

Meeting Minutes
Rockport Housing Authority
Board Meeting – July 11th, 2019

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ring called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

In attendance: Jonathan Ring (Chair), Bethan Brosnan (Treasurer), John Knowlton, Terry Byrne (arrived late, after Treasurer's report), Suzanne Terri-Blake.

Absent: Leigh Perry -Duda (Exec Director/ Secretary)

TENANT PARTICIPATION:

Leigh Perry-Duda was not able to attend due to illness.

A tenant asked if she could speak on an agenda item regarding heating. But this was not on the agenda. No issues regarding the heating system. The agenda item is the "Secure energy agreement."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - June 13th, 2019*

Motion to approve minutes: First by Ring, Second by Knowlton. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Discussed procedure in approving minutes. Ms. Blake thought about abstaining because she wasn't at this meeting where the minutes were discussed. Mr. Ring explained that this is not actually a rule that one has to abstain from approving the minutes, although some people choose to abstain if they were not at the meeting because they were not a witness to the proceedings.

TREASURERS REPORT:

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report: First by Ring, Second by Brosnan. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Brosnan talked briefly about the procedure undertaken by the Treasurer in signing checks for HAP section 8 payments and checks for routine operating expenses.

CPC UPDATE:

Ms. Brosnan presented the board with a CPC update. Most projects went through except for a few projects; projects approved will be brought before town meeting in the Fall. Bethany Brosnan is the Housing Authority rep on the CPC – which stands for Community Preservation Commission. The bottom of our tax bill shows funds that residents are billed to support CPC. CPC reviews application for projects and those projects have to meet certain criteria. Some projects CPC has funded include the Millbrook Meadow project, Congregational church steeple, Granite Street crossing – which is affordable housing. CPC provides funds for recreational, and restoration of buildings. Next time frame for applying for Grants is the First Tuesday in February, 2020.

Workshops will be in September and October 2019. Housing Authority could be eligible for funds. Properties that accept funds have to enter a deed restriction.

NEW BUSINESS:

- o Welcome to new state appointee Suzanne Terry Blake, who was appointed by Governor Baker, [based on recommendation from the RHA Board], and also welcome to Theresa Byrne, who was elected by Rockport voters to the board on June 11th, 2019. Now the RHA has a full functioning board. All board members serve a five- year term including the state appointee, however according to the letter that Chair Ring received, Ms. Blake will be serving for three years because she is finishing the unexpired

term of the last state appointee, Ms. Hapshee. Congratulations to both board members for their appointments and elections.

- o Election of Board officers. After each municipal election the RHA Board is required to re-organize its executive board. The board has three positions: chair, vice-chair, treasurer. Any board member can run for any of these positions. A board member can nominate one self or a fellow board member. It's a good opportunity for a board member to serve. Even a first- time member can be a Treasurer. It's not a requirement. Mr. Ring explained that serving as treasurer was how he started when he got elected. Ring re-iterated that anyone can also serve as chair as well. Ms. Byrne asked if there were any descriptions of the positions. Mr. Ring said that ehe description of these positions are in the RHA Bylaws, but unfortunately, he did not have a copy of these bylaws. The bylaws are not online but in the RHA office. The last time the bylaws were updated was 1982. Ring answered that the Treasurer's responsibility is to sign off on the checks that go out from the RHA office, including Section 8 and routine expenses. Ms. Brosnan informed the board that until the board member has a stamp one has to come in and sign each check. Section 8 was not streamlined – it has not been put on direct deposit. Ring said that all five board members are signatories for any financial statements. But often the treasurer is called in to authorize spending and the chair can also do that as well. The treasurer also presents the Treasurer's report. Ms. Brosnan reminded the chair that the two new board members need to get their name on signature cards for the Institution for Savings. Ms. Byrne asked about the designation "cleared" on the HAP report, and that the column had the word "no" for each check. Ms. Brosnan stated that she thought these were probably checks that hadn't gone out yet. The report was printed on July 9th, but all checks were dated June 19th. But usually these checks don't go out until the end of the month. Ms. Byrne asked who is the current vice – chair. Currently there is no vice-chair because Paula Murphy was the vice-chair before she left the board. Ms. Byrne asked what the responsibilities of the vice-chair. Mr. Ring stated that the vice-chair has no responsibility except to chair the board meetings if the Chair is not available. Chair has responsibility of chairing the meetings, presiding over the communications with the executive director, and submitting additional items for the agenda, or receiving additional items for the agenda from board members.

Nominations for:

- o Chair: Jonathan Ring – nominated by Ms. Brosnan, second by Ms. Byrne.
- o Vice Chair: Theresa Byrne – nominated by Mr. Ring, second by Ms. Brosnan.
- o Treasurer: Bethany Brosnan – nominated by Mr. Knowlton, second by Ms. Blake.

Motion to close nominations: First by Ring, Second by Ms. Brosnan. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Motion to accept the following members as the new Executive Board: Jonathan Ring, Chair, Theresa Byrne, Vice Chair, Bethany Brosnan, Treasurer. Motion passed with unanimous consent.

