

**Watertown Housing Authority
Regular Meeting**

Meeting Date: May 16, 2025
Meeting Time: 6:00 p.m.
Meeting Place: Truman Terrace

Members Present: Ms. Janelle Wilk, Chairwoman
Mr. Dan DiVito, Vice Chairman
Mr. Peter Mucciarone, Commissioner
Ms. Sharon Pratt, Resident Commissioner
Mr. Russ Antonacci, Manager

Members Absent: Ms. Denise Russ, Commissioner

Others Present: Mr. Lance Valentino, Property Manager

1) Roll Call

Please see above

2) Chairwoman's Report – Ms. Wilk

Happy May everyone. I'm going to watch because I didn't write any of this, so I'm going to try be quick. There're two things that I want to talk about. One on a happy note. You have lights. You have light! So Eversource, those lights are back in hopefully in a month or two because they do want those lights were run above ground because there's a fault somewhere. And so, they ran above ground so you guys can actually have lights back, but within a month or two you'll see more activity because the best way to actually do those lights would be to dig a trench and put them underground. But they wanted to do that cause that's the fastest way for you guys. So, it's not, you guys have lights and you can see where you're going. So hopefully in a month or two you'll actually have, it'll be underground and we don't have to worry about trees falling or anything like that, but there's lights.

So thank God. I do want to add something to my report because it came to my attention from somebody that someone, I guess maybe one or two people have said or made some comments about how Watertown Housing Authority is racist. And I'm concerned by that because, well, like I was just saying with the whole, I am sorry, I'm going to be very blunt with this because I've never, in any manner of any way, do I appreciate racism in any way of age, disability, color, however you speak. I could care less as long as you are a good person. That's all I care about. So, I'm not sure who is saying that, but I do know for a fact that myself and every member of this board is not racist. We do have an application that we have online. It's the same application that has been up and it's been the same. The only thing that has ever changed with that is that we've added a minimum and a maximum for your income levels. And that is a generic form that everybody, if you go to a doctor's office, they have that. So, I'm not really sure where those rumors are coming from, but I do want to say it publicly that myself and this whole entire

board, we are not racist whatsoever. We do accept anybody who meets the requirements that CHFA puts out for us. So, I just felt the need to say that because I've heard it a few times in this past week. So, I just want to make everybody be aware that we are not racist. So, everything else I have to say is actually in this agenda and hopefully this meeting will go quickly. So, I will move on from that.

3) Approval of Minutes

Agenda Item:	3.1
Subject:	To Approve the Minutes of the March 12 th , 2025 Housing Authority Regular Meeting Minutes – Country Ridge
Motion Presented By:	Mr. DiVito
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Mucciarone
Text of the Motion:	So moved.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion passed
Agenda Item:	3.2
Subject:	To Approve the Minutes of the April 30 th , 2025 Housing Authority Special Meeting Minutes – Via Zoom
Motion Presented By:	Mr. DiVito
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Mucciarone
Text of the Motion:	So moved.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	Ms. Wilk
Vote:	Motion passed

4) Approval of Bills Paid

Agenda Item:	4.1
Subject:	To Approve the bills for April 2025
Motion Presented By:	Mr. DiVito
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Mucciarone
Text of the Motion:	So moved.

Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion passed
Agenda Item:	4.2
Subject:	To Approve the bills for May 2025
Motion Presented By:	Mr. DiVito
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Mucciarone
Text of the Motion:	So moved.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion passed

5) Property Manager's Report – Mr. Valentino

Mr. Valentino - Country Ridge is full as far as available apartments. Buckingham has one open and Truman Terrace has three open as far as from April to now have 42 completed work orders and three are open also, we have a few variances. They are in the packet. One apartment at Buckingham and two at Truman are ready for rent, where C12 at Truman is still being renovated, but the other two are move in condition and they already have tenants moving in at the end of the month. C12 should be done by next month. The appliances should be in this week.

Ms. Wilk - Ok, so we have some variances to go through. E7 wants to have all of the walls painted, the whole apartment and she would like us to paint it, correct?

