

EAST HAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY MONTHLY BOARD MEETING

May 18, 2022 6 PM Chatham Acres

Call to Order

A board meeting of the East Hampton Housing Authority was held on 5/18 at Chatham Acres 1 Gov. Bill O'Neil Dr, East Hampton CT. . It began at 6:00 and was presided over by Eric Gibson

Attendees

Voting members in attendance included Eric Gibson, Donna Goodspeed, Bonnie Berkovich, Beth Kelpen Roseanne Amenta

Employees in attendance: Jodi Brazal, Sheryl Dougherty

Employees absent: Dion Roccapriore

Guest in attendance: Timothy Chapman, Emmet Flannery, Louise Guertin, Marilyn Gerzabek, Alberta Hyland, Sally Macha, Ann McLaughlin, Linda Nadeau, Shirley Shaw, Kelly Zeitlin

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous March 16, 2022 meeting was made by Donna Goodspeed and seconded by Bonnie Berkovich

Payments of Bills and Financial Report - Jodi Brazal reported an increase to 200 percent to the workman's compensation insurance. The Insurance company stated the increase was based on worker's compensation claim history. Per Jodi's knowledge there have been no claims.

Communications – Jodi reported a complaint from the town of East Hampton regarding the following statement on the agenda, citing exclusion.

"Due to the uptick in Covid-19 cases and the limited size of our meeting space, we ask that priority be given to the Board, Residents, and Staff to attend. We also ask that ALL attendees wear a mask"

Jodi reiterated that the East Hampton Housing Authority is not a town department and clarified the meeting is open to the public, however in this instance, should space be an issue, board members, residents and staff would be given priority for attendance. Overflow could stand, or we could move outside.

Public Comment-

Shirley Shaw C6 Chatham Acres - commented regarding sidewalks an item further on the agenda.

Alberta Hyland E5 Chatham Acres - commented on the discontinuance of Zoom.

Ann McLaughlin 85 N. Main St (no unit provided) commented regarding the status of East Hampton Housing Authority(EHHA) as a town department.

McLaughlin, also, commented on the structure of the EHHA board meetings and the failure to follow Robert's Rules of Order, citing several examples:

Public comment is not available at both the beginning and end of the meeting and does not allow for complaints, suggestions and questions.

Tenant commissioner does not report

Staff is not allowed to report

McLaughlin recommended training regarding Robert's Rules of Order.

Updates & Reports

Maintenance Projects was presented by Jodi Brazal.

Work orders for all maintenance requests are required by the Department of Housing and the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority to ensure a proper paper trail.

The correct procedure is to contact Sheryl Dougherty to fill out the work order and maintenance has 72 hrs to respond.

Contractor on site should not be approached by residents. They are hired by EHHA with instructions provided solely by EHHA staff, they are paid by the hour. Interruptions and additional requests result in added costs to the maintenance budget, which could impact rental costs.

Quotes on concrete for sidewalk repair are being gathered, most have been extremely expensive. The priority remains safety.

Landscaping - there is a concern regarding patios being built in back of units without permission. This is a violation of leases and an EHHA insurance liability. Tenant insurance only covers the unit - not outdoor property.

Jodi requested the board decide the ramifications of these lease violations. Eric Gibson moved to make this an agenda item under New Business.

Resident Services Coordinator report was presented by Sheryl Dougherty.

Energy Assistance – following up on the final applications to ensure they are approved, and submitting 1 or 2 stragglers by the end of this month

Cable Complaint – has not resulted in the expectations hoped for but RSC continues to work with the Attorney General's office. We were however able to convert about 15-20 residents to Internet Essentials and get them set up with streaming television programming at significantly less cost than the cable packages they have had and the RSC continues to work individually with others desiring to do the same.

Renter's Rebate – RSC to begin taking appointments for this program that returns \$700-\$1000 to residents.

Conference – RSC attended the Northeastern Resident Services Coordinator Conference and came back with a lot of new knowledge and ideas. From that the RSC is developing a RSC Services Agreement with Consent packet to provide residents so that they are more aware of the services provided, have the opportunity to opt out of them and provide consent to provide the information that that is needed to outside agencies for the assistance we apply for, like the renters rebate and energy assistance.

Community Engagement Survey – RSC is gathering input from residents regarding activities and events they would like to participate in, in the hopes of creating things that will foster community and socialization.

Communication & Boundary Issues – are two of the RSC's biggest struggles.

Residents consistently comment "I didn't know" – regarding a lot of the information being disbursed. This is despite having the newsletter being hand delivered door to door, having bi-monthly tenant meetings, and posting things on the bulletin board.

RSC has discontinued the tenant meetings due to very poor attendance and the content discussed was not relevant to the purpose of the meetings.

RSC has had people tell her specifically they don't read the newsletter or look at the bulletin boards. Despite being in the office Mon-Thurs since October and with interns in the office regularly, residents often are verbally "surprised anyone is there"

Regarding boundaries of those office hours – We don't want to discourage "drop ins" so often the door is left open a crack. However, when its closed residents don't always knock or request a minute.

