

Ridgefield Housing Authority (RHA) Meeting Minutes for February 22, 2017
(Approved)
Congregate Housing – 51 Prospect Ridge – 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners: Frank Coyle, Vincent Liscio and John Kukulka
Absent: Bob Hebert (Chairman) and Cathleen Savery
Housing Officials: Philip Sfraga, Property Manager
Kimberly Henderson, Resident Service Coordinator
Guest: Jan Hebert, prospective HA Commissioner
Visitors: Sister Martha, Mary Bamon, Coco Barron and several others

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
 2. Approval of Minutes
 3. Treasurer's Report
 4. Tenant Commissioner Report
 5. Management Report
 6. New Business
 7. Old Business
 8. Public Session
 9. Executive Session: Individual Tenant Issues. (if required)
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1. Call to Order

Mr. Coyle called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Mr. Coyle announced to the audience that Mr. Hebert was no longer eligible to serve on the RHA as per the Dept. of Housing. Mr. Hebert currently serves on the Board of Selectmen. The BOS appoints the RHA commissioners. As a result, Mr. Hebert will resign from the RHA board effective mid-April. Mr. Coyle introduced Mrs. Jan Hebert who is considering joining the Housing Authority.

2. Approval of Minutes

Copies of the November 22 2016, January 26 2017 and February 8 2017 minutes were previously distributed to the RHA commissioners.

Mr. Coyle moved and Mr. Kukulka seconded a motion to approve the November 22 2016, January 26 2017 and February 8 2017 minutes. The Ridgefield Housing Authority voted 3-0. Motion passed.

3. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Coyle, Treasurer presented the January 2017 Financial Report.

A) The LP (Ballard Green, Congregate, General Affordable)

Mr. Coyle reported the LP had YTD revenue of \$951K, which was \$1K below budget and expenses were \$70K which was \$10K below. Mr. Coyle said the cash balance was \$457K,

which was a \$15K increase this month, and that obligations remained to DECD of \$44K. Replacement Reserve is at \$352K and Operating Reserve is at \$368K.

B) Meadows

Mr. Coyle reported for the Meadows, YTD revenue of \$25K which was on budget, and expenses of \$17K which was \$2K above budget. Mr. Coyle reported net operating income was \$8K, which was \$2K below budget and the cash balance was \$26K which was a decrease of \$2K from last month. Replacement Reserve is at \$98K, an increase of \$2K this month.

C) RHA

Mr. Coyle reported the balance in FCB RHA funds was \$5.4K, with \$150.4K on deposit in a FCB CD. Mr. Coyle reported the balance in RHA Konover account was \$163.1 (which includes \$16.4 Comcast).

Mr. Coyle reported we had a good situation going in to January and that the cash position looked ok at this point.

Mr. Kukulka moved and Mr. Liscio seconded a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. The Ridgefield Housing Authority voted 3-0. Motion passed.

4. Tenant Commissioner Report

Mr. Liscio said that he went to several Tenant meetings which were held on February 13 2017 and February 21 2017.

Mr. Liscio said that the Tenant meeting on February 13 2017 held at Congregate had several concerns. Namely, that the lounge had not been painted yet, the new staff member Mr. Pereles had not been met yet, difficulties with snow removal, parking concerns, missing Wi equipment, accessibility of posted meeting minutes and the possibility of potential discounts for obtaining Life Line due to health safety concerns.

Mr. Sfraga said that he can arrange a meet & greet for the residents who have not had an opportunity to speak with Mr. Raul Pereles.

Mr. Liscio said that the Tenant meeting on February 21 held at Ballard Green had several concerns also. Namely, raising the washers/dryers in the laundry room, difficulty in using the waste baskets due to resident's physical situation, running out of paper towel/toilet paper on the weekends, inaccessibility of the Library room due to scheduled meetings, privacy and reserve issues in the Community room, and security issues at the Community building due to the outside doors not closing properly.

