

Ridgefield Housing Authority
Ridgefield, CT 06877

RHA Unapproved Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 17, 2024
Meeting in person and via Zoom- 305 224-1968 (266 192 1953)

Commissioners Present: Vincent Liscio, Paul Janerico, Jan Hebert, Maree Macpherson - All Board Members in person except for E. Baird who was on Zoom

REM Staff: Wade Rockwood, Monica Stromwall and Wesley Robinson

RHA Resident: Krisann Benson, Nancy Higgins, Barbara Beaulieu, Isette Brendza, John Burke

A motion to approve RHA Meeting Minutes from January 3, 2024, with no changes, was made by Mr. Janerico and seconded by Mr. Baird, all present approved, except Ms. Hebert who abstained.

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

A motion to add a topic under New Business (Washer/Dryers) for Ballard Green was made by Ms. Hebert and seconded by Mr. Janerico, all present approved.

A motion to add another topic under New Business (Commercial Refrigerator) for Congregate was made by Mr. Janerico and seconded by Ms. Hebert, all present approved.

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

Mr. Liscio called the meeting to order and read the Mission Statement aloud. First order of business was the Approval of Meeting Minutes, which was completed. Mr. Liscio called upon Mr. Rockwood to start with his Management Update.

Management Update We continue to have no vacancies at Ballard Green and we are at 100% occupied with no upcoming vacancies for the development. We currently have 3 vacancies at Congregate that we are actively calling applicants on the waiting list and showing units. We have 2 vacancies in General Apartments with one move in scheduled for February 1st and the other anticipated for early February. We have not upcoming vacancies and anticipate being at 100% by the end of February. We currently have one vacancy at Meadows, which maintenance is currently getting the unit ready for showing. We are currently at 98% occupied for all developments. I have taken action to actively promote Ridgefield Senior Housing and enhance our efforts in attracting potential applicants. In our ongoing endeavor to connect with organizations that actively support seniors, I am pleased to inform you that I was recently invited by Chair of The Ridgefield Commission on Aging to present on behalf of the Ridgefield Housing Authority (RHA) at the Ridgefield Public Library, during a Senior Voices session. This opportunity allowed me to showcase the affordable housing options available for seniors at our developments in Ridgefield. The presentation to Senior Voices not only provided a platform to highlight RHA developments but also facilitated valuable networking opportunities. Meeting with individuals and organizations involved in the senior housing sector has proven to be instrumental in raising awareness about our offerings and fostering connections within the community. I am delighted to share that these efforts have yielded positive results, with additional housing applicants expressing interest in our developments. This demonstrates the effectiveness of proactive outreach and collaboration with key stakeholders in promoting our mission to provide affordable housing for seniors in Ridgefield. I believe that such initiatives play a crucial role in not only expanding our applicant pool but also strengthening our presence within the community. I am committed to continuing these efforts and exploring further opportunities to advance the goals of Ridgefield Senior Housing.

We continue to focus on our delinquencies and have had good progress, there was a marked decrease in the overall aging for all developments by 18%. For December month end Ballard Green had an outstanding

balance of \$3,631 which was down over prior month with a >90 balance increasing to \$896. General Apartments had an outstanding balance of \$6,287 which dropped significantly over prior month with a >90-day balance down to \$774. Congregate had an outstanding balance of \$7,712 which was up over prior month with at >90 up slightly to \$1,856. Meadows had an outstanding balance of \$13,211 which was down 24.8% over prior month with no change in the >90 day. 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. The entire >90-day balance for all developments totaling \$9160 has either been referred to legal or resident is on a payment plan. Over the past several weeks I have been attending mediation meetings at Danbury Superior Court to resolve delinquency matters and agree upon stipulated payment agreements. Maintenance had another busy month completing over 90 work orders. I am 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. We have annual unit inspections scheduled for next week, January 22nd and 23rd for all 34 units at Congregate. **Resident Services Manager** The Resident Services Coordination Program was established to address the unique needs of our residents by offering a range of 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) Individualized Support Plans; 2) Community Engagement Initiatives; 3) Health and Wellness Programs, and; 4) Collaboration with External Partners. While we celebrate our achievements, it's essential to acknowledge the challenges the program faces. Common challenges include residents accessing information despite calendars, newsletters, signs/flyers, and robocalls. I am implementing the following strategies to address them: building captains at Ballard Green, a phone tree at Prospect Ridge, a social media presence through Facebook, email messaging, and finally, text messaging for those who would like to be text messaged about important events.