- o Pump Station Update – Change order. Mr. Ring read from notes provided by E.D. Leigh Perry-Duda which stated: "Pump Station Update – change order – vendor came out and installed fence around pump station. Rocks still to be removed. Executive Director has put a call out to the engineer to schedule a meeting as the fence was not installed well. Ok to agree to change order but need to have company come back before final payment is approved." Mr. Ring also read from a letter from GCG Associates Inc, dated May 31, 2019: "Dear Ms. Perry-Duda: GCG Associates inc. has prepared the attached change order for Sewer Pump Station Improvement Projects at Kitefield as discussed and agreed to at various weekly meetings. The need for the changes became apparent during construction meetings and discussion of various work items. The work items as listed below which are part of the change order were examined, discussed, and verified for need and economy during various site meetings. COP # 1: During construction it has been determined that the RHA would like the new propane tank enclosed to protect against vandalism. The change order would add a black vynl chain

link fence around the concrete pad which the propane tank sits on with a gate to allow for removal and access to the tank. The breakdown of cost for the various items of work is attached as part of this change order. The cost to complete this work is \$3,750.00 which based upon our review is a fair and reasonable cost. The total cost for this change order is a credit of \$3,750.00. GCG Associates inc has reviewed the contractor's proposal and the site during construction. We find the approach and the costs to be fair and equitable, and recommend approval. Should you have questions or comments please contact us at" Mr. Knowlton stated he went up and looked at the fence and said that they did a terrible job – the fence is doing its job but it looks terrible. Ms. Byrne asked if they have already installed this fence. Apparently, the fence has been installed. Ms. Byrne asked how they installed the fence if the work order has not been approved. There is some confusion over the cost – will it cost the RHA \$3,750.00 or does the RHA get a credit of \$3,750 that offsets cost? Is this change order just an amendment to the original order to have the contractor fix the work they did on the fence? Ms. Brosnan stated that the fence was installed while the executive director was on vacation but calling it a change order is probably incorrect. The fence was done out of order.

Motion: To not take any action on this matter because it is not clear what we are approving: First by Ms. Byrne and Second by Mr. Knowlton. This motion was withdrawn and a new modified motion replaced it.

Motion: To table approval of the Pump Station Update change order. First by Mr. Ring, Second by Ms. Brosnan. This motion passed with unanimous consent.

- The board will reschedule a special meeting for next week to take up the issue of the Pump Station Change order and get clarification from the executive director. Ms. Brosnan requested that the meeting should be no later than 5:30pm so that the staff could get out as soon as the meeting is concluded. The next special meeting will be scheduled for Thursday July 18 at 5:30pm unless a sooner meeting is needed for approval. The meeting must be posted at least 48 hours ahead of time.
- Secure Energy Agreement. E.D. Leigh Perry-Duda left a note for the board which stated that "Proposed agreement will save us \$0.02 per kwh. Executive Director would like to vote this in to place to start contract asap. Locked in rate will expire shortly." Mr. Knowlton stated that this would save us \$200/ month. Ms. Brosnan stated that the only problem she has with third party companies is that they get you for one rate in the first year and they raise that rate. Ms. Byrne stated that this agreement says the contract indicates that the locked in period goes from 11/04/19 to 11/03/22.
- **Motion: To approve the schedule provided by Constellation Energy: First by Ms. Byrne, Second by Ms. Brosnan. This motion was approved by unanimous vote.**
- Resident Survey Results. We received survey results from DHCD of Rockport Housing Authority and all LHA's in the state. 54 surveys were completed out of 104 surveys issued in a 2 -year period (2016 – 2018). This is 52%. A lot of questions ask residents a question about issues that happened in the last 12 months. Mr. Ring stated that he does not know if this means the last 12 months of 2018, 2017 or some where in between these years. One of the results was a high satisfaction with management. Mr. Ring stated that he doesn't know if this reflected current management or former management, and if half the people that were sent a survey didn't answer because of bad experience with the former management or because they just never got to it. One of the residents attending the meeting remembered the survey but Mr. Knowlton, who is a resident as well as a board member, did not remember receiving the survey. The only questions omitted from board review are questions 2 to 7 because these questions reflected personal data that is required to be kept confidential. Some examples include: "93% felt they were usually or always treated with courtesy and respect when they contacted management." Ms. Brosnan asked what we would use the survey for. Mr. Ring stated that it is

probably to help LHA's discover areas of improvement. For example, one question asks "In your development, how safe do you feel going out alone during the day? 90 % very safe, 8% mostly safe, 0% somewhat safe, and 2% not at all safe." Another question states "For each of the following documents, please mark whether or not you have seen it in the last 12 months. Capital improvement plan 26% yes, 74% no. Operating budget: 13% yes, 87% no. Annual Plan: 30% yes, 70% no." Mr. Ring thinks that perhaps the goal is to inform LHA's about issues that they may not have asked residents about or about issues that some residents are afraid to discuss at a public meeting. This may also force an LHA to ask questions. One example would be if the numbers on safety were reversed – and many people felt it was unsafe to go outside the board may ask why do people feel it is unsafe and what can we do to improve it. It is unknown if more surveys like this will be done. Ms. Byrne stated that we should probably share this with residents and ask if there are any concerns that they have that they don't see reflected in this survey. RHA could do its own survey and make sure it is confidential. Ms. Blake indicated that a 52% response for a survey is still pretty good. One resident at the meeting stated that she filled out the survey because she cares.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: First by Mr. Ring, Second by Ms. Blake. Motion was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes written and submitted by Jonathan Ring