

Ridgefield Housing Authority
Ridgefield, CT 06877

RHA Approved Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 1, 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 (VL), Paul Janerico (PJ) (left meeting at 9:39am), Ed Baird (EB), Jan Hebert (JH), Maree Macpherson (MM) (All on Zoom)

REM Staff: Wade Rockwood (WR), Robert Weiss (RW), Renee Dobos (RD)

RHA Residents: Nancy Higgins, Krisann Benson

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A motion to approve RHA Regular Meeting Minutes from April 17, 2024, as written, was made by Ms. Hebert and seconded by Mr. Janerico, all present approved except for Mr. Liscio who abstained.

A motion to move New Business to a new, earlier position on schedule was made by Mr. Liscio and seconded by Mr. Janerico, all present approved.

A motion to approve Financial Report was made by Ms. Macpherson and seconded by Ms. Hebert. all present approved.

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

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

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Mr. Liscio began the meeting at 8:04am, by reading the Mission Statement and then requesting the approval of Meeting Minutes which did take place at this time.

Rent Adjustments – Mr. Liscio asked for the Board to approve moving the Rent Adjustments from later in the meeting to this place and he acknowledged Mr. Robert Weiss and Ms. Renee Dobos of REM attending the meeting to offer their expertise, advice and counsel. The Board approved this. Mr. Weiss started the discussion with the basic reasons for rent changes. What he proposed is a rent increase in the *base rent* of \$25 per unit per month for Ballard and an increase of \$29 per unit per month for Congregate, due to increasing costs such as supplies, utilities, insurance, maintenance cost supplies, addition of second maintenance person. Mr. Rockwood took over giving a presentation on the many types of scenarios that could take place for the residents and explained each situation in detail for both Ballard Green and Congregate, which had different basic criteria. Each scenario was documented on a presentation that each Board Member had in their possession. He discussed what *base rent* meant and how it affected the residents, along with their income, which plays a very important role in the equation. Many questions and discussion from the Board. Some questions asked: PJ: do we have any significant one-time expenditures affecting the numbers? RW, no, not even tank issues or legal fees affect the increases. PJ also questioned subsidies and they are capped at 70% for Ballard Green and 30% for Congregate. It was pointed out that the FED is still trying to get the economy and inflation under control. Mr. Rockwood began his presentation of the several different scenarios at each location. Utility allowance is set at \$95/month dictated by the State. JH it appears person with Part Time job and increased income will pay additional monies. What happens if that person leaves the PT job, how is that handled. That person would continue to pay the rate for this year and next year, potential adjustments will be made. RD commented that UniteCT is still available for residents. While operating expenses are high, we are experiencing a break-even budget. Mr. Janerico took the position of trying to explain COLA and its role, how REM has been trying to focus on what our realistic expenses are and how they can provide for the expectations of the residents while keeping a balanced budget. Further discussion at this time concerning ways to assist residents with grocery expenditures. Suggestion was made to reach out to Meals on Wheels – VL suggested making a list to distribute to agencies of paper goods, cleaning items, soaps, for example, that might help with resident expenses so that they would spend their income on food that's healthier. MM, Monica Stromwall and JH will coordinate with organizations. Mr. Rockwood then began his presentation on Congregate, which is more complicated, due to the "services" which is part of their rent. As Congregate was designed by the State we don't

have ability to make adjustments. Numbers are tough. For next week's meeting put resolution together and use same numbers for Meadows and General, as has been utilized in the past- \$50 per month not to exceed allowable limits, or \$100 per month where there is a \$200 or more gap between the rent and the mandated rent limit. Concern was expressed about our reserves and how well we are replenishing them for the future. Suggestion was made that we do an analysis of last 10 years to determine if we are putting enough in reserves. PJ pointed out that with the experiences we had with COVID, the "regular expenses" would not be obvious since we were living in such a strange time, vacancies were up and we actually used ARPA funds to bring our expenses to flush again. Mr. Weiss will do an analysis over last 10-11 years to see what the average monies involved in unexpected expenditures. Mr. Janerico offered a suggestion that the Board hold a united position about the resolution. Not that a change cannot be made, if warranted.

Management Update - Next week, Mr. Rockwood, recounted the Ballard Green power washing of buildings will commence on Monday morning. Focus continues on keeping occupancies at 100%. Two move-in today, one at Meadows and one at Ballard Green. Ballard Green has one upcoming move out.

Financial Report- Wanted to talk about a couple things, one is the rent adjustments, which we just covered, and the other is the audits conducted by Jason's team and then the LP Exit. I received the draft audit report that was issued to Boston Financial and it goes to their investors. It needs to be done timely and so forth and they put pressure on Jason to get that report out. And, he did the taxes, so that's out too. Not a concern, but there were some complications in the audit this year, given the complexity of the 4 properties and how the accounting is handled for managing them. While there is a little difficulty to follow what's happen between the properties, but when pulled together, it looks fine. They are in the process of doing the audit for RHA, LLC, which is the overall Parent company, and its all consolidated but concerns that there may be some compliance issues that were related to the LP. I understand what Robert is doing, but we probably need to talk about that a little more, off line. Not to make a big deal about it, but just to make sure that we don't have any issues going forward. Next year it will be simpler overall due to the fact that it will be one basic audit that covers every and we don't have an issue between money moving between various accounts. We can centralize. Also, on a percentage basis, we can allocate to each property that

are general expenses. But, PHA Web has its limitations. Fairfield County Bank has signed off. CHAFA asking for \$5K review fee which I challenged, but we will pay. Also, \$5,700 Wiggins fee.

Tenant Commissioner- The garden sale from the Garden Club will take place on the 10th-11th at Ballard Green. I would like to source the plants from Congregate from them at this time. Not sure what the monies will be to purchase, but perhaps \$200, which would be available from Comcast funds. Ms. Macpherson will work with Mr. Rockwood concerning funding and asked for help with planting new items at Congregate.

Old Business

Ballard Green Walkways – No updates at present.

Grants – Ms. Hebert has been looking into grants but they are mostly for health care kind of things but will continue to pursue.

Emergency Plan – Dick Ahrens Ok'd and now with Ms. Hebert for final approval.

BG Cameras – Run into weather delays and secured incorrect mountings. Congregate happening this week; Ballard Green next week.

CNA – Hired new maintenance person who can now get involved. Doug has assigned Alec a few projects. For elevator facing, we are working to get estimates.

Annual Certification – taking up lots of time. Recerts going well 80% completed. Letters going out 16th of May, 45 days' notice for rent advice.

LP Exit – Mr. Janerico previously reported.

Ms. Liscio then asked for a vote to adjourn meeting at 9:50AM

RHA Minutes Respectfully submitted by Patricia Harney, Recording Secretary.

Next Meeting May 8, 2024 at 7pm

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

Audio available:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/ZsLV41mDzEdDHYugDPPAkEqOAaADKSZhisBU9X-LpZNGQZy0hbxCBK35gPamuC4u.abo-OOeUFVSvYb-Q>