Mr. Sfraga said they were looking at either buying risers for the washer/dryer or having Doug build them. Mr. Sfraga has reached out to the manufacturer previously and had been told they were not available, however he will try again.

Mr. Sfraga said that there was a resident who was taking the paper towel/toilet paper on the weekend so that by Monday, they were all gone. Possible solutions being considered are air blow dryers and installing industrial sized toilet paper dispensers.

Mr. Sfraga said with regards to reserving the community room, residents can go to the office and reserve for certain hours. The community room is reserved for free to organizations if it benefits the community. If the organization is not a benefit to the community, there is a small fee charged. Mr. Sfraga said with regards to a sign, he said yes, a sign could be put up. Mr. Sfraga said with regards to privacy, it would be possible to have a privacy screen placed. Mr. Sfraga said with regards to security, the new ADA compliant doors with key fob access will begin to be installed this Friday at Congregate. The new ADA compliant doors with key fob access will be installed at Ballard Green first week of March.

Mr. Coyle moved and Mr. Kukulka seconded a motion to approve the Tenant Commissioner Report. The Ridgefield Housing Authority voted 3-0. Motion passed.

5. Management Report

Mr. Sfraga reported:

- A. **Occupancy** - Mr. Sfraga stated for the first two months, occupancy was at 100% at all properties. At Ballard Green, occupancy was at 100% with one apartment turnover last month. Mr. Sfraga stated Congregate Housing was 100% occupied as of February 1st, with one tenant in the eviction process. Mr. Sfraga said there is a new tenant who will move in immediately. Mr. Sfraga said General was at 100% occupied as of February 1st, and two units have given notice to vacate. Mr. Sfraga said one unit is a one bedroom in the A wing building and the other a two bedroom unit moving out in the next two weeks. There is no tenant as of now, but both are anticipated easy to fill. Mr. Sfraga stated Meadows was 100% occupied as of February 1st, with no anticipated notices given nor any anticipated vacancies. There is one repayment agreement. If not fulfilled, they will be evicted.
- B. **Maintenance Issues** – Mr. Sfraga said there had been lots of positive comments. Mr. Sfraga said there were concerns stemming from the parking situation in the snow. Mr. Sfraga said although notices were sent out, some tenants did not move their cars because they were out of town. This caused difficulties for the tenants. Mr. Sfraga said that there was lots of positive comments for the actual snow removal. Mr. Sfraga said there was some ice, but they spent a bit of money in upgrading the snow melting material. Magic salt was purchased which worked well on the walkways.

Mr. Sfraga said the annual fire alarm testing was scheduled for the first week of March. Mr. Sfraga said that for those tenants for whom the noise was an annoyance, ear plug protection was being offered at both Congregate and Ballard Green.

Mr. Sfraga said the new doors with key fob access were being installed at Congregate this week and next. Mr. Sfraga said the tenants had been well informed. Mr. Sfraga said an addendum was to be signed advising the additional charge of \$30 for a lost key fob.

Mr. Sfraga said next Tuesday, gym equipment in the fitness lounge was to be delivered and improvements to the ceiling tiles would be done. Also, flooring for the elevator was to be installed the first week of March.

Mr. Sfraga said there was a new assistant manager named Raul Pereles who started January 30 2017. Mr. Pereles is extremely knowledgeable about multi subsidy sites.

Mr. Sfraga said they would be working on the re-certifications. Mr. Sfraga said in 2015, 100 recertifications were completed in 2 ½ months. Last year, it took 7 weeks. This year, it is expected to take approximately 6-7 weeks. Mr. Sfraga said many tenants have provided the necessary documents. Mr. Sfraga said the sooner this was completed, the sooner the residents would know what the rent would be in July.

- C. **Resident Services Coordinator Report** – Ms. Henderson said two resident meetings were held on February 13th at Congregate and February 21st at Ballard Green.

