

WATERTOWN HOUSING AUTHORITY
Minutes
Special Meeting: Wednesday, December 30, 2020
VIA Zoom Meeting – 7:00 P.M.

1. Roll Call.

Members Present: Janelle Wilk – Chairwoman/Acting Executive Director
Dan DiVito – Vice Chairman
Sharon Pratt – Resident Commissioner
Denise Russ - Commissioner
Carmine Verno - Commissioner

Other Present: Russell Antonacci – Interim Manager
Lori Finke – Interim On-Site Manager

2. Public Participation:

Katherine Camara, 31 Cottage Place: spoke

3. Chairwoman’s Report – Acting Executive Director

Janelle Wilk reported: We all know things are different this year with COVID but I hope everyone had a nice and safe holiday. I want to express my gratitude for everyone’s patience and understanding as we go through this transition. Please know the Watertown Housing Authority will not change; the Board will continue to function the way it has been. The management may have changed but they still report to the Board. I realize that referring the current management as “interim” can evoke feelings of being unsettled and uneasy about the anticipation of another change. The board has strict protocols that must be followed which require the current Property Management Company to be referred to as “interim”. We are working together to make sure all three complexes are safe, clean and well maintained. That will always be a priority as we only want what is best for the tenants. I also want to note that the WHA meeting that was on December 16th; had some technical difficulties and we felt to be fair to the public that we postpone the meeting until tonight. All commissioners were on Zoom at the time but the Zoom link was not working correctly and it wasn’t showing that people were waiting in the “Waiting room”. We had no way of knowing if anyone else was trying to get on and that meeting should have been a “special” meeting not a regular meeting too. I apologize for the clerical error. I do want to give a big thank you to all of our commissioners and our RSC Janice Connor, giving our personal donations along with the WHA to make some Christmas dinners and cookies to spread some holiday cheer.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting VIA Zoom – October 14, 2020
- b. Special Meeting VIA GoToMeeting – November 2, 2020

A motion was made Denise Russ, and seconded by Daniel Divito to table minutes for the Regular Meeting for October 14, 2020 and the Special Meeting for November 2, 2020.

By voice vote the motion was passed unanimously

5. Approval of bills paid for December 2020

A motion was made Daniel Divito, and seconded by Sharon Pratt to approve bills for December 2020.

By voice vote the motion was passed unanimously

6. Interim Manager's Report

Russell Antonacci reported:

I own PropertyWorx, we are a Watertown based property management company and have been in business for 15 years. We currently manage several communities in town such as Watertown Old Farms on Thomaston Road, Westview Village on Buckingham Street, the Highgate Condominium Association on Cherry Avenue, and a 55 and older adult community, Reflections on Echo Lake. When presented with this opportunity the commission tasked us with three primary responsibilities, improved services, and quality of life for the residents, improved transparency, and improved efficiency from a business perspective. The WHA mission statement reads the Watertown Housing Authority strives for social interaction to exceed our resident's expectations and to enrich the lives of those we serve. As Interim Manager it is our goal to set the Watertown Housing Authority on a path to achieve this. We are going to be working closely with the Resident Commissioner, the Resident Service Coordinator, and the Commission to implement events, trips, and programs for all three communities. We are now publishing our Commissioner reports on the Watertown web site so residents of the WHA communities can now view what the Commission is receiving and discussing. The Commission can now view maintenance activities online. We're implementing a community wide mapping system that will provide Management and the Commission with information as to the age and condition of items that include but are not limited to exterior lighting, fire panels, interior appliances and hot water tanks. We're going to begin the implementation of a preventive maintenance program which in the long run will save the WHA money as well as a preventative maintenance schedule that will forecast out when work may occur. But most importantly, our focus will be on the residents by improving services and their quality of life. We'll be reaching out to residents, in the possible form of a survey, to gather information and input from them directly to help us in achieving this goal.

Commission questions:

Sharon Pratt: I have received a lot of great feedback regarding maintenance. The people who have hand things done in their apartment were amazed in the fact that it was done so efficiently and properly. I want to say thank you very much for that, you have made a lot of tenants happy.

Denise Russ: If you make up a preventive maintenance plan where is it in the budget and how is that going to keep the costs down?

Russell Antonacci: We are proposing to put the platform in place with guidelines. It is not included in the budget right now because the transition has just begun, we need to budget to begin operations.

Carmine Verno: Can you give some insight on how many work orders you are receiving and what the turnaround times are?

Russell Antonacci: When we first started there were approximately 10 to 20 pending work orders, there was a surge of work orders within 3 or 4 weeks of our arrival. Between mid-November and mid-December we had approximately 60 work orders.

Lori Finke: Unless we have to buy materials and schedule an appointment to go into someone's apartment it would depend on the situation. For the most part we are turning them around within one or two days if not sooner.

7. New Business

- a. Signed Separation Agreement received from former Executive Administrative Assistant.
- b. Signed Separation Agreement received from former Maintenance Superintendent.

Attorney Franklin Pilicy it would be appropriate to place 7a & 7b on file.

- c. Discuss possible action on Request for Qualifications for management of the WHA. Actions include approval of Request for Qualifications, establish publication.

Attorney Franklin Pilicy: This will require a vote of the Authority because the proposal will be to publish. To publish the request for qualifications for management and we would note that the request that has been prepared as been reviewed and approved by the State of Connecticut. I am recommending publication both in the Waterbury newspaper and the Town Times. I think the authority could give us some direction as to the time you would want to give from the publication date until an end date to receive the proposals. Then I would recommend the proposal for an authority meeting or be opened in the presence of a chair plus and one other member of the authority. I think it is appropriate to get this item moving. If you want more time to discuss how to publish and things of that nature it doesn't have to be done tonight if you want to put this off for two weeks for members of the authority to review this request for qualifications and ask questions of yourself or

myself maybe that would be appropriate if you wanted to table until the first regular meeting in January.