Mr. Valentino – Yes. She has been there for over two years and it has not been painted in that time. It would just be a regular color, and it does look as though it needs it.

Agenda Item:	5.1
Subject:	To Approve the Painting Variance for E7
Motion Presented By:	Mr. DiVito
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Mucciarone
Text of the Motion:	So moved.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None

Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion passed

Ms. Wilk – Ok, same thing for B3? She wants the whole thing painted and the same color, correct? And again, there is a need?

Mr. Valentino – Yes. Yes, to all.

Agenda Item:	5.2
Subject:	To Approve the Painting Variance for B3

Motion Presented By:	Mr. Mucciarone
Motion Seconded By:	Ms. Pratt

Text of the Motion:	So moved.
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Discussion:	Mr. DiVito questioned if we were paying for this one as well. Ms. Wilk said yes and explained the 10 year mark as it is part of maintaining the property.
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Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion passed

Ms. Wilk – Ok, the next one is for the dog. She would like an emotional support dog, and we have done this before, so I think it is up to us. We have something drafted from before as well. She will have to follow the policy that we have. Did we put that we wanted an insurance, like an additional insurance on the renter's insurance just in case? God forbid someone gets bit, I know it's an emotional support dog and as long as they have the appropriate paperwork, the dog, I feel bad because I love animals, but my animals are not emotional support dog.

Mr. Antonacci - There's nothing about insurance. And then we do say it has to be registered with the housing authority, but we should also make sure it's registered with the town.

Ms. Pratt - I do just have one question that stood out to me and it says that she's having surgery. And my question is, while she's having surgery, I just want to know who's feeding and taking out the dog. I mean we don't want the dog feeding itself.

Ms. Wilk - We can have that be a question to say in signing this and having all this stuff that we do need to make sure that that dog has, it's fine if she has to have surgery, but if she is someone to watch that dog or dog could go. That's my point. So, if we can add that to this and say she has to sign this and then give us the appropriate paperwork and everything for this and then just let us know when she is. In fact, when she's not around and things like that, who would be taking care of her dog?

Ms. Pratt - People do leave their animals in the house, you know what I'm saying? And they end up going away for a few days and the animals are in there. I just want to make sure she said she's having surgeries. I just want to make sure somebody's taking care of the animals.

Ms. Wilk - That's a reasonable thing. So as long as she follows this and then if she can let us know. We do need to, if someone could reach out to her and say that as long as she provides us with this and then literally just let us know when she's not there, who will be taking care of the dog.

Mr. DiVito - We should say approved contingent upon having insurance for the dog and information about who will care for the dog if you're absent from your home there.

Mr. Antonacci - Perfect. And through the chair. One other thing I think we should add is an apartment inspection, whether it's monthly or whatever, just to look at the apartment. So, if there is, say the dog is damaging something, we don't wait until she moves out and the whole apartment is destroyed. Whether it's because we're doing a standard application, it's just something that should be added. So, we catch something early and if it has to be repaired, it's repaired sooner than later. Also, when you get an emotional support dog, there is a class they have to go through to get certified.

Mr. DiVito - But if the dog is trained, so many emotional support dogs are pre-trained. So, what I'm saying is I got the impression from Pete that she would have to go to a training session, but I believe many emotional support dogs, the dog itself is the one that received the certificate, not the person. So, what I'm saying, we get clarity if she gets a dog, I don't think she needs to go to a class if the dog has a certificate, we should get that along with a doctor's note.

Ms. Pratt - And we asked for that the last time too. Well see that's the only thing I want to make because of me dealing with it. I just want to make sure that we follow, I don't mind if we add, but I want to make sure that we follow the same guidelines as with the other.

Ms. Wilk - Everything's so fluid and we're always adding and subtracting. So, we have a good starting point document here and I'll just add those things to it loose. Alright, let's make motion to approve it.

Agenda Item:	5.3
Subject:	To Approve the Emotional Support Dog

Motion Presented By:	Mr. DiVito
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Mucciarone

Text of the Motion:	So moved. We are going to add the apartment inspection, the doctor's note, insurance and the dog's certificate.
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Discussion:	None
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Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion passed

Ms. Wilk - Alright, so we have another one. So, this one is a tile fixed in the bathroom. What kind of tile? (Vinyl) All right. So, you want the bathroom painted in the hallway closet. This is all you've been into this place before? Yes. And this is everything that she is asking for is legit like needs to be done. (Yes) along with the roof leak?