Ms. Henderson said 12 residents attended the Congregate meeting and 9 residents attended the Ballard Green meeting. Ms. Henderson said that as a Thank You to each resident that attended these meetings, a surprise raffle would be held at the next meeting they attended. Ms. Henderson said these meetings gave residents an opportunity to speak freely and respectfully.

Ms. Henderson said Fairfield County Bank was scheduled for February 28th between 3-4pm at Ballard Green to talk about scams and how to protect their finances.

Ms. Henderson said there was a grand opening of the Wellness Center located next to the resident laundry room. There are various exercise equipment and a handful of residents attended the grand opening. Healthy snacks were provided on Wednesday, February 22nd as well as bottled water.

Ms. Henderson said that on February 16th, several RSC's worked on putting together a welcome packet for the residents. These packets define the role, responsibilities and duties of the RSCs as well as identify resources and valuable information. Ms. Henderson said it was anticipated the packets would be ready to distribute the beginning of March.

Mr. Coyle moved and Mr. Kukulka seconded a motion to approve the Management Report. The Ridgefield Housing Authority voted 3-0. Motion passed.

6. New Business

Mr. Coyle said that because of the financial position, things had been improving. Capital needs to make life better extended asset life. Mr. Coyle said this discussion was started last meeting, for example the front entry way – how it looked and functioned. Clearly this was something to investigate.

Mr. Sfraga said a report was compiled which identified future Capital Needs in a 5 year plan. This report incorporates some of the same conclusions from 2013, 2014 and last year's Asset Needs review.

Overview

Mr. Sfraga said capital improvements identified were 1) installation of ductless a/c on the upper floors (3rd/4th floors) of Congregate, 2) redesign of the front entrance to benefit residents, 3-4)

continued driveway repairs at both sites, 5) installation of step-up accessible ramps at Ballard Green. 6) Congregate elevator replacement equipment parts specifically for the electronics and hydraulics components, 7) Congregate facade work in the B&C wing, 8) Meadows siding replacement (which had been deteriorating for the past 5 years or so), 9) Meadows concrete stairs repair and 10) Congregate Boiler system replacement.

Mr. Sfraga said most Ballard Green apartments were built in the late 70's which had a ¾ inch step up. This is an issue for those with limited mobility as that small gap makes it difficult to maneuver. Mr. Sfraga said in the past, ramps were installed for those with a medical necessity. However, Mr. Sfraga said they would want to do these repairs for the remaining apartments.

Mr. Kukulka asked why the Meadows siding was falling apart. Mr. Sfraga said he didn't know, but that the siding had been painted and power washed. Mr. Sfraga said that perhaps the product had not been spec'd out right when the siding was done in 2009. Mr. Kukulka said that perhaps the warranty could be reviewed. Mr. Sfraga agreed.

Mr. Sfraga said Meadows' concrete stairs were loose and their repair cost was around \$12k.

Mr. Sfraga said that the replacement of the boiler system at Congregate would cost about \$150K. Mr. Sfraga said boiler repairs were done last year. The payback for a more efficient system is about 20 years. The current boiler was installed in 1991, so there wasn't much of an incentive to have the work done immediately.

Mr. Kukulka asked if solar had ever been considered. Mr. Kukulka said that perhaps the lighting issue could be solved. Mr. Sfraga said there had been some reduced expense in lighting. Mr. Sfraga said energy costs were running about \$3-4K a month at Congregate.

Ballard Green Capital Improvements

Mr. Sfraga said some capital improvements last year were delayed to this year which meant an additional amount available of approx. \$2.2K from the 2016 budget.

Mr. Sfraga said approx. \$4K for landscaping at Ballard Green was budgeted for the front of the units. When new people move in, they are replacing the landscaping with uniform planting. This is because in the past, as people moved in, they did not keep up with the prior tenant's garden landscaping resulting in overgrown plants. To remedy this, Mr. Sfraga said they are putting in uniform plants with Units B1 and B6 as an example.