Future Plans: 1) Health and Wellness; 2) Learning and Skill Development; 3) Community Involvement; 4) Access To Services; 5) Cultural and Recreational Activities; 6) Transportation Support; 7) Information and Communication; 8) Volunteer Opportunities; 9) Safety and Security; 10) Intergenerational Programs; and 11) Feedback Mechanism.

Ms. Hebert pleased about drops in overdue monies, however, do residents actually realize this is how we make our income that provides services to all residents. Mr. Liscio asked if we are still pre-qualifying for residence? Yes, but even then, potential residents will drop out at the last minute. Mr. Rockwood plans to reach out to local towns to make them aware of our locations. Another question asked related to Section 8 and whether we apply. Mr. Rockwood will check.

Financial Update: Mr. Janeriro stated that he handed out the summary from November – nothing exceptional to report. REM getting used to operation and put in other lines. Renee Dubos – interest on reserve accounts, ok given and will move it soon. December financial statements expected soon. Comments from budget meeting – Robert/Paul got good answers. CNA should be into capital expenditures more completely soon. Not an official report.

Tenant Commissioner Report: While Ms. Macpherson didn't have feedback to share at the meeting, she did want to question Solar Panels and their value on RHA properties. Mr. Janerico responded that we did have an active program to explore solar panels, but had been put on hold for several reasons including whether we can pursue grants. We are waiting until our relationship with Boston Financial has ended and perhaps our next business relationship may afford us the opportunity to explore grants. Not an official report.

Old Business

Ballard Green Walkway We have taken a proactive step to enhance the visibility of the Ballard Green Walkway project by submitting a revised RFP. This revised document has been successfully posted on several job sites, resulting in increased interest from a wider array of potential contractors. To facilitate engagement with interested contractors and offer them a firsthand understanding of the project, we are organizing a site visit on: Wednesday, January 24th, 2024 at 3:00 PM. It will provide valuable insights into the project's scope and foster direct communication with potential contractors. The deadline for proposal submission is

February 12, 2024. This timeline allows us ample opportunity to thoroughly review and assess all submitted proposals before making informed decisions. Trex material will also be pursued for price and efficacy.

Emergency plan. After further discussions with REM's President regarding CPR and first aid training for staff, the decision has been made not to move forward with this training as even though there are Good Samaritan laws, the laws won't protect you if your actions were reckless or careless in any way. you can still be sued for civil or criminal damages if your help actually makes the situation worse or injured the person further. This would fall under tort or criminal law, depending on how severe the actions were. I am continuing to perform updates to the emergency plan based on meeting feedback. Ms. Hebert will contact Dick Aherns for guidance.

Cameras: Meeting that was scheduled for Tuesday, January 16, 2024 was postponed due to the inclement weather. I am waiting on Open Systems to commit to a date so that we can form a plan to move forward with the project and order the cameras.

CNA Capital Needs Assessment We have a meeting scheduled for this Friday, January 19th.

Contracts/leases/Insurance - A meeting on Friday will cover the most recent aspects of the project.

Contracts, Leases/Insurance: we have successfully billed for insurance that we are entitled to. Additionally, we have ensured that we received the appropriate certificate of insurance and coverages as per our requirements. This ensures that these assets are adequately protected and that we have the necessary documentation in place for any unforeseen circumstances. Ms. Hebert will review position of each of our renters and their status.

Alternate High School – Nothing to report at this time.

Congregate underground oil Tank – I am pleased to announce the successful completion of our project, and I wanted to provide you with a brief update on the environmental aspects. We have received the environment report from Advanced Environmental Redevelopment, and I am pleased to inform you that the report indicates no contamination concerns. This is a significant milestone and a testament to the careful planning and execution of the project. Following the receipt of the environment report, I promptly filed the EZ-File report with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Upon reviewing the filing, I did not identify any penalty fees associated with our submission. For your reference and review, I have placed a copy of the environment report, the filing report, and the submission confirmation in the Dropbox under the "PROJECTS" folder. Please feel free to access these documents at your convenience. With the successful filing and completion of all necessary environmental reporting, I am pleased to confirm that the project is officially completed. Conversation about "finishing" touches for project including fence around oil tank and suitable covering where previous tank was located ensued.