Mr. Valentino - Yes. And I fixed the roof leaks down there, but the spot is still there so it needs to be touched up.

Ms. Wilk -All right, do I have a motion to approve this one?

Agenda Item:	5.4
Subject:	To Approve the Vinyl Tile Repair and Roof Leak Painting
Motion Presented By:	Mr. DiVito
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Mucciarone
Text of the Motion:	So moved.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion passed

Mr. Valentino - Just to also add to the pile, that I did speak with the Russ about the roof at Country Ridge and I did call the company, they will be coming down to take a look at it and fix whatever leaks we have up there so we don't have to deal with that Diamond Roofing.

Mr. Antonacci - We're submitting financials to the account for the biannual audit. So that will be coming up shortly, but we have to do an audit every two years to comply with CHFA. So that's going out and scopes of work are out and hopefully by this time next month at the next commission meeting we will be able to review scopes for the sidewalks of Country Ridge and the asphalt.

6) Resident Service Coordinator Report

No Report

7) Resident Commissioner Report – Ms. Pratt

I spent the whole day at Country Rich Day. Okay, so the first thing I want to say is that I spoke to the tenants at all three sites and as far as the picnic for the tenants, it's going to be July 15, 16, 17 at 11:30 a.m. It's going through Labonne's again like last year with the grill, the menu I submitted to you with hot dogs, hamburgers, and salad. The normal stuff that we had last year we're just repeating it because the tenants at three sites said they were happy with it. Okay. Again, the tenants, they all know it. They are all going to pay, make a \$10 contribution. They do that every year for that and the Christmas party, so they know that. So as far as I'm concerned, that's out of the way. That's a long line. That's one less thing

we have to think about with that. So as long as if it worked last year with, they enjoyed having the grill on the property to have their hot dogs and hamburgers. So, then I was open Country Ridge today and there were a few complaints. So, Janelle had to come in the end of it, and I kind of pushed them off on her because I got tired of going around in circles. The one thing that they did say to me when I walked in today is that they're very upset that the driveways are being done and the roofs aren't, they think that, don't kill messenger, I'm just telling you what they said. Okay. They said the roofs are leaking and that should be done before the driveway because that's important because they said it's leaking into their houses, whatever they said that they feel that the water coming in is an important issue. So that's what they're saying that they would like done first.

Mr. Antonacci – Can I comment? But before you go on to the next items, I just want address that one if I may. Okay. And it should go in the minutes too. We will repair all the leaks. If there is a leak, we're not going to allow the leak to continue and ignore it. So, we will stop the leaks. The issue is, and I understand the roofs are important, but the grant money is only for the buildings, not for the roadway. So, if the authority pays out of pocket for the roofs, we will not be in a financial position to pay for the parking lot and the roadway because the parking lot and the roadway is not part of the grant money. So that however many hundreds of thousands of dollars that'll cost us to replace the roofs will not be available to us anymore. So, we will just be throwing that money away. Now if the commission, because I will serve at the pleasure of the commission chooses to do that, we will do that. It's against, I think, our better judgment to do so. I think the needs of the tenants might not be in the best interest of the authority as a whole. I understand it's no fun having water leaking over your head, but we will repair those leaks. Unfortunately, we've had so much rain that we can't make those repairs during the rain. So, Lance took the necessary action to put a tarp on the roof to stop the leaking. And the roofing company should hopefully be there by the end of this week, if not early next week to make a permanent repair until all of those roofs are replaced. It's my hope that all of the roofs at Country Ridge will be brand new going into the holiday season this year. But the money to do those roofs should be the grant money because that grant money cannot be allocated to the parking lot. So, I don't know how many people from Country Ridge are here tonight. I don't believe I see any of the regular suspects, but I wanted to make that comment in response. Thank you for going up there and hearing what they had to say and bringing it to us. But I think it's important that this goes in the minutes. I need one thing before I can provide that timeline. I need the housing department in the State of Connecticut to tell me when the town will receive the money. We are at the mercy of the public sector. We are at the mercy of the State of Connecticut. We have been awarded the money, but being awarded money and actually being in receipt of it are two different things. So, I have calls into the Department of Housing just trying to get an idea when the town will be funded and I do not have an answer yet. The minute I get an answer, I'm going to rush it to a computer and post it everywhere so everybody will know what the schedule is.