Mr. Sfraga said at Ballard Green some walk up repairs would be done where the pooling was the worst. The goal was to make it easier for the residents to move around.

Mr. Sfraga said the new entrance building signage was more informative. It would show where the offices, meals on wheels, etc. were located.

Mr. Sfraga will be meeting with the space planner for the \$5K redesign of the community room. The project would put a separate room in the community room. Mr. Sfraga said at Ballard Green, Doug was now in the main office and the RSC was in what was the maintenance shop.

Congregate Capital Improvements

Mr. Sfraga said at Congregate, the 1st and 2nd floor painting will be done next month by the contractors and Doug will be painting the resident's lounge.

Mr. Sfraga said extra money was found from the State's Dept. of Health which will be used to develop more fitness & wellness programs.

Mr. Sfraga said he was attending a furniture show this week to get ideas on Lounge furniture.

Mr. Sfraga said an ADA picnic table and bench was ordered last week for Congregate. Mr. Sfraga said there is more work to be done on the gazebo, staining, and garden beds will be restored.

General Apartments Capital Improvements

Mr. Sfraga said for the general apartments, Buildings 2-5 painting on the 2nd floor will be done next month

Mr. Sfraga said installation of two benches and one picnic table will be installed in front of the town houses and by the grotto in May 2017. Mr. Sfraga said siding repair will be done throughout the summer, likely in the hunter green color.

Mr. Sfraga said the gift shop demolition is now expected to be about \$17-18K. The cost savings will be used to maybe replace some furniture, decking or install beds on site. Mr. Sfraga said he would submit the gift shop demolition request to the town and perhaps be able to save more money.

Mr. Sfraga said that more asphalt repairs would be done in June, mainly patch and seal work.

Mr. Sfraga said for Meadows, they will be able to install solar roof vents which would reduce overheating thus reducing the heating issues due to the intense heat in the boiler room.

Mr. Sfraga said about 20% have new flooring. Mr. Sfraga said the current budget allows new flooring for two turnovers this year.

Mr. Sfraga said as for landscaping, they will continue with repairs to the walkway and upgrade the landscaping.

Mr. Coyle said this was a terrific report. Mr. Kukulka confirmed this was a 5 year plan/process. Mr. Coyle said they were looking at roughly 100K a year, which would necessitate staging. Mr. Coyle said this would have to be run by the auditors. Mr. Sfraga said they were receptive to resident comments to improve the properties. Mr. Sfraga encouraged the residents to make suggestions, come up with ideas and plans.

7. Old Business

- A. **Phone answering machine** – Mr. Sfraga said this was switched so there is no delay when you push "3". A lot quicker in the relay.

8. Public Session

Sister Martha asked if the telephone line between the apartments and security on the weekends was working. Mr. Sfraga asked if the right number was being used since it was changed last year. Sister Martha said she would check. Mr. Sfraga said he would post this information again as well as hand out the procedure to the tenants.

Ms. Mary Bamon asked if there was anyway the RHA Board could reach out to volunteers to help with the snow removal. Ms. Henderson said there use to be a list of college students that has dwindled to nothing. Mr. Coyle asked if perhaps there were other groups in town that could be asked. Mr. Henderson said the Boy Scouts was asked but that they could not assist for that age group. Mr. Sfraga said that years ago, there were people who had to do community service and that worked out. Mr. Liscio said that was a great idea. Mr. Liscio said that also the Lions Club could be a resource but that they would have to be approached.

Ms. Barron asked if new things could be added to the agenda. Ms. Barron said the agenda was the same all the time. Mr. Coyle said Ms. Barron brought this issue up last year and it had been agreed that new things would be put on the agenda.

Ms. Barron said the new calendar was difficult to understand. Mr. Kukulka said this was brought up previously and that it was difficult to read because the original was in color while subsequent copies are in black and white. Ms. Henderson said she had retyped it and would give it to residents in Ballard Green.

