the new flooring in the Community Room as well as the new outside sconces look.

Judy Schell made a motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held October 19, 2021, seconded by Mike Hogan. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

2021 Year-End financial report (September 30th report):

Chair Wilkes asked for fee accountant Gary DePace's assessment of HHA's performance in fiscal year 2021. The overall picture shows HHA's operating reserves were at \$89,672.00 at the end of FY2020 and for the close of FYE2021, operating reserves have increased to \$117,107.00. Some items encumbered from the previous budget are the replacement of the exterior lighting as well as \$30,000.00, funds originally put aside for the parking lot project but ultimately went unused. The Board had a brief discussion regarding the spending of these funds. Chair Wilkes observed, and confirmed by Gary DePace, that HHA was a surplus LHA for FYE2021, which included an additional \$14,353.00 from the CARES Act funds. Gary DePace emphasized the HHA is in good financial shape for the upcoming fiscal year. Alex Malinowski made a motion to accept the financial report as of September 30, 2021, seconded by Mike Hogan. Motion passed 4-0 with Christopher Smith abstaining.

Judy Schell made a motion to sign and accept the Certificate of Compliance with Notification Procedures for Federal and State Lead Paint Laws, seconded by Mike Hogan. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Judy Schell made a motion to sign and accept the Certification of Top 5 Compensation Form, seconded by Mike Hogan. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

FYE 2022 Annual Operating Budget:

There was a 4% increase in the ANUEL with this year's budget guidelines, reflected as an increase from \$153,069.00 to \$159,192.00. HHA is now operating as a surplus housing authority. This should be the case throughout FYE2022, especially as Social Security is going up 5% and therefore HHA's revenue stream will increase. This is contingent on units staying occupied and utilities not increasing dramatically. Mike Hogan asked the benefit of being non-subsidized LHA; Gary DePace explained the advantage is having more spending power away from DHCD's guidelines. Mike Hogan asked if HHA would have to continue to utilize the CHAMP application process if no longer in need of a subsidy; HHA would. Alex Malinowski made a motion to accept the FYE 2022 Annual Operating Budget as presented, seconded by Judy Schell. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion to review, approve, and sign payroll, time sheets and accounts payable was made by Mike Hogan, seconded by Alex Malinowski. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion to accept and sign the November 26, 2021, Warrant was made by Judy Schell, seconded Mike Hogan. Motion passed 4-0, with Christopher Smith abstaining.

Old Business:

Project #127040: Community Building Residing – Dean Couture has rejected the proposal to administer a change order for the repairs as requested by the Board and presented by DHCD Construction Advisor, Tom Boyer. HHA is awaiting Dean Couture to file a dispute with the help of RCAT. Chair Wilkes as that the Director put HHA's attorney, John Liebel, on notice.

Project #127036: Repave of the Parking Lot – The Application and Certification for payment #3 to JL Construction Corp. in the amount of \$4,975.63 was presented to the Board as well as the Certificate of Substantial Completion. Judy Schell made a motion to approve the Application and Certification for payment #3 to JL Construction Corp. in the amount of \$4,975.63, seconded by Mike Hogan. Motion passed 4-0, with Christopher Smith abstaining. The Director gave a report of the final punch list items, which included adjusting the timing on the crosswalk signs, addressing a damaged bench, and adding additional loam and seeding (to be done in Spring 2022). Judy Schell made a motion to accept the Certificate of Substantial Completion, seconded by Mike Hogan. Motion passed 4-0, with Christopher Smith abstaining.

Project #127048: Emergency Generator for Backup Power – The project is currently out to bid, with a walkthrough scheduled for November 17, 2021. The Director provided the Board with the Bid Schedule for this project; all bids are due by December 1, 2021. Christopher Smith asked if the specifications for the installation of the generator included an option to convert the generator to gas should the moratorium be lifted in the future. The Director will obtain an answer to this question.

The Director asked the Board if it would be acceptable if the mini-split project is tabled until HHA was ready to begin bidding process. The Board agreed this was acceptable.

The YES Phone, iPad, Computer Cooperative Senior Center/High School/Housing Authority – Workshops are going to be set up after the holidays (beginning in January). These workshops will be by appointment, which can be made through either HHA or the COA, with all workshops taking place in the

newly renovated Senior Center. The start of these workshops is contingent on Smith Academy students volunteering, but the Director is hopeful lack of volunteers will not be an issue. Smith Academy's principal and guidance counselor have relayed this opportunity for volunteer hours in the school's newsletter as well as informing specific groups of students who need to accumulate volunteer hours, such as the National Honor Society. Chair Wilkes would like the Director to reach out to the local sheriff department; being that they created a program similar to the one the HHA and COA are forming, they may have some helpful training material and ideas for the Directors.

New Business:

Judy Schell reported on the tenant meeting held Sunday, November 7, 2021. Due to the coin shortage and difficulty tenants are having obtaining quarters for the laundry machines, it was proposed that HHA could recycle some of the coins for the tenants. The Director will ask Gary DePace if this is an option, as half of the quarters goes to DHCD so there are some logistics to work through.

PHN 2021-21: LAP – The Director will have a draft of a Language Access Plan (LAP) prepared for the Board to review at the December Board Meeting.

The Director presented the Board with a draft of a CORI policy. HHA currently does not have one. The Director was made aware of the lack of a CORI policy after a representative of an outside entity emailed the Director requesting a copy of HHA's CORI policy. Chair Wilkes asked that the acronym "CHSB" be spelled out in the first line of the policy. Judy Schell made a motion to accept the CORI policy given the Director make the one change to it, seconded by Alex Malinowski. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Report of the Executive Director:

The Director has met with the tenants to thoroughly discuss and distribute the Tenant Handbook. Tenants also signed off that they had received a copy of the Handbook.

DHCD periodically reaches out to tenants of LHAs and asks them to take a survey on the various aspects of living in State Housing. This was done in the Fall of 2019 and the results were analyzed by the University of Massachusetts, Boston. The Board was distributed copies of the results of the Tenant Survey which included a comparison of HHA's results to other small LHAs in Western Massachusetts as well as small LHAs throughout the State of Massachusetts. The tenants at Capawonk gave the housing staff and property high ratings. HHA's scores were overall better when compared to other small Western Massachusetts LHAs as well as state-wide small LHAs.

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

The Director attended the Board of Selectmen meeting held November 16, 2021. The Director discussed the safety concerns of the School Street crosswalk as well as the issue of the tree planted at Capawonk by the Town. Mike Hogan was unaware of the tree issue. The Director explained that there was some miscommunication with the Town; the DPW took instructions from someone who is not affiliated with Capawonk and planted a small leaf Linden on Monday, November 8, 2021. By Wednesday, November 10, 2021, the tree had been removed from the property. The Chair had voiced his disappointment in the

size of the tree, and the Director explained to the BOS that tenants had chosen some options of species of trees they wanted to see planted. Overall, the BOS meeting was positive, as the tree issue was understood to be a miscommunication and the Town will be exploring ways to make all Hatfield residents safer when using crosswalks.

Christopher Smith voiced tenants' have been discussing the need for a speed bump before the crosswalk on School Street. Chair Wilkes stated both the Hatfield Fire and Police Chiefs view that as an inappropriate location for a speed bump. The Director commented that this was not a discussion for the Board; School Street is the Town's property and therefore it is not the burden of HHA to resolve any traffic issues. Chair Wilkes added the tenants have spoken to the BOS and other members of the Town administration to voice their concerns about how unsafe the School Street crosswalk is for pedestrians. Christopher Smith suggested bringing the issue to the BOS to achieve a solution to this matter. The Director will join Christopher Smith at a BOS meeting to represent the Housing Authority on this matter.

Christopher Smith shared concerns of tenants who have lived at Capawonk for many years, with their units going unrenovated since move-in, and are not eligible to be moved to a newly renovated unit when one becomes available. Christopher Smith would like to address this, and perhaps the extra money in the FYE2022 budget should go to upgrades in the units of these "long-term" tenants. The Director stated that would be a matter of changing HHA's policy, which would be a larger discussion. This will be discussed during a future meeting.

Motion to Adjourn

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenna Duquette, Secretary