Ms. Pratt - I mean, my thing is, again, today before you walk in, I was accused again of not telling the board anything that they said. And again, it's over and over again. I want to make sure that I understand, but I want to make sure that I relay this. You're doing your job. You know what you should do. You should bring the minutes to there and highlight so they know. Lance did make a promise to them too that as soon as the minutes are approved, they're going to go up on the board right away. They're going to go up on the board. Because again, I'm hearing that we don't have use with a computer, we don't have this, we don't have that. Right. Let's see. They also asked me today if I would please make sure I show up the beginning of next month so they can do their report cards. So, I'll be working on that. I had ones and zeros again, after all I work for them. And then I have another issue that came up again today

that's come up before. And this is something, Russ, I need you to work on. So, they're still bothering you about the accounting for the money that they claim that \$500 went missing someplace out of the RSC money. So, I've been hit up with this now three times. Okay. Alright. My issue is that I would like you to come up with some type of plan. First of all, I know that Janelle had asked before that Lori look into finding out where that money went. I told you that I kind of looked into it and found that it was just an error where she was supposed to get \$300 per month. She spent 200. So, she only asked for a hundred. So that's where she corrected. Now she is correct. That's where that \$500 went. Okay. I know what I explained it, but now I also got hit up with today, because we haven't had an RSC in a couple of weeks that they have accumulated all their receipts for what they spent on an RSC day when the RSC wasn't there. But they plan on handing in Monday. Alright, what I need to know, alright, are we going to continue to do this when there isn't an RSC? Let them turn in the receipts for their snacks. Okay. There's no ruling on this and I'm not about to tell them, oh yeah, turn them in because that's not my place. So, I need a ruling on this because again, they're saying, well, in order to have our snack for our RSD, we have to have food. So, they're turning in their receipts. That was fine before we hired an RSC because nobody was doing it.

Ms. Wilk - Okay, I understand that. But there's got to be some type of ruling about we're not just going to be, if they want this bottle of water saying that we have to reimburse them for it. I need some type of guideline for this. I was going to say for me, no, I think that's fine if no one's there, but there's going to be a cap on how, I mean I want lots of things, but if you buy a stake for a hundred dollars, good for you. There has to be some type of guideline.

Ms. Pratt - What I did before we hired an RSC, I kept it at \$25 because I took a hundred dollars per month, four weeks. So, if Diane went shopping when we didn't have an RSC and even if she gave me a receipt for \$60, she will attest the fact that I wrote \$25 only and handed it into the office. No, I mean what's fair is fair. That's what I'm saying though. It has to be, you can't just get what you want. I think that even though the amount that has gone up, I believe she asked you for \$400 a month. I still think that we should just because I'm hoping that not a whole other of days are taking off. We kept it at 25. That's enough to buy their snack for that one day. Alright. And I think that's reasonable because you're taking it out of the RSC fund anyway.

Ms. Wilk - I think that's fine. I have no objection. I have no problem with that \$25. It's fine. I have no objection to Yeah, that's fair. That's more than fair. And that keeps everybody in check

Mr. DiVito - I think we should, we use the word guideline in one of the statements that you made. And I think that that's what we should do is put it in what you just mentioned in writing. And I don't think we need to post it, but I think we should distribute it at least one time so everybody has it. So, we can always refer to it so there's no confusion.

Ms. Pratt - I'm not going to say yes or no because that's not my place. So that's why I need a guideline because I can say, oh, it's in writing right here. Do you know what I mean?

Ms. Wilk - Yep. That makes absolute sense. Because I'm not arguing over \$25. Yep. No, \$25 And then we can draft something up. Yes, save that.

