

Bellingham Housing Authority - Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2021 – virtually via ZOOM

1. Mrs. Sacco calls meeting to order at 6:00.

The following members present:

- Monique Bergeron, Executive Director
- Debra Sacco – Chair Person
- Linda Cartier – Vice Chair Person
- Sandra Tracy – Treasurer
- Chris Remillard – Assistant Treasurer
- Randy Hall – Board Member
- Russell Anzivino – Recording Secretary
- Richard Conlon – Accountant

2. Approval of May 11, 2021 Minutes

- Mrs. Tracy makes motion to accept, Mr. Hall Seconds; Discussion: Mrs. Cartier states on back of page 1 Russell needs to re-listen to section about the lead and who makes motions for what. Third page under number 10, include bank discussion and that all members need to go to bank and sign papers. Mrs. Sacco then asks for additional input, in which there was none. With the changes made, the board is all in favor of accepting the minutes.

3. Public Input

- None
- Mrs. Cartier asks Mrs. Bergeron if she is giving her Letter of Resignation during meeting and where it should be discussed – Mrs. Bergeron stated it was to be part of the “New Business” Section.
- Mrs. Cartier also asks why this meeting is a Zoom meeting and not in person at Depot Court – Mrs. Bergeron stated it was due to a change in the State of Emergency. Mrs. Cartier thought it was up to the board to decide and Mr. Remillard also states that every committee in town is meeting in person. Mrs. Cartier states meeting should be in person in the building again so the residents can see the board and discuss matters with the board. Mrs. Cartier thinks it is up to the board to make the decision. Mr. Remillard makes a motion to have meetings in person again next month; Mrs. Cartier seconds; Mr. Hall requests from a scheduling standpoint, as long as state allows, keeping meetings via Zoom. Mr. Remillard thinks if you are elected or appointed, you should make the time to be able to attend meeting in person. Mrs. Tracy thinks meeting should resume in person and wear masks if feel to be necessary – she also states next month is her last meeting. Mrs. Cartier asks Mrs. Tracy why she’s leaving in which she responds that she has too many other things going on. She advised she will serve through the summer until a new appointment can be made. Mrs. Sacco asks Mrs. Bergeron if they meet in person, is there any guidance on distance/masking – Mrs. Bergeron states she did not read anything on that. Mrs. Bergeron asks if there is a preference to where August meeting is – Mrs. Tracy asks for Depot Court. Board members agree except Mr. Hall who was opposed to in-person meetings.

4. Correspondence

A) KP Law eUpdate Implications of the Pending Termination of the State of Emergency dated June 7, 2021: already discusses previously in regards to in-person meetings.

B) HUD QAD HCV VMS Review Report

- BHA Response to HUD QAD VMS Review: Mr. Remillard asks whose recommendation it was to get rid of Section 8 and how it all happened – Mr. Conlon states it was Mrs. Bergeron suggestion although Mr. Conlon suggested it many years ago. Mrs. Bergeron states Section 8 program is very labor intensive. The 30 vouchers in Bellingham have been transferred to Dedham. Discussion regarding priority and preferences are still in place for Bellingham residents. Mr. Remillard has concerns this decision was not relayed to the town. It is discussed that Section 8 is not part of the town so no clear reason why it would have been relayed to the Town Administrator. Reason for change in executive director salary is due to dropping Section 8. Executive salary will remain same through March 2022, per guidance from DHCD.

C) HUD HCV Transfer approval – no questions

D) PHN 2021-11 End of COVID-19 State of Emergency and LHA Operations – no questions

