

Trumbull Housing Authority – January 23, 2024

Trumbull Housing Authority Virtual Meeting
January 23, 2024
7:00 pm

Commissioners Present: Chairman Kathleen McGannon, Maureen Bova, Laurel Anderson and Sara Pflueger

Absent: Charlene Pederson

Also Present: Paulette Mack, Executive Director; Jacqueline Vega, Assistant Property Manager; Dawn Cantafio, Director of Finance; Lisa Labella, Administrative Assistant; Jason Geel, Accountant; Lisa Alhabal, Resident Service Coordinator

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. McGannon at 7:02 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to add to New Business the discussion of rent increases for Stern Village and the Congregate. Seconded by Mrs. Bova and approved by unanimous consent.

Past Minutes

Motion was made by Mrs. Bova to approve the Special THA Meeting (CNA) minutes of December 14, 2023. Seconded by Mrs. Anderson and approved.

Motion was made by Mrs. Bova to approve the regular THA Meeting minutes of December 12, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Pflueger and approved by unanimous consent.

Motion was made by Mrs. Bova to approve the Special THA Meeting minutes of January 9, 2024. Seconded by Mrs. Anderson and approved by unanimous consent.

Public Comment

No public comments.

Report of Director of Finance

Mrs. Cantafio reported the following:

1. The audit has been going smoothly. There was a meeting on January 11 with Marcum LLP (new audit firm) to evaluate records. No problems were indicated.
2. Currently working on the lease for the Congregate and Tenant Selection Plan. Waiting for more information and should be moving forward shortly.
3. Rental income is up for 2023 in the Village and they hope to maintain the status moving forward.
4. Interest income is up again this month due to interest on the STIF account.
5. Office supplies continue to be over budget due to PHA web expenses and IT support.
6. Refuse removal is over budget due to tenants moving out and leaving furniture that Maintenance has to remove before turning over the units. Getting additional dumpster charges on a regular basis recently in order to clean out the units.
7. Paper supplies and toner seem to be the overage at the Congregate for office supplies.
8. All maintenance supplies are up due to deliveries of appliances.

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9. Appliances are on back order. Some were ordered a little bit ahead. We now have a supply and as they renovate the apartments, they will replace the stoves and refrigerators.

Report of Congregate Manager

Ms. Torres was not in attendance. Ms. Mack reported:

1. Currently there is one unit open in the Congregate.
2. Work on the fire panel continues.

Report of Resident Service Coordinator

Ms. Alhabal reported the following:

1. On January 11, Jewish Family Services came with the mobile food pantry with seventy people participating. February 8 will be the next visit. Eighty-seven people are signed up to participate.
2. February is Heart Month. Paramedic Leigh Goodman from Trumbull EMS will be making a presentation on Heart Health on February 16 at 11:00 am for the Village and 12 noon for the Congregate.
3. One of the residents suggested a Game Day so the residents could socialize. It is scheduled every other Wednesday from 1-3 pm. The first Game Day was held on January 11. This was a great suggestion and she hopes participation will increase once the word gets out. The next dates are February 7 and February 21.
4. The Southwestern CT Agency on Aging (SWCAA) will be doing a presentation on February 23 at 10:30 am in the Community Room at the Village and 11:30 at the Congregate to discuss the services that are offered by the agency. This presentation was postponed from January 9 due to a scheduling conflict.
5. Currently trying to schedule presentations for both the Congregate and Village on the same day so that both locations get the same information.

Report of Property Manager

Ms. Vega reported the following:

1. Maintenance is working on closing out Work Orders. There are still Work Orders to close out from inspections. Some are project Work Orders and include fixing some of the units that needed help. Seventeen of the Work Orders are new and have been prioritized.
2. Occupancy rate is 92.4%. Fourteen units are currently vacant which puts them at a 7.53% vacancy rate. Four of the units are open and ready, however, one of the units had an unexpected issue and will have to be looked at for repairs. The remaining units have been interviewed for with two scheduled to move in on February 1, if they agree, and the last on February 15.
3. The wait list is moving fast with sixteen applicants. We should be opening a wait list fairly soon. Working on the forms for the pre-application process. Should be open by the end of February or at the latest April.
4. Pet permits have been a success. Various tenants have come in to get the pet forms signed and submit all required paperwork. Residents are happy about the new process and coming in and getting the forms has helped to alleviate some of the feelings the residents had about the possibility of losing their pets.

Treasurer's Report and Discussion of Financials

Mrs. Bova reported for the six-month period ending December 31, 2023. The Authority had an operating gain, before capital activity and depreciation, of \$18,330 of which \$11,335 is attributable to Stern Village and \$6,995 to Congregate.

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For Stern Village, operating results have been trending in a more positive direction, moving from operating deficits through the first four months of approximately \$5,000 to the current surplus. Administrative expenses have gone from a budget deficit to close to budgeted amounts with total administrative projected to come under budget for the year with additional cost savings expected through yearend. Maintenance expenses continue to trend overbudget, particularly in supplies with ongoing vacancies continuing to drive this budget area. Management anticipates other maintenance expense areas to stabilize within the budget, but supplies will end the year significantly over budget, with the goal of exceeding revenue projections to offset this cost overrun. Currently, net rental revenue has met projected amounts despite significant lost revenue through ongoing vacancies.

