MINUTES OF THE JUNE 18, 2009
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:
Domenico Chieffalo
Raymond Yamin
Stanley Watkins
Mary Teicholz
Jim Zeh

ATTENDEES:
Lorraine Coffey
Colleen Madson
Richard Knapp
Carolyn Sistrunk
Jackie Elam
Brian Duncan
Helen Wright
Clemmie ???

CALL TO ORDER
The Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting for the Housing Authority of the City of Danbury was called to order at 5:43 p.m. at Laurel Gardens, 385 Main Street, Danbury, Connecticut. Upon motion by Stan Watkins and second by Ray Yamin the meeting was called to order.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

RESIDENT COUNCIL REPORT
Ms. Ella Fraser, President of Resident Council was unable to attend, but asked Jim Zeh to read her report. Ella, Iris, Laveda and myself attended the statewide resident network meeting in Meriden on Saturday. Guest speaker was Tim Coppage, new President. We have forms that they passed out and will be bringing out to our housing sites. Thanked Senator Christopher Dodd for introducing a bill on Section 8 reform and hoping it will be passed this year. Another message to Ella Grasso asking her to include the 4 million or 3.9 million in this years state budget for 2010 state budget in the pilot program in lieu of state taxes. This will be getting out to our neighbors. We meet with Carolyn this morning as Carolyn had mentioned. Presently Ella and a few of us are working with the Volunteer Center to help in the selection of a consultant and

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volunteer parliamentarian to assist our parliamentarian Lorraine who is new to the board this year. Our next meeting will be Monday at Laurel Gardens right here at 6p.m. We are in the process of selecting a member for the board from Laurel Gardens. We have two prospects and we are going to meet the couple tomorrow and then Monday everyone will meet with them and we will see which one will have an election or if one of them bows out to see which one is best for the Board. That is the report from Ella. The Board Chairman asks Commissioner Zeh if the Volunteer Center is helping out with the Board structure and governance. Commissioner Zeh tells him that yes they are very much.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Stan Watkins asked to clarify a statement of John Ward regarding the statement that Debbie McKenzie could not get a return call from here meaning HACD office. Upon motion by Jim Zeh and second by Stan Watkins the minutes of the May 21, 2009 regular meeting were approved.

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS - Capital Project Update

Carolyn Sistrunk, Executive Director, provided updates. Ms. Sistrunk states that we just want to reiterate what was said last month. That we have a lot of capital work planned and I meet with Resident Council this morning and we went through all the capital items property by property. Beginning next week we will begin the roof replacement at the 290 units up there on Mill Ridge Road. We have given noticed to the residents and we have asked the Resident Council for help because the only adjective that I can use to describe is that it is going to be a mess. It is 290 properties, a total of 150 plus buildings that means that you have a building a day, there is staging going on, there is roofing that is going to be hauled away, it is going a massive effort. We are extending an out reach to businesses right there along Mill Ridge Road to let them know as well. School is out, I think, (interjection by Jackie Elam, the Friday the 19th) so we should be ok with regard to school being out, but it is a good thing. And what we are finding is that although this takes a long time, we just have the final sign off last Friday by the Attorney General's office on the grant and we issued a notice to proceed to the contractor on Monday and the contractor is expected to be on site beginning this next Monday. So if you get calls, that is why. We have like-wise pretty ambitious behive of contract activities scheduled for our Federal properties. They will begin more in July. We have finished the roofing at Ives Manor. We also have roofing work going on at Glen Apartments. We've actually have had some people in the public say to us that we see what you are doing down there at Glen. Thank the City for Block Grant dollars and thank our State Legislative delegation that helped us get that money. It is all good stuff. We are looking at community room upgrades. We are looking at putting more security cameras on senior properties. We are going to be tearing up parking lots at Putnam and Wooster. We got City approval for both sites a couple of weeks ago. Jessie is not here, but a couple of weeks ago we got land application. So in terms of capital items they are long over-due, very much needed, and it's going to be a mess, but it is going to be worthwhile at the end of the day.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

With regards to our other items, the Authority Management Report is there for your review. The Authority is I would say doing very well. Collections believe it or not are up even in our difficult sites. We have formalized our resident complaint process to the degree that we are keeping a data base of our complaints such that when questions asked on status, we know what those statuses are and we have also formalized a systemic way of following through. The complaints have increased over the last month. We have been responding seriously to the Fair Housing complaints and we are waiting the results.

So we take them seriously, to the point that we just spent $15,000 and took the entire staff, all 47 employees out for 2 days and may be one of the first times maybe other than a holiday that we shut down the agency. We had all the staff down to our front line maintenance, our Property Managers, Receptionist, Case Workers, Asset Managers up to our Executive Director for a pretty extensive 2 day training course on Fair Housing. The reference manual was one of the best training packets I have seen and I have seen a lot. We shared it with the Resident Council. We are waiting for the test results. We think that it was dollars well spent.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program you know we were awarded $824,000. We are putting the final touches on the budget. We have received the award letter. We received the actual agreement with the City in terms of what we will do verses what they will do. We are thinking that we will get about 7 or 8 units from this pot of money which is not just the $800,000 but we also have another $134,000 in Block Grant dollars and another $413,651 in Federal Funds. The whole pot is $1.3 million and that is where we think will get the 7 to 10 units. That covers everything including environmental assessments to the appraisals, to any rehab work that may need to be done with these properties. We have an infusion of cash. We have streamlined our operations, but we are still being killed with utility costs.

If you look at the financials this month we have a negative of $118,000. That $118,000 is primarily a $142,000 in utilities over what we budgeted. We budgeted with an increase of what we experienced last year 4% and in fact it is much more than that. Richard, because it is primarily his State elderly properties, has been looking at some energy performance contracting where we would have companies come in, look at those systems at those properties and recommend the capital improvements that would reduce the cost because we can't pass along the costs to our residents in this economy. We can't afford it, but we can certainly make them more mindful of how they use the energy. It is killing us. It is killing our projects. We have had an uptake in revenues, a reduction in expenses in a lot of key areas, but utilities are still killing us. It is one of those mandatory, non-discretionary expenses, we just have to find a way to reduce the cost and with these old buildings and old systems it is killing our projections thus far. But, I would say generally things are going well.

Our Chief Financial Officer that was with us for 90 days, after that very short employment period, he decided that it was not a good fit for him. We will not go out for a new CFO currently. We will use the staff in place for the next 3 months and then after 90 days we will go out again. There is no gap in services. We still have Casterline working with us, who is working with us as we close out 2008 which is due in September. We have not had any gap in terms of our major financial functions. We wish Mr. Durnin well in whatever he decides to do in his next career move.

The Board Chairman states that she covered items A, B, and C on the agenda all together. Ms. Sistrunk proceeds to point out that what is in front of them. As you know every year we get annual funding requests and this year we have taken a pretty hard stand this year born out of necessity that we don't have unrestricted funds where we can contribute to anything other than direct housing assistance and programs that provide direct housing assistance. The request is an annual one from the Willy Knight Foundation. He provides a computer camp for our youngsters at the Laurel and Eden Drive I believe. Mr. Knight we have donated in kind computers, donated space, cost of maintaining of the location for the period of the camp and he has asked for $1,000. We have asked for a proposal that is very specific so that we can assess what that $1000.00 is for. We have general agreement with other requests because it really does offer a cafeteria of services and activities for our kids in the summer along with summer camp and target, modified target program.

The second request that was for us, I think I sent you all a copy of email, was from Dream Homes/ARC. Last year we donated $7500 to them and the prior year it was $5000 and they asked for $15,000 this year. We are not in the position to honor a $15,000 request. What we have proposed to do is to work with them to come up with a special voucher allocation with three vouchers that we would work with them for their clients; one client whom is a victim of domestic violence, and 2 veterans. They would have to follow program guidelines for Section 8 and HUD would have to approve the plan and the net benefit is more than $15,000 a year. We figured that for three 2-bedroom vouchers it is about $45,000 a year and it is direct housing assistance. It goes to no one but to the actual recipient of the voucher. We feel comfortable with that kind of giving in this climate such of HUD approval and your approval, but in terms of unrestricted dollars where we can make donations, we are not in the position to do it so we have chosen this option. What we will do from today, unless you have a general disagreement with us moving forward with the idea, is develop a plan, submit it to HUD and pending their review and approval we would hold on any implementation of that kind of plan. It would be for those people who are at risk of becoming homeless and who meet the other criteria of being a victim of domestic violence and/or veterans. Commissioner Yamin continues that we already have those categories, or programs, don't we already have veterans, and victims of domestic violence? There are already those pathways into the system. Ms. Sistrunk answers, not through this program, that they are monitoring or administering is called Rapid Rehousing. There is different