5. Old Business

A) Resolution 2021-08 Procurement Policy Amendment: Mrs. Sacco asks for further discussion/questions – Mrs. Cartier states she would like to make a motion to table again – too many discrepancies from what Fitchburg has and what Bellingham has – there's an entire ethics section not listed in Bellingham's. Also still issues with numbers at bottom of pages. Mrs. Sacco and Mrs. Cartier discuss having members of the board meet in person to discuss missing pieces and develop questions as to why they are missing. Mrs. Cartier makes official motion to table Resolution 2021-08; no board members second the motion to table; Mr. Hall makes motion to approve Resolution 2021-08; Mr. Remillard seconds to approve; discussion – Mrs. Cartier states there is a lot of missing information and parts that don't make sense. No further discussion. Mr. Hall and Mr. Remillard in favor of approving. Mrs. Tracy questions Mrs. Cartier for clarification on her reasoning why she wants to table Resolution 2021-08. Mrs. Cartier reiterates prior comments. Mrs. Bergeron states she did not include every little piece of Fitchburg policy. Mrs. Bergeron used it as a guide. Mrs. Tracy questions that anything in regards to ethics would just be assumed – Mrs. Cartier states no. It is again discussed that the Fitchburg policy was only used as a reference. Mrs. Bergeron feels ethics section shouldn't be in a Procurement Policy. Mrs. Cartier mentions there is a section missing on selecting subcontractors that is in Fitchburg and not Bellingham. Mr. Conlon feels ethics section should be included. Mrs. Tracy votes to table Resolution 2021-08. Mr. Hall and Mr. Remillard vote to pass Resolution 2021-08 and Mrs. Cartier, Mrs. Tracy, and Mrs. Sacco vote to table Resolution 2021-08 until next meeting. It is discussed the members will schedule a time to meet together to review.

6. New Business

A) Resolution 2021-10 Write off Tenant Accounts Receivable: Mrs. Cartier makes motion; Mr. Hall seconds; Discussion – Mr. Remillard asks if someone can explain the resolution – Mrs. Cartier states it is writing off the money owed – Mrs. Tracy explains resident either abandoned, passed away, or moved out; all in favor; motion carries.

B) Resolution 2021-11 Open Flame Policy: Mrs. Cartier asks what is being added – Mrs. Bergeron states there were recent fire at Franklin Housing Authority due to candles – there is currently no written open flame policy for Bellingham. Candles were never allowed but now this will be a written policy to enforce no open flames. This policy will cover all locations. Mr. Remillard asks how it will be enforced – Mrs. Bergeron states “it will be worked on” and inspections will be completed. Mr. Remillard asks who will enforce at night – Mrs. Cartier states it is more or less on the honor system. Mr. Remillard makes motion to adopt policy; Mrs. Tracy seconds; all members approve except Mrs. Cartier who does not agree with policy.

C) Resolution 2021-12 Outside Use of Utilities Policy: policy being presented because a housing authority had a resident with an electric vehicle and was running extension cord out of their apartment to charge their car. Electricity should not be used for high-amount of electricity charges. Same thing goes with outside water sources for watering plants. The electricity and water are paid for by the housing authority. Policy includes some of the parking policy but the parking policy only mentioned washing a vehicle. Mrs. Cartier asks how we will resolve the issue when residents need to charge their vehicles – Mrs. Bergeron states they will need to go elsewhere. Policy would exclude charging the electric lawn care equipment provided to some residents by the housing authority. It is discussed that the scattered sites should be written in the policy as “the exception.” Mrs. Cartier and Mr. Remillard asks if this prevents residents from using outdoor holiday lights – Mrs. Bergeron states residents use battery operated lights. Mrs. Bergeron continues to state that this is a draft and up to the board – they are more than able to make changes to it. Mrs. Sacco clarifies that the housing authority does not pay electric on Arthur Street and Center Street. The policy can be made to not apply to Arthur Street or Center Street. Mr. Remillard makes motion to table policy as edits need to be made as previously discussed; Mrs. Bergeron asks for specifics – Mrs. Tracy states the scattered sites and their electric lawn care equipment need to be listed as an exception – Mr. Remillard wants it removed entirely as Wrentham Manor and Depot Court will never have lawn equipment. It is discussed also that electronic devices be removed from the policy. The electric policy is only going to apply to Wrentham Manor and Depot Court. Water feature applies to all sites and is a state regulation. Mrs. Tracy asks if residents are allowed decorative lights inside their apartments – Mrs. Bergeron states they have never been limited in that way before. It is asked that outside battery light usage being allowed be written in the policy. It is discussed Mrs. Bergeron will present the changes at the next meeting.