Ms. Barron asked about the possibility of putting the agenda in the mailboxes. Mr. Coyle said the meeting was held at the same time every month. Mr. Sfraga said the RSC puts out a calendar. Mr. Sfraga said he would have them put a calendar together for Ms. Barren's property.

Mr. Sfraga said that with regards to the issue with the rent, anyone who lives there are already paying the maximum amount. The rent increase won't affect them. Based on comments, the RHA will approve or not approve what would be sent to the state. Any increases are kept to a minimum for state sponsored properties.

Ms. Barron said Northeast was doing a good job. Ms. Barron said it was impossible to finish the snow removal because tenants do not move their car. Ms. Barron said if they don't move their car, maybe they should pay. Mr. Kukulka said that perhaps they could be towed. Mr. Sfraga said the tow companies don't want to come out in Ridgefield. Their storage capacity is small and reclaiming the cars is low because of the low value on these cars. Mr. Sfraga said in the end, they would be responsible for the storage expense.

Ms. Barron said people were still putting items in the wrong receptacles. Mr. Sfraga said there was an article in the paper regarding increasing the bottle deposits. Mr. Sfraga said they use to have a bottle recycle program but the recycling cans yielded in the end the cost of a box of cookies. Mr. Sfraga said that was why that program was discontinued. Ms. Barron said she saw diapers in the recycling bin. Mr. Kukulka said there was no police enforcement for abusing the system. Mr. Kukulka said no one disagreed with Ms. Barron, however it was difficult to change people's behavior. Mr. Barron suggested cameras. Mr. Kukulka said that would be expensive. Ms. Barron said it was a question of respect. Mr. Sfraga said it was also a timing issue to catch

someone that was difficult. Ms. Bamon said that she had seen strangers throw their garbage in the property's garbage bins. Mr. Sfraga said there was a \$35 charge if evidence of the perpetrator could be verified. Mr. Coyle said that didn't lend to community spirit.

Ms. Barron said there was high humidity in her hallways and if someone could check in the back of the chimney. Mr. Sfraga said the building was over 100 years old and as such, not sealed as well as the newer buildings. Mr. Sfraga said the sprinklers had been checked. As there had been issues in the past. Mr. Sfraga said the thermostat was multi-zoned which could bring about a difference in air temperature from one section to another.

Ms. Barron asked if Mr. Sfraga opened all the envelopes in the rent box. Mr. Sfraga said that sometimes he had asked Doug to grab the envelopes but that he is the only one who processes the rent checks.

Ms. Barron asked about the intercom in the Building A wing. Mr. Sfraga said he didn't know if they would invest funds for the three upstairs apartments in this wing. Mr. Sfraga said there was an issue with the manufacturer. Mr. Sfraga said that most people currently use their cell phones rather than use the intercom.

Mr. Coyle asked if there were any other issues, concerns or compliments.

9. Executive Session

Mr. Kukulka confirmed he would prepare the 8am meeting minutes and forward to the Town Clerk's office as appropriate, while Mrs. Fields would prepare the 7pm meeting minutes and forward to the Town Clerk's office as appropriate. Mr. Coyle asked if the approved RHA minutes could be put on the town's website. Mrs. Fields advised the RHA Board they needed to authorize her to have access to the RHA page. Mr. Kukulka moved and Mr. Liscio seconded a motion to approve website access for Mrs. Fields to the Town of Ridgefield/Housing Authority page. The Ridgefield Housing authority voted 3-0. Motion passed.

Mr. Coyle stated the next meeting of the Ridgefield Housing Authority would be on March 22, 2017 at 7:00 p.m., located at Ballard Green-25 Gilbert Street. Mr. Coyle moved and Mr. Kukulka seconded a motion to adjourn the Ridgefield Housing meeting at 8:27 p.m. The motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Fields
Recording Secretary