A motion was made Carmine Verno, and seconded by Denise Russ to table.

By voice vote the motion was passed unanimously

Attorney Franklin Pilicy: I want to emphasize that I think it is entirely appropriate having it tabled until the January meeting but I would like to recommend that we do have action at that meeting. We have heard from the state they would like an update on our status of getting this done to make sure, it is moving forward. We will inform them it has been on the agenda and everyone has the request for qualifications and expect to vote at the January meeting.

d. Alarm Masters – Asking to push-off battery replacements until spring due to COVID.

Lori Finke: I talked to the owner and the residences and due to COVID and with the numbers spiking they would like to do it in the spring.

Janelle Wilk: You are confident that everyone is safe and their alarms are good.

Lori Finke: They didn't think it was an issue until spring and they do them every year, they should be good for a while yet.

e. Discussion and possible action on the 2021 Meeting Schedule.

Watertown Housing Authority
1091 Buckingham Street
Watertown, Ct 06795

2021 Meeting Dates – all meetings are held at 7:00 p.m.

January 13
Buckingham Terrace

February 10
Truman Terrace

March 10
Country Ridge

April 14
Buckingham Terrace

May 12
Truman Terrace

June 9
Country Ridge

July 14
Buckingham Terrace

August 11
Truman Terrace

September 8
Country Ridge

October 13
Buckingham Terrace

November 10
Truman Terrace

December 8
Country Ridge

A motion was made Denise Russ, and seconded by Sharon Pratt to approve the meeting for 2021 for the Watertown Housing Authority.

By voice vote the motion was passed unanimously

8. Old Business

- a. Discussion and possible action on opening community building.

Janelle Wilk: The community buildings have been closed for quite some time, I would like to hear commissioner's thoughts on reopening the buildings or keeping them closed.

Commission Comments:

Denise Russ: I personally would not want to open up the community room because as the news is talking right now, they expect a lot more cases after the first of the year because of Christmas and New Year. I would like to keep it closed at least until March.

It was the consensus of the commission as well; it will be revisited every month. Right now, we will keep those community rooms closed.

- b. Discussion and possible action on opening the Tenant waiting list for Truman Terrace.

Update on available units: Truman Terrace has 5 open apartments, Buckingham Terrace has 5 open apartments, Country Ridge has no openings.

The consensus of the commission it to open the list up and get them rented.

Attorney Franklin Pilicy: When you go down the list it is not always a realistic list, I would leave this up to Russ and Lori I would recommend you do whatever you have to do move forward with getting the units occupied.

Russell Antonacci: If we are given the green light, we will initiate the process by going through the list and finding out which ones are valid and which ones are not and then we will work from there.

Commission questions:

Sharon Pratt: Have the people on the current list have they been called more than once.

Lori Finke: Some of them have yes, I need to update that list we will go through that first.

Sharon Pratt: If they decline would they come off the list.

Lori: What I have seen in the files if they decline more than 2 times, they will come off the list.

Sharon Pratt: In the wintertime we have to heat these apartments while they are empty.

A motion was made Daniel Divito, and seconded by Sharon Pratt we need to exhaust the list we already have and then open the tenant waiting list for all sites.

By voice vote the motion was passed unanimously

9. Executive Session: In at 7:55.

- a. Personnel Matters – Discussion concerning personnel matters
 - i. Former Executive Director
 - ii. Former Executive Administrative Assistant
 - iii. Former Maintenance Superintendent
- b. Discussion of interim agreement between WHA and Property Worx LLC for Property Worx LLC to act as interim manager of WHA. Property Worx LLC to continue on an interim month to month basis until a management company is selected and a management contract is signed.

A motion was made Janelle Wilk, and seconded by Denise Russ I move that we go into Executive

Session for the purpose of Personnel Matters, attending the Executive Session will be Sharon Pratt, Denise Russ, Carmine Verno, Daniel Divito, Attorney Pilicy, Jeff George, Russ Antonacci, Lori Finke and myself Janelle Wilk.

By voice vote the motion was passed unanimously

Time out of Executive Session 9:06.

Went back into regular session 9:08.

10. Regular Session/Possible action on Personnel matters

Personnel Matters – Discussion/Possible action on personnel matters.

i. Former Executive Director

Motion by Janelle Wilk and seconded by Dan Divito to authorize the WHA attorney to continue negotiations with the Attorney for former Executive Director.

By voice vote the motion was passed unanimously

ii. Former Executive Administrative Assistant

A motion by Janelle Wilk and seconded by Carmine Verno to take no further action on this matter.

By voice vote the motion was passed unanimously

iii. Former Maintenance Superintendent

A motion by Janelle Wilk and seconded by Carmine Verno to take no further action on this matter except to approve and reimburse the final Expense Report and Employee Compensatory Report.

By voice vote the motion was passed unanimously

Discussion/Possible action of interim agreement between WHA and Property Worx LLC for Property Worx LLC to act as interim manager of WHA. Property Worx LLC to continue on an interim month to month basis until a management company is selected and a management contract is signed.

A motion by Janelle Wilk and seconded by Carmine Verno to ratify interim agreement between WHA and Propertyworx on a month-to-month basis, retroactive to November 1, 2020 and to

approve payment to Propertyworx in accordance with the interim agreement, retroactive to November 1, 2020. The interim agreement will remain in place on a month-to-month basis until a management company is selected and management contract is signed.

By voice vote the motion was passed unanimously

11. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Janelle Wilk, Chairwoman/Acting Executive Director
Watertown Housing Authority