Ms. Pratt - And I only have one other thing that I'm supposed to tell you tonight. And this is from all three sites. And if you wouldn't mind, we should block your ears because I don't want to talk in front of you. All three sites have told me that Lance is doing a wonderful, wonderful job. They also said all three sites, not just one. They all said that work orders are being done on time. That he has been very polite and they said they get the feeling like he's really concerned about the tenants. And I just thought that was a nice thing. But they asked me to relay it to the board. So again, that's what I'm doing. You can unblock your ears now and that's the end of my report.

Ms. Wilk - Thank you very much. And that is wonderful to hear about Lance. I always say Lance is like the Zen of the chaos, so I appreciate that. Thank you very much. All right. We're going to move on to public participation. Does anybody have anything to say? Please state your name and address.

8) Public Participation

Bill Damicis – C20 – I want to second that about Lance. That he does a great job here. Does it in a professional manner. He's got a timely and efficient and just glad to have him there. Also, they are losing rent checks. My receipt was found, but I don't make out anymore checks, I make money orders now.

Ms. Wilk - All right. So, we're going to think, we had the discussion before too. So, you're involved in this obviously tonight. But if we can come up with a better system, you got that box so people can't just walk away with a box, but we need to come up with a little bit better system because it seems like there's too many cooks in the kitchen for certain things. So, if we can just come up with a more streamlined approach to this. I don't think anybody's doing anything wrong, but I just think that there's too many cooks in the kitchen. So, at a later time we can just talk. But thank you for bringing that up. We did have this discussion the other day.

Mr. Antonacci - So we can do something called a CH automated clearing house, which is the simplest, smoothest, easiest, most efficient form of making a payment, which is signing an agreement with the housing authority. And this requires a trust for technology, which a lot of people don't have. So, I'm assuming that the number of residents at the authority, it might be a minimum, but for those that are adopters of technology, if you provide your bank account number and your routing number, we can automatically debit the funds and you don't have to do a thing. And so that's the way where the money orders and checks are out of the might worked out for some.

Ms. Pratt - I just want to say, because this is important. So, through the chair what's happening is we have people that get their social security check at different parts of the month. Not by the fifth. And that, and Laurie told me that was a problem right there. Okay. If they come after the date, it did not work out. Sam does not have a checking. I'm sorry. I'm just saying he doesn't, that's why he does money orders. So, the thing of it is, is that, and I had another tenant call me because the check was lost and they were assessed a \$30. They asked, the housing authority said to stop payment and it cost them \$30. So, which means their rent is \$30 more than normal be and it's on our part. (This was refunded.)

Mr. Damicis - So hear me out. So, for anybody who wants to do the ACH, that's perfectly fine. But for anybody who does not want to, you make a check out, how can we take 10 days to get it back my account, 10 days, put it in a box there and pick it up and 10 days later it comes out of my account.

There's no money in the account then now anyway, so it bounces. Why do you take 10 days? (That is just the banking system.)

Ms. Wilk - So, all right. So, what we'll do is just literally we can do ACH where people can do it and then when we leave here, we can sit down. Cause we just start talking about it that we can have a system where one person is handling the checks. We have too many people taking checks. And if we just have a system saying on this day, just say, we will talk about it. Yeah, we can talk about it at a different time, but we will. And it'll be a little bit more streamlined. So, then there's just not too many cooks in the kitchen. I like saying that and start cooking third time you said it. I just love it though. It was great. Alright, so does anybody else but we'll come up. Thank you for pointing that out. But we did, Lance and I did talk about that the other day and we'll come up with something. Does anybody else have anything to say?

Sharon Orsini – B9 - I'm not used to talking, but anyways, they helped me figure out what was going on with my stove and my refrigerator and they helped.

Martha Nericek – C18 - I just want a compliment, Lance. He's competent and kind and he gets the job done.

9) Adjournment

Agenda Item:	9.1
Subject:	To Adjourn the Meeting
Motion Presented By:	Mr. DiVito
Motion Seconded By:	Ms. Pratt
Text of the Motion:	So moved.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary