

Ridgefield Housing Authority
Ridgefield, CT 06877

Approved RHA
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 20, 2024
Ridgefield, CT 06877

**Meeting via Zoom- 305 224-1968 (266 192 1953)
In Person at the Ballard Green Community Room**

Commissioners Present: Vincent Liscio, Paul Janerico, Jan Hebert, Maree Macpherson (All in Person), Ed Baird on Zoom

REM Staff: Wade Rockwood, Monica Stromwall, Wesley Robinson

RHA Residents: Susan Proctor, Nancy Higgins, Krisann Benson, Phyllis Llorca, Barbara Beaulieu, John Burke, Louise Massey

A motion to approve RHA Regular Meeting Minutes from March 6, 2024, with one spelling change, was made by Mr. Janerico and seconded by Ms. Macpherson, all present approved.

A motion to approve the Management Report was made by Ms. Macpherson and seconded by Mr. Janerico, all present approved.

A motion to approve the Tenant Commissioner Report was made by Mr. Janerico and seconded by Mr. Liscio, all present approved.

A motion to adjourn the RHA Meeting was made by Ms. Hebert and seconded by Mr. Janerico, all present approved.

Mr. Liscio called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and read the Mission Statement aloud. He asked for a motion to approve Minutes from March 5, 2023. Ms. Hebert stated that there was an error in a name that needed attention. Secretary made note of that and changed before finalizing. The motion to approved Minutes proceeded.

Management Report - For the month of February we have 1 vacancy for Ballard Green with an anticipated move in date of mid- April. We are currently at 98% occupied with 1 upcoming vacancy at the end of April. We currently have 2 vacancies at Congregate with one move in scheduled for April 5th and the second anticipated for mid-April. We have no upcoming vacancies and are 95% occupied. We are 100% occupancy for General Apartments with no upcoming vacancies. We currently have one vacancy at Meadows with no upcoming vacancies. We are currently at 98% occupied for all developments. We continue to focus on our delinquencies and there was an increase in the overall aging for all developments by 29% in February. Statements of account for those residents with debit balances were mailed last week. Property management is continuing to reach out to those residents with delinquencies to make payment arrangements. We continue to follow our accounting procedures with those residents who are unresponsive or who do not follow agreed upon payment arrangements, have and will be turned

over to legal. Mr. Rockwood listed the monies owed by several residents. Additionally, out of these seven residents, three have been issued notices to quit and are moving forward with the necessary legal steps. Ms. Hebert questioned the process of going to legal and that expense. Mr. Rockwood explained that they work with residents to assist them in any and all ways possible before pursuing legal methods. Maintenance completed over 60 work orders this month. Mr. Rockwood is continuing to interview for another maintenance technician to assist Doug as we anticipate the number of work orders to increase as we continue to review the capital needs assessments and perform annual unit inspections. Lastly, the annual recertification packets were hand delivered last week to all 60 Ballard Green residents and the 34 Congregate residents with a due date of April 5th. Another question about assisting residents with rent – do you get money from charities or does REM initiate or do you give information to residents. Contact information is given to residents but REM is there to assist them if they are unable.

Resident Management Report - I am pleased to present this report on the activities and outcomes of our Resident Service Coordination Program over the past month. As part of our commitment to providing comprehensive support to our residents, this program plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of life within our community.

Program Overview:

The Resident Service Coordination Program was established to address our residents' unique needs by offering various supportive services. Our dedicated team works tirelessly to create an environment that fosters independence, well-being, and a sense of community among our residents.

Key Highlights and Achievements:

1. Collaboration with External Partners: The needs assessment I helped develop with the Commission on Aging, which facilitated the town-wide Senior Survey, was presented to the public at the public library last week. The Senior Survey will help the town identify future unmet needs and budget and allocate resources to help plan for funding and improvements for the quality of life of the town's aging population. Partnerships with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DHMAS), the Department of Social Services (DSS), and the Ridgefield Police Department are expanding the range of services for the residents at Ridgefield Housing Authority to provide referrals, supportive services, and educational opportunities which are taking place this month and will be ongoing for the residents.

2. Individualized Support Plans: I continue implementing personalized support plans for residents facing various challenges, such as health issues, financial concerns, and social isolation. These plans ensure supportive care, home care resources, and referrals to behavioral health and local physicians.