Facebook Update: - Ms. Stromwall discussed position of past Facebook Pate from 2015 and the inability to update. She plans to create a new Facebook page and mark "old" page as revised.

LP Exit: REM/Boston Financial to exit by the end of the month. Going through RHA properties as part of exit and attorneys are involved but we need to wait for results. Belief is that we will not close by end of month.

Mr. Rockwood has requested that Board add a new item under New Business. Mr. Liscio requested the Board submit a motion for the first item which was Washers/Dryers at Ballard Green. The second motion involves new Commercial Refrigerator at Congregate. Each motion was individually approved.

New Business

Washer/Dryers at Ballard Green.

Commercial Refrigerator at Congregate.

Washers and Dryers at Ballard Green:

We are experiencing ongoing problems with the washer and dryers in the Ballard Green laundry room. Currently, two of the washing machines are inoperable and are awaiting parts for repair. Upon further investigation, it has been identified that we own the current machines. In light of this, I have explored a few options to address the situation:

1. Replace with New Machines:

- Purchase 4 new washers and 4 dryers for a total cost of \$12,607.92.

2. Rental Option:

- Obtain a quote for renting new machines.

3. Lease with Pay-for-Use Program:

- Implement a lease agreement with a pay-for-use program, where residents would be responsible for the cost of using the washers and dryers. Please note that this would be a departure from the previous arrangement where these services were provided free of charge.

4. I am in the process of obtaining a quote for the rental option and would appreciate your input and guidance on the best course of action. Our goal is to ensure the residents have reliable access to laundry facilities while considering the most cost-effective and efficient solution.

Major discussions ensued concerning several aspects of this expenditure and how it would be handled.

Commercial Refrigerator at 51 Prospect Ridge

I wanted to bring the board's attention the persistent issues we are facing with the commercial refrigerator at 51 Prospect Ridge. Over the past year, the refrigerator has broken down three times, incurring repair costs totaling \$1,646. Considering its age and unreliable performance, it is evident that a more permanent solution is needed to ensure the well-being of our residents and the freshness of stored food. I have taken the initiative to obtain quotes for replacing the commercial refrigerator. The estimated cost for a new unit is approximately \$6,000, and there will be additional expenses for the removal of the old refrigerator and the installation of the new unit. To mitigate the financial impact on our community, we plan to seek grant funds to reimburse the cost of acquiring the new commercial refrigerator. This approach aligns with our commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our residents. I believe swift action is crucial in this matter to avoid further disruptions and potential risks to the well-being of our community.

Discussion ensued but it appears as though most agreed to pursue this.

Grants will be pursued for both of the above. Ms. Stromwall will handle.

Public Session

Krisann Benson – Appears as though the first users of machines get the hot water. After there is none. Suggests we consider a new water heater and also monthly contract for the cleaning of the machines.

Nancy Higgins – Have any of the quotes for sidewalks included seal coating? Coal tar as a sealant had been banned in New York State and been partially banned in CT. Please don't accept this as a solution for a sealant. Thanks to the Board/REM for all they do for the residents.

Barbara Beaulieu- Doesn't agree with being charged to use the washers/dryers. Comparing Ballard Green to Congregate is an invalid concern.

Izette Brendza – Wade, Wesley, Monica – Holiday Party – Excellent!!! Great!! Done Beautifully!!! Had another experience with no heat/hot water and Doug rescued her once again within hours. Danbury Resource might be a good place to find reasonable washer/dryers.

John Burke – No response.

Mr. Liscio then asked for a vote to adjourn meeting at 9:15PM

RHA Minutes Respectfully submitted by Patricia Harney, Recording Secretary.

Next Meeting February 7, 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>

Audio Visual Link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/FNpgZbjkyQHveUwH1R8Nrlo8TQ9wwYguULG3DtSiCjtrcrT_IA0HVPj1xndilqhy.i0EPAU8CAp1A1g_L