We've had two experiences in the last couple weeks in which the RSC was in zoom conference meetings with the red do not disturb sign up, a sign stating do not knock as well as a bigger sign

stating I'm in a meeting and to Do Not Disturb. In one case, I could hear the residents outside the door and one stating "I'd knock anyway" which they did, interrupting my meeting for a general question. The other person was outside the door talking and trying to stick their rent check through the crack in the door.

I would like to request the board's assistance in addressing these matters. Eric Gibson moved to make this an agenda item under New Business.

Commission on Aging report was presented by Bonnie Berkovich.

The senior center newsletter is now being distributed to both mail rooms.

The commission on Aging has developed three subcommittees to address the recent Senior Needs Survey, the committees include Transportation, Housing and Health and Wellness. These subcommittees identify the priorities represented in the results and their suggested resolutions and will be presenting them to the Town Council. She is hopeful for change.

Tenant Commissioner report was presented by Roseanne Amenta.

Roseanne had nothing to report. Roseann clarified in response to Public Comment that often tenants' questions and concerns will be addressed and resolved outside board meetings and therefore are not required to be reported as most are confidential.

Active Business -

CDBG - Jodi Brazal reported a continued breakdown in communication between the state and agency managing the grant. After two years of non-action there remains a clear lack of urgency with missed emails, failures to respond etc.

There is an added lack of faith in the architect on the project due to errors in reporting and paperwork discussed in previous meetings, as well as, the continued failures of previous work overseen by his firm that were completed at Bellwood.

Jodi has reached out to several State Representatives. Eric Gibson to reach out as well.

Property for Expansion - Jodi reported there being no news on this agenda item. She did report an upcoming tax sale which may make property available. This sale is a result of properties with delinquent taxes being given the requirement to pay or the town takes ownership and auctions the property for sale.

Eric agreed to reach out to architects to explore options.

New Business –

Automated External Defibrillators (AED) Donna Goodspeed provided research on the various options of AED's available and their costs. She reported Donald Scranton of the East Hampton Emergency Response Service has agreed to provide any training required, though she has requested quotes from both the Red Cross and the American Heart Association.

Decisions such as type, the varied accessories required, installation, training etcetera are needed. Donna reported due to supply chain issues delivery of units can expect to be up to 32 weeks.

Beth Kelpen made a motion to discuss installation of AEDs at EHHA in both locations and was seconded by Roseann Amenta.

Jodi suggested researching grants available to pay for the units. It was agreed that these units save lives. Training considerations regarding the population of those who may need to use these devices was made. ie: making cabinets low to the ground, being able to move a patient from a chair to a prone

position, the physical ability to perform CPR etc.

Due to the many considerations required from recommended units, accessories required, funding, training a motion to move this discussion to the next full board meeting was made by Donna Goodspeed and seconded by Bonnie Berkovich.

Lease Recertification and Signing

Leases will be signed May 25, 2022 and May 26, 2022 Inspections will occur in June. Upon satisfactory inspections new leases will go into effect July 1, 2022. There remain some residents who have not satisfied their paperwork requirements and are in jeopardy of non-renewal.

New Business

Master Key possession and emergency access - it was made aware that a resident is in possession of a master key and residents are using a former procedure to access units in case of emergency. A complaint was made by several residents who were not comfortable having other residents in possession of a master key and thereby access to their units.

A motion to discuss resident access to a master key was made by Roseanne and seconded by Beth.

The correct procedure is to use the existing 24/7 access emergency lockboxes. There are currently two, one for Emergency Medical Responders and one for Residents at each location. The concern is ensuring the key is returned to the resident lockbox, given there already is a "lost" master key at one property.

A motion to use the Resident Emergency lockbox was made by Donna and seconded by Beth.

A request to return any and all master keys held by residents will be placed in the June newsletter, as well as, clarification of emergency access procedures.

Inspections - Inspections for non-rental assisted units will be conducted in June. As previously indicated under lease recertifications, a satisfactory inspection will allow leases to become active effective July 1st.

This clarity will be posted in the June Newsletter.

Vacancy Report -

1 Bellwood 0- Chatham

Jodi reported a continued lack of qualified tenants and the difficulty in finding a suitable tenant for the current available unit, due to its difficult accessibility, a tenant who is highly ambulatory is required. The process of vetting potential tenants is lengthy, requiring the application, the offer to accept, then screening, and in instances of a decline the process starts again. On average the process takes two to three weeks in non-rental assistance and a month if rental assistance is attached. While the process occurs, no other candidate is contacted for that particular apartment.

ADJOURNMENT

Donna moved that the meeting be adjourned Bonnie seconded, this was agreed upon at 7:14pm.
Respectfully Submitted by:

Sheryl Dougherty, RSC