

**SARATOGA SPRINGS HOUSING AUTHORITY
THURSDAY, JANUARY 17, 2019
STONEQUIST APARTMENTS
2:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Ann Bullock
Bobby Dixon
Joanne Foresta, Chair
Joy King
Michelle Roddy, Vice Chair
Stephen Sullivan

ABSENT: Lu Lucas

ALSO PRESENT: Paul Feldman, Executive Director
Scott Peterson, SSHA Attorney
Cindy Gaugler, Finance Director
Arthur Kirker, Asst. Facilities Director
Katie Sicko, Executive Resident Advisor

CALL TO ORDER

Joanne Foresta called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

COMMENTS

Joanne Foresta opened the public comment period.

Erica Ortiz, resident of the Terraces, said she was concerned with the second hand smoke that she is exposed to where she lives. She said smokers are less than 12 feet from her residence. She said she would like to see the entire Housing Authority properties to be smoke free.

Paul Feldman said the current policy states that smokers must be 25 feet away from a building, which is difficult at the Terraces. He said if Board members would like, it could be placed on next month's agenda for discussion.

President Joanne Foresta suggested that Board members discuss this at the end of the meeting.

There being no one else wishing to speak, Joanne Foresta closed the public comment period.

RESOLUTIONS

FY18-R41 – Acceptance of the Previous Month's Board Meeting Minutes

Steve Sullivan moved and Michelle Roddy seconded to adopt the following resolution:

Acceptance of the December 20, 2018, Board Meeting Minutes

**WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has reviewed the minutes of the December 20, 2018, monthly Board Meeting,
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority approves, at this meeting on January 17, 2019, the minutes of the December 20, 2018, Board meeting of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority.**

Minor typographical errors were corrected.

Ayes all.

FY18-R42– Acceptance of Vendor Payments December 2018

Ann Bullock moved and Michelle Roddy seconded to adopt the following resolution:

Acceptance of Previous Month's Payments

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has reviewed the monthly vendor invoices for payment of the financial obligations of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority for the month of December 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners has reviewed and signed off on each vendor invoice prior to payment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority approves the disbursements for December, copies of which were forwarded to Board members prior to this meeting.

Joy King asked about landscaping costs. Paul Feldman said that due to the unusual weather, landscaping was completed much later in the year.

Michelle Roddy asked about the elevator expenses. Paul Feldman said there is a monthly service contract for \$825. He said over the past year, there have been maintenance issues that we were not responsible for paying because it was covered by warranty, but there were also expenses that were not covered by warranty. He said a spreadsheet on the expenses could be developed and shared with Board members on this matter.

Joy King asked about the payment to the Adirondack Trust Company. Cindy Gaugler said it was the quarterly payment for the EPC contract. She said that of the \$49,000, \$31,000 was interest.

Joy King asked about the legal expenses. Paul Feldman said that was the quarterly payment for the attorney's services.

Ayes all.

FY18-R43 – Amend Section 8 Admin Plan – HQS Self-Certifications

Joanne Foresta moved and Michelle Roddy seconded to adopt the following resolution:

Amend Section 8 Admin Plan – HQS Self-Certifications

WHEREAS, the federal regulations require Public Housing Authorities to create and maintain a Section 8 Administrative Plan for the administration of the Housing Choice Voucher Program; and

WHEREAS, HUD has provided housing authorities with the discretion to allow property owners to self-certify when Housing Quality Standards deficiencies have been corrected; and

WHEREAS, the SSHA has elected to implement this option to expedite the inspection process and enhance the convenience of the program for both owners and voucher holders;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority approves the amendment to the SSHA Section 8 Admin Plan to include the attached language changes.

Paul Feldman said the SSHA has had this flexibility for years and now this resolution will formalize the process.

Ann Bullock asked how often inspections are completed on Section 8 housing. Paul Feldman said every two years as well at the beginning of a new lease.

Ayes all.

FY18-R44 Amend ACOP Interim Reexaminations

Ann Bullock moved and Michelle Roddy seconded to adopt the following resolution:

Amend ACOP – Interim Reexaminations

WHEREAS, Federal Regulations require Public Housing Authorities (PHA'S) to create and maintain an Admissions and Continuing Occupancy Plan (ACOP) for the administration of their Public Housing Program; and

WHEREAS, the SSHA identifies the need to amend this plan from time to time and has identified a section of the plans for change. Federal Regulations require PHA's to set policy on income reporting timeliness and when interim reexaminations are implemented; and

WHEREAS, the SSHA has elected to amend the plan to allow tenants an additional five days to report a decrease or loss of income so that an interim reexamination can be made to adjust the following months rental payment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority approves the amendment (attached) to the SSHA ACOP to amend the language on when a decrease in income must be reported to trigger a change in rent for the following month.

Ayes all.

FY18-R45 Amend SSHA Procurement Policy

Steve Sullivan moved and Bobby Dixon seconded to adopt the following resolution:

Amend SSHA Procurement Policy

WHEREAS, the SSHA must periodically review agency policies to insure compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations; and

WHEREAS, the SSHA's Procurement Policy was revised in 2017 in order to insure compliance with these regulations; and

WHEREAS, Auditors from Guyder Hurley have informed the SSHA that the use of purchase orders is neither an audit requirement or regulatory requirement; and

WHEREAS, the use of purchase orders has been identified as an unnecessary administrative burden which provides minimal benefit to the operations of the authority, since all agency expenditures must be approved by the Executive Director and Chair or Vice Chair of the Board;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority approves the amendment to the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority's Procurement Policy removing the requirement to use purchase orders for expenditures of less than \$3,000.

Paul Feldman said a tremendous amount of time is spent developing purchase orders for minor purchases. It was agreed to amend the resolution that expenditures under \$3,000 would not require a purchase order

Ayes all.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Finance

Joanne Foresta asked about fraud expenditures. Ann Bullock said there was a significant increase a few months ago and it has now plateaued. Paul Feldman said in some cases, the SSHA is at the mercy of the City Police Department and their investigation. He said often, it is a family member or neighbor who turns someone into the SSHA for lease violations. Cindy Gaugler said there is one tenant who owes the SSHA \$7,000. She explained that once the tenant moves, the amount moves to the vacated column. Paul Feldman said there are also damages that are collected.

Paul Feldman said the City's standards for a habitable residence seems to be lower than he would prefer and he wondered if the SSHA could set those standards higher. Scott Peterson said that the SSHA could set the standards higher, however, it would depend on what the Judge believes when the case goes to court. He said when he was in Schenectady, Code Enforcement would require the resident to vacate the residence because it was not habitable, however, here in Saratoga Springs, often Code Enforcement gives the resident 30 days to fix the problem. Ann Bullock asked how we could describe higher standards. Paul Feldman said it could read something to the effect that there be no conditions that could create the potential to attract bugs, mice, etc. Scott Peterson said that the SSHA should not be so specific, nor too broad in the definition.

Paul Feldman said another matter that the SSHA needs to address is the assistance animals. He said there have been questions/concerns raised on assistance animals and the disturbance and damages that they cause. He said there is a difference between a pet and an assistive animal.

Facilities

Joanne Foresta asked if the staff is ready for the snow storm coming this coming weekend. Paul Feldman said residents will be notified that they must move their cars at some point over the weekend so that the parking lots can be plowed.

Michelle Roddy asked about the plumbing issues and turning off the water. Art Kirker said that a 2 ½ inch line needed to be repaired and it required that all of the water be turned off.

Occupancy

Michelle Roddy asked about welfare checks. Katie Sicko said welfare checks are conducted by the City Police Department.

Director's Report

Paul Feldman said that he had a conference call with Dominion concerning the capital physical needs assessment. He said that additional costs for the environmental needs could be as high as \$2.7 million at Stonequest; Jefferson Terrace could be \$2.6 million and Vanderbilt could be \$1.7 million which totals nearly \$7 million. He said there was no environmental assessments completed, i.e., asbestos, mold, radon, etc. He said once those assessments are completed the costs could reach \$9 or \$10 million. If this was done through the RAD process the costs would again be that much higher because of the additional soft costs that must be added in.

Paul Feldman there was a meeting with Bonacio Construction to discuss the SRDI construction budget and they believe that the budget developed by Bonacio is a reasonable budget. He said there is a gap of about \$1 million between that budget and the "worse case scenario" budget. He said there could be savings in the site plan part of the budget. The total site plan cost is a half million so there could be some savings there. There is a 10 percent contingency built in and there could be some savings there. He believed there could be some savings in the developer's fee. He still believed that this project is a worthwhile investment. Everything still needs to be submitted to the state. The rents could be increased to cover some of the shortfall. He said it was his recommendation that the SSHA take out a mortgage on the project to make up for the funding shortfall.

Joanne Foresta asked if the mortgage needed to be taken out before the project starts. Paul Feldman said he was not sure. Ann Bullock suggested a line of credit be explored. Paul Feldman said a separate entity may need to be created.

There was consensus among the Board members that a mortgage or line of credit be explored. Paul Feldman said he and Cindy Gaugler would explore our options and a resolution would be prepared for the next Board meeting.

Paul Feldman said the SSHA is in good shape during the federal government shutdown. The SSHA has enough reserves to sustain itself for a few months. He said the Section 8 voucher program would likely not be funded on March 1 if the shutdown continues.

Ann Bullock said it was good to see that there was a great response to Paul Feldman's email on the RAD program and how the PHA process moves through that program. Paul Feldman said he was surprised that the email generated such a great response which has resulted in a meeting to be held on January 25. He said other housing authority directors have expressed their concerns with this program and the push by HUD for housing authorities to use this program. He said there have been significant ramifications to some housing authorities who have completed this program.

In one instance, the existing staff was let go and offered re-employment with the new business at a lower income and little benefits. Ann Bullock pointed out that there is no long term data on this conversion process.

OLD BUSINESS

Development Date

Previously discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider of Mortgage for SRDI Program

Previously discussed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

There were no announcements from Commissioners.

Joanne Foresta asked if Board members were interested in going to a completely smoke free authority. Paul Feldman suggested that we might want to think about this. He said it was difficult to enforce. He also did not believe that there had been a case brought before any judge on this matter. Bobby Dixon said he is a smoker and he believed that smoking far enough away from the building in the gazebo at Stonequist was adequate. Paul Feldman said that might be so, but it was different at the Terraces. He was also concerned that such a restriction could cause residents to simply smoke in their apartment. Bobby Dixon said smokers have rights too. Michelle Roddy said, in her opinion, the housing authority should be totally smoke free. Paul Feldman reminded everyone that when we discussed this matter before, Glens Falls conducted a survey among the residents and while there was a majority who favored no smoking, it was not an overwhelming majority. Bobby Dixon asked if a resident would be able to smoke in their car if it was on housing authority property.

Joanne Foresta asked that this be place on the next agenda for further discussion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

Bobby Dixon moved and Michelle Roddy seconded to adjourn the meeting at 3:45 p.m. Ayes all. There being no further business, Joanne Foresta adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine A. Moran
Clerk