D) Discussion regarding FY2022 Budget/Executive Director Salary Calculations: it is discussed that Mrs. Bergeron decision to resign is a personal decision. Mr. Hall questions what is to be done with director salary given Mrs. Bergeron resignation – Mr. Conlon states that’s once director gives their resignation, the board can begin the advertisement process for a new director. Mrs. Bergeron states she is giving her 90-day notice and will work through end of October 2021 – 90 days from August 1, 2021. The board is given a packet to assist in the hiring of a new director. Mr. Remillard asks what the new salary will be – Mr. Conlon states it is not calculated yet. New salary will be calculated based on 158 units in the housing authority at 32 hours. Mrs. Cartier asks Mr. Conlon if her and members of board should get together to begin the process of advertising for the position. Mrs. Bergeron advises to read the 2021-03 notice as it will explain step-by-step what needs to be done. Mr. Conlon discusses if Mrs. Bergeron will be taking any vacation time – she states only the week she has scheduled off coming up. It is discussed at the end of Mrs. Bergeron’s 90-days she will be owed her vacation and sick time. Mrs. Bergeron states she is resigning, not retiring. Mrs. Cartier asks if the week of vacation time

Mrs. Bergeron carried over comes into play – Mrs. Bergeron states she will be paid for all her vacation time. Sick time will be paid at 20% per Director's contract. Mr. Remillard makes motion to accept Mrs. Bergeron's resignation based on resignation letter that will be sent out; Mr. Hall seconds; further discussion – Mr. Remillard states contract says board can let director out of 90-day period with no penalty – Mrs. Bergeron states she plans on working the 90-days. However, she is actively looking for another position and if she cannot give another employer as much time, the board can re-discuss then. Mr. Remillard thinks the board should allow Mrs. Bergeron to leave prior to 90-days if an opportunity arises – the board discusses this would not hurt the Housing Authority financially but would affect the authority in the aspect of not having a director. Mr. Remillard states he spoke with the State and there are programs to assist in keeping housing authority going until a replacement is found, should Mrs. Bergeron need to leave before her 90-days are up. Mr. Hall seconds the motion to accept Mrs. Bergeron's resignation. Three board members in favor and one opposed.

7. Treasurer's Report period ending April 30, 2021 and May 31, 2021

- Mrs. Sacco asks Mr. Conlon to explain what happened to the VMS and how there were three issues – Mr. Conlon states it's the way the info was presented to the board. Mrs. Bergeron states there were no fines – just concerns. The entire concern is resolved. Mr. Conlon will be at next meeting.

- Mrs. Bergeron states large payment to the group insurance – quarterly payment.
- Copy machine was purchased on the advice of Mr. Conlon
 - Mr. Remillard questions this and thinks it's an unreasonable expense – Mrs. Bergeron states will assist in the amount of printing for applicants; also this is a recommendation by Mr. Conlon to use some of the Section 8 money. Did not lease a machine because Mr. Conlon asked that one be purchased. It's discussed the money had to be spent or it would be taken back.
- Mrs. Cartier asks if there are two full-time maintenance workers – in which there is.
- Another large expense in June was for Norfolk County Retirement
- Running credit for solar
- Large check to Mr. Conlon- \$3,000

8. Executive Director Report

- Daily and weekly meeting w/ town and DHCD are over
- Monthly meeting w/ state
- Preconstruction meeting and notice to proceed for the emergency generator installation
- Three vacancies
- A lot of applicants received
- Paperwork all together for Dedham Housing Authority
- Tenants accounts receivable doing okay
- Mr. Remillard makes motion to stop being member of National Association of Housing where it costs \$281; Mr. Hall second; all in favor; none opposed.
- Mrs. Tracy asks if community rooms open – Mrs. Bergeron advised yes – no restrictions.

9. Any other business that may legally come before the board

- None

10. Meeting Closure

- Next meeting is August 10, 2021 at Depot Court
- Mrs. Cartier makes motion to adjourn
- Mr. Remillard asks about the Procurement – Mrs. Cartier says an email will go out and will be done before next meeting.
- Mrs. Tracy seconds to adjourn; all in favor; meeting ended.