

The Webster Housing Authority held its regular monthly meeting on Monday October 25, 2021 in the community building at 10 Golden Heights, Webster. The meeting was called to order at 5:38 pm and Chair announced the meeting was being recorded through the GotoMeeting app.

- I. *Roll Call* Upon roll call, the following members were present David DuPont, Douglas Babcock, William Herra, James Avery and Peter Luchina. Also present: Paula Mayville, Executive Director. Virtual attendees Carrie Moore Dedham HA, Rhea Parker, GHTO president, Laurie Herra, Susan Smichinski & Frank Stefanik.
- II. *Minutes* James Avery made a motion to accept the minutes from Oct 13, 2021, seconded by Peter Luchina, all members in favor.
- III. Executive Director's Report
 1. Modernization Update: DHCD approved the Authority's five-year Capital Improvement Plan for state properties on October 19. DHCD also approved schematic design and bidding for Phase 2 windows at Golden Heights I setting total development cost at \$152,547. Masonary investigation is ongoing. Intend to receive bids around April in order to complete work in Spring weather. Paula provided October 1 correspondence to FRG Contractor summarizing liquid damages and its intent to access their performance bond in terminating the contract for bathroom renovations at Golden Heights II. Work has still not begun.
 2. Paula confirmed a maintenance position will open January 1, 2022. She provided existing job description in packets, along with proposed additional language (avoiding duplication) including utilizing software, courteous work manner, adverse conditions, quick response while on call, and newly required covid language. Future use of tablets by maintenance workers was discussed. Paula noted the suggested additional language should also be reviewed at the next union contract renewal so it can be applied to all maintenance positions. Local residence cannot be required, however quick on-call response is addressed in job description. This open position will be advertised on Nahro sites, local newspapers including Telegram, Indeed platform and town offices to attract the most applicants. Hourly rate will be finalized by Mass DLI though description varies very little from exiting position.

- IV. Report of Tenant Organization: Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants advised GHTO to take vote at its Oct 18 meeting to waive the officer's terms for one additional year due to the restrictions COVID had on activities/services. All eighteen present voted yes and that was filed/approved with Paula. Movie nights hope to continue after anonymous donation of new TV mounted on wall at Bldg 19. Good turnout for coffee/donuts. Farmers Market will continue through December based on turnout rates. November will host hot dog/bean luncheon. Chair Yoga will start on Mondays. Food donations collected over last month and membership voted donations go to Food Share for distribution Nov 10th. State/Federal funding prescribed by state and federal regulation was released and Memorandum of Understanding subcommittee meeting scheduled for later this week. Next meeting November 18 at 1pm.
- V. New Business
1. Fair market rents were published by HUD requiring and adjustment to Golden Heights II flat rent. Flat rent is 80% of HUD's fair market rent. Paula reviewed the calculation increasing flat rent from \$908 to \$930 based on fair market rent increasing from \$1134 to \$1162. Paula provided background on the flat rent option in lieu of paying thirty percent of household income, noting this option benefited residents who earned over \$3100 monthly. Only two residents of 61 opt for the flat rent option at this time. This benefit is not available at Golden Heights I. Douglas Babcock made a motion to approve the flat rent for Golden Heights II at \$930 per month; seconded by David DuPont, all members in favor.
 2. Atty Karen Ahlers provided an updated Abandoned Unit Policy for all area housing authorities on 10/20/21. Paula provided the new and existing (2016) policies for comparison in packets with newly created forms and worksheets. Paula advised members that the policy also applied to apartments "abandoned" by resident death and covered removal of deceased residents' personal property. Upon review, Bill Herra made a motion to adopt the policy packet drafted by Atty Ahlers. Peter Luchina seconded the motion and all members were in favor.
 3. Option to contract-out administration of Section 8 program: This item was taken out of order so Carrie Moore could address and field

questions from the Board about this opportunity. Paula reviewed the job responsibilities left with the retirement of leased housing director. Surprisingly low response from qualified applicants was received from advertising, however other housing authorities report the same experience. Section 8 program reporting and administrative requirements have grown exponentially in last fifteen years since previous staff was hired/trained. Additionally, the vendor WHA used for its inspections closed since COVID. Webster's comparatively small voucher count/salary is not attractive for experienced managers to leave larger authorities where their duties are program-specific. Existing staff is inexperienced in federal housing programs and can be trained to administer Section 8 within two years after federal public housing is comprehensive managed. Paula expanded on the need for current staff to learn and concentrate on lease enforcement and unit turnovers at both state and federal housing programs and the plan to focus there while Section 8 administration is outsourced. Search for hands-on training of exiting staff from seasoned administrators was unsuccessful, fee accountants recommended Paula contact Dedham HA since it already administers for other housing authorities. Paula provided Dedham's management proposal in board packets including all administrative tasks from receiving applicants, leasing, annual recertifications, inspections, utility allowances, payment standards and landlord payments. Administrative Fee split was reviewed and fee account verified that salary levels could be maintained; no additional fees above that admin fee split including inspections. recently proposed part-time position would be eliminated. Carrie Moore reported Dedham's experience and capacity to the board; Dedham administers strictly through written contracts; vouchers remain with the WHA's portfolio while Dedham performs administrative tasks; WHA still funds the landlord payments by making payments to Dedham who cuts actual checks; contract addresses separation of funding/accounts and can be cancelled upon written notice if dissatisfied. Warren is closest LHA that Dedham administers in Central Mass. Paula noted that HUD recommended she reach out to Southbridge and Shrewsbury to see if they were interested in providing these contract services. Unlike Dedham,

neither of these authorities currently administer Section 8 vouchers for other authorities. Peter Luchina made a motion to enter into contract with Dedham HA for a maximum period of two years while WHA transitions back to in-house administration of the Section 8 program. Motion seconded by James Avery, all members in favor. Board then discussed the desire to receive packets on Wednesday before the next Monday's meeting with late items addressed under "business unknown at posting".

VI. Unfinished Business

1. Reasonable accommodation policy was reviewed again, as the policy provided in last month's packets did not have the appropriate mark ups needed for voting. Minor changes recommended by Atty Ahlers were reviewed and Bill Herra made a motion to adopt the policy as presented. Motion was seconded by Douglas Babcock and all members were in favor.
2. Vaccine Policy finalized: Board reviewed draft policy at special meeting in October and requested Atty Driscoll clarify language defining "fully vaccinated" and the implementation timeline. Upon review and discussion, James Avery made a motion to adopt the Mandatory Covid 19 Vaccination Policy as presented. Motion seconded by David DuPont and all members were in favor.
3. Executive Director contract reviewed last month was provided in packets now in typed format, verifying the state's salary proration for both Chair and Treasurer to sign with Paula. Motion made by Peter Luchina to approve renewal of Executive Director's mandatory cover sheet with employment contract for a three-year term ending December 31, 2024 with a salary of \$91,790 per year and hours from 8 am to 4 pm in accordance with the most recently completed salary calculation worksheet. Motion seconded by Douglas Babcock, all members in favor.

- VII. *Other Business* unknown at time of posting: Ron Keogh was punching out for the day; to take advantage of his presence Paula opened discussion about a truck bed cover that just came up today. WHA confirmed \$400 price for tri-fold cover to fit eight food bed with delivery

expected within a week. No WHA vehicles currently have a cover and fill with snow while plowing making bed unusable; open beds also prohibit transporting supplies in bad weather (like wrapping up window installation in this week's rain). Doug Babcock made a motion to approve this purchase, seconded by Bill Herra all members in favor. Paula did not receive update on tractor delivery date requested at last meeting. Board discussed advantages of John Deere brand vs other brands and the inclusion in state purchasing contracts played in purchases. Paula provided a notice to residents that

4. *Bills and Listing* Checks and registers were signed and debit card charges reviewed at beginning of meeting.
5. *Adjourn* With the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday November 22, 2021 (fourth Monday) Doug Babcock made a motion to adjourn at 640pm. Motion seconded by James Avery, all members in favor

Respectfully Submitted (Attest)

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Paula Mayville, Executive Director