

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PORTSMOUTH HOUSING AUTHORITY
March 10, 2021 - 2:00 p.m.
Conference Call

Chair Ferrini called the meeting to order.

I. ROLL CALL

PRESENT	LATE ARRIVAL	ABSENT
Commissioner Jewett		Commissioner Leith
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		
Secretary Craig Welch		

Members were present via conference call due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also present via Conference Call: Finance Director Valerie Labrie, Executive Assistant Mary Kelliher, Attorney John Bosen.

Chair Ferrini declared a quorum present.

II. READING OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Rodenhizer motioned to waive the reading of the minutes dated March 10, 2021 and accept as presented. Commissioner Main seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Main		Commissioner Jewett
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

The motion passed.

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Court Street Update

Mr. Welch reported that we underestimated the amount of contaminated soils and that is going to add an additional \$200,000 expense. The nature of the contamination is arsenic and lead, which are naturally occurring. The levels are just high enough that the soil cannot be disposed of as “clean fill” and therefore needs to be disposed of at an appropriate landfill for an additional cost. He explained that part of the development budget is a \$560,000 owner contingency. The additional cost will come out of that owner contingency. We should be much more consistent with cost as the building is constructed.

Funding Update

Between the LTD meeting and this meeting, we received another \$5,000 pledge and are now \$6,000 away from meeting our \$375,000 goal. We have 30 businesses so far that have stepped up and purchased tax credits. Our goal was to get all of our pledges in by the end of March.

Vaccinations

To date, we have gotten 340 vaccines distributed to our residents. We were able to offer the vaccine to residents, caretakers, and PHA staff.

Human Resources

Mr. Welch informed that Board that, unfortunately, our Property Manager at Feaster and Margeson, Jeramie Whipple, is leaving the PHA. He is the first staff member to start as a Maintenance crew member and move up to be a Property Manager. He has worn many hats in the organization and we're very grateful for all the work he has done for us and our residents. We are planning on filling that position internally, with a promotion of the recently hired Assistant Property Manager, Amanda Kittredge.

We are hiring and we're also looking to expand our Tax Credit management staff. Our Tax Credit portfolio is going from 184 to 248 units and we want to lease that up quickly.

Vacancies

Mr. Welch reported that something we've noticed during the pandemic is applicants turning down units. It takes a lot of work to get a full application complete, hand off that application to the Property Manager, then have the applicant come in and turn down a unit. We have had a lot of turn-downs at Feaster. It appears that most of the individuals who are currently leasing up at Feaster are coming from homelessness or a shelter. There is a combination of reasons for this. With the ongoing construction of 160 Court Street as well as Feaster renovations, the building is more difficult to get in and out of. Additionally, due to the construction, we have lost a dumpster location and have a number of roll-off containers by the building entrance; we are still working on figuring out the right size and number of containers that the building needs.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution No. 2021-002 Request for Release of Funds

Commissioner Main motioned to approve Resolution No. 2021-002: Request for Release of Funds. Commissioner Rodenhizer seconded the motion.

Discussion followed.

Mr. Welch detailed the resolution. When Feaster Apartments was completed in 1970, part of the lot was used as a parking lot for Feaster residents, the City Fire Department, and the general public by way of metered spaces monitored by the City. Prior to July 9th, 2018, we never received any revenue for those metered spaces. It was a loose agreement where they would plow the parking lot and we would let them meter those spaces. In anticipation of the project at 160 Court Street, Mr. Welch reported that he changed those terms. The amount of resident permits went down and increased the amount of spaces that could be metered by the City. We made a deal with the City to get part of that revenue. We accumulated \$43,730.30 from the time we made the agreement in 2018 up until we officially closed the parking lot, and left in escrow at the City. Mr. Welch recently requested those funds from the City. The City attorney asked for a Board vote to make that request official.

Commissioner Main asked if the Ltd Board had to approve or request anything. Mr. Welch said they did not. Since the agreement with the City was with the Portsmouth Housing Authority, they requested that the Portsmouth Housing Authority ask for those funds. They did not dictate where the funds need to go. With the funding that we have under the PHA Housing Development Ltd, we thought it best to have the money deposited directly to the Ltd.

There was no further discussion.

The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Jewett		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

V. OLD BUSINESS

There was no discussion.

VI. OPERATIONAL REPORTS

A. ORGANIZATION CHART

There was no discussion.

B. WAIT LIST

There was no discussion.

C. VACANCY REPORT

Commissioner Main asked what a Public Housing 0-bedroom unit is. Mr. Welch responded that it is a studio apartment.

D. LANDLORD-TENANT

Commissioner Rodenhizer asked about the debts that were wrote-off for individuals that may or may not be engaging in payment plans, wondering how that impacts their ability to live at Portsmouth Housing again. Mr. Welch said we do not house anyone who has an outstanding balance with us or any other Housing Authority in the country. As long as an outstanding balance is settled, an individual would then be able to reside with us.

E. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Chair Ferrini asked what the net income deficit budget is for in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Ms. Labrie said when we did the budget, we weren't sure if we were going to utilize all of the CARES Act funds for the HCV program. We are continuing to apply those funds in 2021, part of which can be seen under Cares Act Grant Expense.

Chair Ferrini asked why administration expenses are down in the Central Office Cost Center. Ms. Labrie said the budget is based on 5 weeks, while the actual is based on 4 weeks. She said we will continue to watch it.

Commissioner Rodenhizer asked what the red text means in the budget draw template seen in "total prior adjustments" and "undisbursed after this draw." Ms. Labrie answered that the prior adjustments in red are adjustments that are reducing the original budget for that line item. For "undisbursed after this draw," the red text denotes an expense being more than what was budgeted. Essentially, the red are negative amounts.

Commissioner Rodenhizer motioned to approve the operational reports, as presented. Commissioner Pickering seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Jewett		
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

The motion passed.

VII. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

There was no discussion.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Main motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Rodenhizer seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Jewett		
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

The motion passed and the meeting adjourned.