3. Community Engagement Initiatives: In collaboration with local organizations, I have organized 36 community engagement events, workshops, and activities at Prospect Ridge and 24 at Ballard Green for our signature Ridge&Green programming. These initiatives aim to promote social connections and empower residents with valuable resources. This month, the residents celebrated with a St. Patrick's Day party and look forward to our K-9 demonstration with Officer McKnight and Odin tomorrow at Ballard Green and our new partnership with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DHMAS), which will add additional support to the Resident Service Coordination Program by providing a presentation of support services next Tuesday at 1pm and assisting and evaluation of residents of programs which they are available.

Challenges and Solutions:

Our challenge has been reaching residents to encourage participation in events, workshops, and lectures. I now have complete control of the Facebook account and will utilize social media to promote events and share information. I am working on creating building captains to ensure residents have varied communication streams for accessing information.

Currently Working On:

1. Community Involvement:

- a. Goal: Increase residents' involvement in decision-making processes
 - b. Strategy: Establish resident councils or committees to provide input on community matters, events, and improvements
2. Information and Communication:
- a. Goal: Improve communication channels within the community.
 - b. Strategy: Implement practical communication tools, such as block captains and digital platforms, to keep residents informed about upcoming events, services, and news.
3. Volunteer Opportunities:
- a. Goal: Encourage residents to contribute to the community through volunteerism, empowering residents, increasing purpose, social skills, and self-esteem, and building community.
 - b. Strategy: In May, a volunteer fair will connect residents to volunteer opportunities within the town and the surrounding area.

Conclusion:

Highlights for the upcoming April Month will include a visit from our partners at Exceptional Sidekick Service Dog Stanley, RVNA Healthcare Know Your Numbers Clinic, DHMAS Supportive Services, and Earth Day Activities

Much discussion about pickleball. . .

Financial Update: Due to rampant COVID outbreak at REM Headquarters, all intended reports slipped. Hopeful to have updated reports by next Board Meeting.

Tenant Commissioner Report: The first week of March Ms. Macpherson had a meeting with Social Services, Karen Gaudian and Tony Philips regarding my concerns about the bus service provided by the town for older residents to go shopping and keep various appointments. The driver, as I reported to the last Board meeting, does not keep to the schedule and leaves older residents standing. Often waiting an hour or hour and a half with nowhere to sit. Tony Philips took note of what I have been hearing from the passengers and he will be reporting to the person who is in charge of the bus operation, as Tony is not responsible for this. On the 8th March Ms. Macpherson visited the Building Department in search of the Building Inspector, looking for information regarding permits for the repair and/or complete renovation of the Stucco surface of Congregate, 51 Prospect Ridge. Jason Holstein 203 431 2743 did call me back and explained that if we only require repairs to the stucco – no permit is required, whereas if we do a complete renovation a permit is required. I passed on this information to Wade Rockwood.

During these past weeks of March, Ms. Macpherson's time was much taken up with various issues of some residents either with meetings or follow up phone calls. It is upsetting to hear the unkindness of some towards their neighbors and needless gossip. At this point I am not quite clear as to how to resolve some issues but working on them. There were 12 residents on the 14th enjoying a pleasant St. Patrick's party, arranged by Monica, our challenge is how to get more of our residents to attend. If others have ideas that would be appreciated. Ms. Macpherson had planned on attending the Catauaia Garden Club but was unable to attend due to ill health. However, she has been in touch with key members of the club since and it is arranged that she will be visiting Congregate on 21st with a Board member to inspect the possibilities of creating a charming garden by the front door entrance. The Board Member will be making a report to the Board Meeting on the 26th March. As a result, we may have some excellent suggestions and possibly some volunteers. No promises at this stage. Upon approval of any proposals that are made I would like to ask if a grant of some kind might be available to buy the approved plantings. Remembering that both the Ridgefield Garden Club and the Catauaia Garden Club have their joint Garden Sale at the beginning of May. There may be the possibility of some discount – I am hoping. There was a discussion about handicapped parking and Ms. Hebert suggested that perhaps the town might be a good place to start investigating the rules on that. Ms. Stromwall brought over two of the Ridgefield Garden Club to Ms. Macpherson's house the other day and they have already received another grant to build another garden box and were wondering where to place it. I have always spoken of the flat space

between Buildings B and C – it’s a good open space, within easy access to water and plenty of sun. Easy access also for those of us having trouble getting around – thinking of volunteers that I must round up. The last two weeks Ms. Macpherson has spent time making phone calls and chasing up artisans who are expert in renovating and applying stucco. She has spoken to ten companies, all recommended on Angie’s list. She has now set up meetings at Mr. Rockwood’s request for some of them to meet with Wade at 51 Prospect Ridge, next week. This afternoon I received a text from John Burke who is more up on some of these things than I, as I am still in a learning curve. But what John was asking certainly sounds a very valid question. He is asking, as am I, why utilities allowance in recertification has not changed in three-four years from \$95.00. Utility bills follow inflation, but RHA? What is DOH and CHFA of Ct allowing?

Old Business

Ballard Green Walkway Discussed the approved Ballard Green Walkway project with the contractor earlier today. During our meeting, the contractor confirmed that they will be providing me with the material data sheets as required for the project. Additionally, they have outlined a comprehensive plan for completing the project in a timely manner, which I would like to share with you. The contractor anticipates that the project will be completed within a span of three days. Day One: The first day will involve the removal of the existing asphalt from the areas identified in the contract. This preparatory step is crucial to ensure a smooth transition to the new walkway. Day Two: On the second day, the contractor plans to lay processed stone in the sections where the asphalt has been removed. This step is essential for providing a stable base for the final layer of asphalt. Day Three: The third and final day will focus on laying the asphalt to complete the walkway. It is important to note that on this day, residents will not be able to walk on the sections undergoing asphalt laying. However, we will coordinate with the residents and provide a schedule to minimize inconvenience. Throughout the project, we will prioritize communication and coordination with the residents to ensure minimal disruption to their daily routines. Additionally, we are committed to adhering to all safety protocols to ensure the well-being of both workers and residents. There will be **NO** Cold Tar.

Emergency plan - Myself, Resident Service Manager, Monica Stromwall met last week and started performing the final review of the emergency plan. There are additional edits to the document. We have another review session on Tuesday, March 26th to complete reviewing the document for final edits.

Cameras According to open systems, the cameras have been ordered and they anticipate having the project completed by the middle of April.

Capital Needs Assessment No update since our meeting two weeks ago. I had some planned time off last week and I was focusing on other property management related priorities. There will be a meeting on Tuesday with Mr. Rockwood, Ms. Macpherson and Mr. Baird.

Commercial Refrigerator at 51 Prospect Ridge with the decision to replace the existing commercial refrigerator with a True Manufacturing two-door refrigerator. This decision was made after careful consideration of factors such as reliability, efficiency, and long-term cost-effectiveness. The selected refrigerator comes with an impressive 7-year warranty covering parts, labor, and the compressor, providing us with added assurance and minimizing potential disruptions to our operations. The total cost for the removal of the existing refrigerator, disposal, and installation of the new True Manufacturing refrigerator amounts to \$8,306.82. This investment is essential to maintain the quality and efficiency of our facilities, ensuring the satisfaction of our residents. I am pleased to inform you that the refrigerator has been ordered, and we are currently awaiting delivery and installation information from the vendor.

Facebook – Ms. Stromall has taken over the RHA Facebook page and will update as necessary.

LP Exit – Moving along.

Other – Move Congregate Gazebo to action area. Congregate Tower will move to CNA.

Public Session

Susan Proctor Can the residents be involved in camera placement? No, but please contact REM with your suggestions/ideas. Stucco surface on Carriage Barn the same as Congregate and Doug has made improvements to it. Shouldn't aides have badges as identification? Plant watering – all buildings have spigots but some have been turned off – can they be turned back on?

Krisann Benson Can we do something about additional handicap parking spaces?

Nancy Higgins Motion lights for security purposes? Power sources on buildings for internet?

Louise Massey – left

Barbara Beaulieu- Thank you.

Phillis Llorca – left

John Burke – left

Mr. Liscio then asked for a vote to adjourn meeting at 8:52AM

RHA Minutes Respectfully submitted by Patricia Harney, Recording Secretary.

Next Meeting April 3, 2024 at 8am

Minutes available in Hardcopy at REM Office, Gilbert Street, or outside REM Office at Prospect Ridge, or with this link on Town Site.

<https://www.ridgefieldct.org/housing-authority>

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- Link to A/V: :
<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/KLN5qfHrYd6ljFNemwgS7JZOeFq7cCdzgMYV2vodL3DYbZJNFe8y04gHm25ZTWN8.-1xz7gGHRGZQ7LCY>