For Congregate, the Operating Gain of \$6,995 has come close to budgeted gain of \$7,500 through the first six months. Overall, occupancy has exceeded budgeted amounts resulting in \$2,415 in rental income in excess of budgeted amounts mixed with some budgeted cost overruns. The maintenance contract's budget has recently gone over due to call-for-aid system repairs accounting for the cost overrun. Otherwise, legal fees continue to be the largest cost overrun for this property.

Tenant Accounts Receivable balances as follows:

	6/30/23	# of Tenants	12/31/23	# of Tenants
Stern Village				
One Month or Less	(\$6,448)	73	(\$3,158)	75
Over One Month Rent	\$1,350	3	\$1,400	3
Inactive AR	\$14,392	21	\$14,364	29
Total	\$9,294	97	\$12,606	107
Congregate				
One Month or Less	\$2,965	8	(\$341)	8
Over One Month Rent		0	\$3,218	2
Inactive AR	\$3,846	7	\$3,846	7
Total	\$6,811	15	\$6,723	17

The overall cash position of the Authority, including reserves, is \$976,234.

A snapshot of program balances are as follows:

	6/30/23	11/30/23	12/31/23	YTD Change
Stern Village				
Cash	\$43,918	\$37,947	\$33,755	(\$10,163)
Accounts Payable	\$65,510	\$27,227	\$27,849	\$37,661
Interprogram Loan	\$351,546	\$339,716	\$343,823	(\$7,723)
Reserves	\$528,290	\$834,146	\$834,146	\$305,856
Excess Cash	(\$96,801)	(\$49,654)	(\$57,093)	

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Congregate

Cash	\$30,563	\$81,205	\$56,469	\$25,906
Accounts Payable	\$6,774	\$8,455	\$9,838	(\$3,064)
Interprogram Loan	\$351,546	\$339,716	\$343,823	\$7,723
Reserves	\$9,831	\$10,096	\$10,096	\$265

A schedule of operating cash activity for the period:

Cash Flow	<u>Village</u>	<u>Congregate</u>
Beginning 11/30/2023	\$37,947	\$81,205
Plus		
Rents and Other	\$83,512	\$31,229
DOH Subsidy		
Interentity Transfers	\$12,345	(\$12,345)
Less		
Vendor Payables	(\$61,845)	(\$43,690)
Payroll	(\$38,204)	\$0
Ending 10/31/2023	<u>\$33,755</u>	<u>\$56,469</u>

Congregate cash is just ahead of cash management goals and has remained within expected balances for the year. Village cash has struggled to reach the cash management amount, but management expects additional immediate flexibility with certain payroll-related costs ending and the upside of better occupancy results in the second half of the budget period.

Mrs. Cantafio thanked Mr. Geel for his help on the audit and Michele for making sure everything got to the auditors on time. This is the first time in many years that they were able to get their accounting in order to get it to the auditing firm on time. Hopefully, the State will look positively on this work.

Mrs. Anderson expressed her pleasure and gratitude to the Staff and Mr. Geel for handling the audit so well. The new auditors are amazing and it seems, as a team, it was done very quickly.

Mrs. Anderson questioned the reserves and noted the THA would be applying for grants. If the State sees the money in the reserves, without already working on projects to use the money, will that hinder the THA from getting grants. Mr. Geel noted if they are large capital projects, as long as you have a scope of work put together for the use of the reserves, it shouldn't hinder too much. If it is from the Critical Needs funds and, if you have more than \$1,000 per unit (\$186,000), then they will offset the funding. Congregate and Village reserves should be looked at separately for funding. Ms. Mack is working on grant opportunities with Rina Bakalar which could also include the Village. Additional

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discussion was held on grant funding for Stern Village. It is uncertain if having a scope of work or capital budget in place would protect the funds, but it can't hurt. Critical needs are scored higher by the State. Having the funds will lower the score according to the metric. Mrs. Anderson noted they will be looking to approve a Capital Needs Assessment for the Village and were hoping to use the document like the one done for the Congregate to look at costs and funding for the findings. Mr. Geel noted it depends on the competitiveness of the grant and the critical need. Mr. Geel felt the best grants would be matching type grants where they give you dollar-for-dollar funding. Mrs. Anderson addressed Ms. Mack regarding the reserve situation and recommended she look for matching grants.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Mack reported the following:

1. Contacted Mentor regarding the Village rent increase; waiting for a reply.
2. Meeting is set with Ms. Mack, Ms. Vega and Rina Bakalar on January 24 at 1:30 pm at the Town Hall to discuss grants. THA has drainage issues throughout the property.
3. Several units are open, 14/15, some due to deaths, others have moved out to live with family or have been admitted to nursing homes. Those are the reasons they have so many empty units.
4. One vendor has given a quote for rehabbing the empty units and noted other vendors are not returning her calls.
5. Gutter quotes are a challenge as only one vendor has responded.
6. Increasing the rent for the Congregate and Village will be discussed later in the meeting.

New Business

1. Discussion and Vote on New Lease for Village – Mrs. Labella discussed the changes to be made in the document. Tenant meeting was held on January 12; many residents attended but no comments were made either on the lease or Tenant Selection Plan. Most comments referred to the animal assistance policy. One of the documents provided to the Board was an outline of the changes made to the lease and the Vacated Premises Policy which was overlooked and came to their attention through the Congregate Manager.
 - a. Typo was corrected on the bottom of Page 1 – There was a word missing which was added. Section 8 – was discussed with regard to the above statement.
 - b. Page 4, Section 8 – no language requiring residents to provide notice or how long that notice should be when they are vacating. The language now states a 30 day notice. She would like to add – You must notify THA **in writing** at least 30 days... in the first sentence.
 - c. Section 11, aa – addresses the pet issue. Should only refer to grandfathered pets; there are no pets. Those approved on January 9, 2024 are governed by the animal policy.
 - d. There needs to be a sprinkler addendum as required by the State – Mrs. Cantafio noted CHFA stated they are required to have a lease rider for a fire suppression system alert notice so that all residents know, when they sign the lease, that there is no sprinkler system in the apartment. It will be included in the lease package.
 - e. H – the last sentence will be removed as it is unenforceable.

Motion was made by Mrs. Anderson to approve the new lease for Stern Village as amended and with the addendum for the sprinkler rider. Seconded by Ms. Pflueger and approved by unanimous consent.

2. Discussion and Vote on Tenant Selection Process – Mrs. Labella noted there were no changes or comments from residents on the document. **Motion was made by Mrs. Bova to approve the Tenant Selection Process. Seconded by Ms. Pflueger and approved by unanimous consent.**

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3. Grant Opportunities and Funding Approval – Mrs. Anderson noted Ms. Mack is working with Ms. Bakalar regarding the Small Cities Grant. This grant requires up front funding in order to come up with a plan on the work. Discussion was held regarding whether it might be helpful to Ms. Mack to have funding approved up to a certain dollar amount for the plan in order to move this forward and to assure the Town Council that the Board is supporting the application. Ms. Mack noted the THA has drainage problems. It was unsure how to proceed with this project and funding. Mr. Geel noted an architect should be able to provide all the up-front costs for the project. Approving a dollar amount at this time may not be necessary. Mrs. Anderson wanted the Board to be aware of this project. The last grant involved a lot of work and was costly for the Board to fund. It was suggested Ms. Mack work with Ms. Bakalar to see what the timing for the grant would be. Mrs. McGannon will speak with Mr. Estrada to see if he can assist with pricing. A meeting can be scheduled, if necessary, to approve any necessary documents or motions required.
4. Discuss the On-Site Assessment for the Village/Board Approval to Withdraw from Village Reserves to Have on-Site Assessment Done – Mrs. Anderson noted there has been a working group reviewing the Capital Needs Assessment (CNA) completed for the Congregate in 2021 from On-Site. It has been ten years since the same company did this assessment for Stern Village. The process needs to start in February and they have been informed it must be funded out the reserves. Amount is \$10,000. This is not a budgeted item and requires Board approval. This will be the same document for Stern as for the Congregate which was helpful in addressing the work requirements and costs. **Mrs. Anderson motioned that the Board approve the agreement with On-Site for the Stern CNA and that they use \$10,500 out of reserves to fund it. Seconded by Ms. Pflueger and approved by unanimous consent.**
5. Discussion of Rent Increase for Stern Village and the Congregate – Mr. Geel and Mrs. Cantafio discussed the utility allowance study for the Village. She noted they are having a problem with coming up to the average because of energy assistance for the residents, residents moving and other requirements of the study. The State would like to see this study every five years. Mrs. Cantafio may be able contact the State to see what to do since they cannot meet the minimum requirements for each type of unit for the reasons mentioned. Mr. Geel noted the benefits of the study do not go to the neediest based on the program design. This is important in the budget process and will be removed as a factor in rent discussions. Discussion was held regarding residents who are rent burdened or pay less than 30% of their income. Program rule is 30%; some have been grandfathered and only pay 28%. Utility allowance and rent increase should offset eventually. Suggested the focus be on the lower rents since the higher rents have been the focus the last few years. Going from 28% to 30% and picking a number between \$25 and \$50 for the remaining residents should be considered.

Mr. Geel noted the increase at the Congregate should be a minimum of \$75 to \$100 after looking at the contracts. He needs to gather more information for the next Board meeting as far as revenue and who is affected.

Discussion was held regarding the timeline of meetings, votes, resident notices, etc. April is the Board vote for the increase after resident comments in March. Final notice as to the rent decision is the end of May. Ms. Mack will forward the information from DOH regarding the timeframe.

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Old Business

No Old Business.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Mrs. Bova to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 pm. Seconded by Ms. Pflueger and approved by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk