

**SARATOGA SPRINGS HOUSING AUTHORITY
TUESDAY MAY 14, 2019
STONEQUIST APARTMENTS
2:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Ann Bullock (arrived 2:45)
Michelle Roddy, Vice Chair
Joanne Foresta, Chair
Joy King (arrived 2:45)
Lu Lucas
Richard Shipman (arrived 2:44)
Stephen Sullivan

ABSENT: No one

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 2:40 p.m.

COMMENTS

Joanne Foresta opened the public comment period.

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

RESOLUTIONS

FY20-R01 – Acceptance of the Previous Month’s Board Meeting Minutes

Paul Feldman announced that three Board members are on their way to the meeting, and due to a lack of quorum of members that attended the SSHA Board meeting on 04/18/2019, the vote on FY20-R09 should be temporarily postponed until the other members arrive.

FY20-R10– Acceptance of Vendor Payments April 2019

Lu Lucas moved, and Michele 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 April 2019; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority approves the disbursements for April 2019, copies of which were forwarded to Board members prior to this meeting.

There were no questions or discussion by the Board members on vendor payments.

Ayes: 4 Absent: 3 (A. Bullock, J. King, R. Shipman)

FY20-R11-Awarding of Contract for RAD Consultant

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

Awarding of Contract for RAD Consultant

WHEREAS, the SSHA has decided to move forward with the Rental Assistance Demonstration Conversion program; and

WHEREAS, the SSHA has determined that due to the complexity of this program a consultant is needed to provide the technical expertise necessary to complete the many tasks associated with the conversion; and

WHEREAS, the SSHA put out an RFQ to procure the services of a qualified firm and received proposals from two firms; and

WHEREAS, the Gill Group has been selected based on the scoring of the two proposals;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority approves the awarding of the SSHA RAD Consultant Contract to the Gill Group.

Ayes: All

FY20-R09 – Acceptance of Previous Month’s Board Meeting Minutes

Acceptance of the April 18, 2019, Board Meeting Minutes

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has reviewed the minutes of the April 18, 2019, monthly Board Meeting,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority approves, at this meeting on May 14, 2019, the minutes of the April 18, 2019, Board Meeting of the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority.

Ayes: 5 Abstentions: 2 (L. Lucas, S. Sullivan)

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Finance

Cindy Gaugler reported a \$24,265 loss for the month of April primarily due to increased expenses because she paid the property and liability insurance for the year. Paul Feldman advised that RAD effects insurance, so the option of whether or not to pay the insurance in a lump annual sum should probably be re-considered.

Facilities

Arthur Kirker reported that Richard Shipman and Joy King toured Jefferson Terrace checking out damaged units. Richard Shipman commented that he was impressed by the Terrace itself, but depressed and saddened about the extent of the damages. Paul Feldman said that this damage seems to be coming from residents that have been around for some time, not the newer residents; and this is the reason for the imposition of security charges. RAD conversion will convert the apartments but not the tenants. He advised that a large amount of the damage is caused by animals. He explained that the tenants are charged; attempts to get payments while the tenants are still there increases the chance of receiving the money.

Paul Feldman mentioned that part of the problem is the need for firmer rules emotional support animals and the determination as to whether to negotiate with legal aid or stand firm for eviction. It is often a health hazard that could impact surrounding tenants. He explained that often the tenants acquire a legal aid attorney when the situation involves emotional support animals and ultimately the court kicks it back. Lu Lucas said that when there has been damage, there should be no negotiation. Steve Sullivan agreed that tenants should be responsible for their emotional support animals.

Joy King stated that there seemed to be a lot of human damage also. Paul Feldman advised that this is normal in public housing across the country and this will continue even after the residences are made brand new. Once an apartment has been renovated in the RAD conversion program and it has subsequently been damaged, the SSHA will have to use its own reserves for repairs.

Scott Peterson explained that tenants use online doctors and receive certificates for animal support animals online. This is a policy issue that must be resolved at a higher level; there is a delicate balancing act between enforcing policy and infringing on those individuals with disabilities that require emotional support animals.

Paul Feldman advised that if tenants are charged for damages and do not pay, the amount due remains on the books as an accounts receivable and if there are too many of those unpaid charges, it will reflect negatively on the SSHA evaluation points, which is why housing authorities ultimately write off most of those charges. He said regarding court, we are often at the mercy of the judge's view of public housing. Lu Lucas said that policy should be more aggressive yet enforced on a case by case basis. Paul Feldman said that recently, the scales have tipped in the favor of SSHA regarding eviction, but we try to work out repayment for damages while the tenants are still there. Scott Peterson added that it is a win if you can get tenants to pay their damages along the way. Paul Feldman advised that these issues will still exist, regardless of RAD conversions. Lu Lucas suggested giving legal aid attorneys a tour of the damaged apartments to show them what they are trying to protect.

Occupancy

Paul Feldman said there are about twelve serious issues and corrections to these problems are begin attempted when possible. There are a couple of apartments that will have to be taken offline when they are vacated because it will take longer to get them ready to be turned over. Two families have been identified where their lease will not be renewed. These situations will be more significant when the RAD conversions are complete because we do not want vacancies after a RAD conversion. Paul Feldman commented that most of the tenants of damaged units are timely in their rent, so it is harder to show cause to evict them. The situation makes more work for staff and maintenance.

Joanne Foresta asked about the status of the water meter replacement project. Art Kirker replied that most of them are complete; Vanderbilt Terrace will be done tomorrow. It was noted that several units in Vanderbilt Terrace and one in Jefferson Terrace are still vacant and undergoing rehab since 2018. Paul Feldman said that the ones that are vacant for rehab for a longer time period are those that require substantial capital investment on our part.

Director's Report

The Director's report was previously distributed to the Board.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

RAD Update

Paul Feldman circulated drawings and layouts of buildings to be placed at the terraces; they will be two-story buildings. At this time, the heat mechanism has not been determined. There may be gas furnaces with either baseboard units or vents. There will be no centralized boilers because then SSHA would have to pay utilities. He clarified the new residences will look similar to the Allen Drive units, and a one-bedroom unit is about 700 square feet. If there is a RAD conversion at the terraces, these new units will serve as models for the RAD units.

Paul Feldman stated that within the next few days, the 9% tax credit awards will be announced. Historically it is not uncommon for projects not to be funded during the first application round. He will notify everyone by email. The south Broadway project is a priority so if we do not get funding this year, it will open up a lot of possibilities for renovations elsewhere.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Lu Lucas moved, and Stephen Sullivan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 3:13 p.m. Ayes all.
There being no further business, Joanne Foresta adjourned the meeting at 3:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Wagner
Clerk