program criteria so we they might not necessarily be on our list, but we have really 7 or 8 different programs. The Board Chairman adds that they would have to go on a wait list if they come to us. We are dedicating these vouchers to Dream Homes so they can develop their own way. If they get on our wait list they may have to wait a year unless you have an emergency of domestic violence kind of thing that they expedite that program. If we dedicate these vouchers to Dream Homes they don't have to get on our wait list and wait for a voucher to become available. So while we have these categories, if we dedicate these to that organization they can use them. Ms. Sistrunk clarifies that we have today 5 vouchers reserved for victims of domestic violence and 10 vouchers that we want to reserve just for veterans. This is coming out of those pots. We are not creating a whole new set of voucher allocations, they are coming out of the 5 and the 10. Ms. Sistrunk states that we are serving 3 of their clients as long as they otherwise eligible of either domestic violence voucher or veterans voucher. The Board Chairman states that at least we can do something to help Dream Homes. We can't give them dollars anymore, this year not a good year to be giving out dollars but at least we can give them something. The Board Chairman agrees with the plan on helping out Dream Homes.

Ms. Sistrunk clarifies that the Willy Knight information she recommends to the Board that what we do on this one is that I have asked for a proposal and I don't have a proposal yet, and we are being very consistent with everyone who has asked us for money. We have asked for a proposal from Mr. Knight. My understanding is he said this afternoon he would send it soon. Commissioner Yamins asks where the camp is at, where do we provide the space. Ms. Sistrunk states that it is set it up here just like this, 2 or 3 tables. They may have 2 or 3 kids per a computer. It's a cross education approach. They bring some kids in from I think there's a southern town they work with close contact and those kids are tutors for the camps. They go through things like how to use Word, how to use the Internet. It is pretty instructional. We have asked for a report from last year; how many kids served, what were the skill sets and outcomes and as we did last year. We are waiting for that. We feel comfortable moving ahead with the computers and the space and allowing them to use the room. We have just taken the position that if they want dollars we need a proposal. Commissioner Zeh asks Ms. Sistrunk about the replacement of the 25 broken chairs. Ms. Sistrunk comments that she does not know what that is about. Commissioner Zeh states that if we are going to provide them with new chairs, we give him the old chairs and the new chairs go to other properties.

RESOLUTIONS AND INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. **Resolution 799** authorizes the Executive Director to submit the State Elderly Certification and Tenant Rent Roll to the Department of Economic & Community Development, as required, to request Rental Assistance Payments for Glen Apartments and Crosby Manor in the amount of one-hundred nine thousand, seven-hundred forty eight dollars ($109,748.00) for the period of July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. Upon motion by Jim Zeh and second by Ray Yamin the Resolution was adopted and approved.

B. **Resolution 800** authorizes the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Paychex which introduces and offers a 401(k) plan which is optional to all HACD employees. Upon motion by Stan Watkins and second by Mary Teicholz the Resolution was adopted and approved.

The Board Chairman entertained a motion to revise the agenda for three add-on resolutions, Resolution 801, Resolution 802 and Resolution 803. Upon motion by Stan Watkins and second by Mary Teicholz the motion to amend the HACD agenda was accepted and revised.

C. **Resolution 801** authorizes the Executive Director to approve and implement the proposed amendments to the language of its Admissions & Continued Occupancy Policy to assure compliance with both Federal and State regulations effective immediately.

1. *Revise language in Section IV: Selection from the Waiting List, Paragraph B;*
2. *Revise language in Section II: Eligibility for Admission, Paragraph G, Subsection G;*
3. *Revise language of Section VI: Lease, Section E, Subsection 6.*

Upon motion by Jim Zeh and second by Mary Teicholz the Resolution was adopted and approved.

D. **Resolution 802** authorizes the Executive Director to approve and implement the proposed amendments to the language of its Rent Collection Policy effective immediately, specifically:

1. *Clarify the language in Section III: Rent Payments, page 4;*
2. *Change the language in Paragraph VI: Summary Process Action, page 6.*

Upon motion by Jim Zeh and second by Mary Teicholz the Resolution was adopted and approved.

E. **Resolution 803** authorizes the Executive Director to approve and implement the proposed amendments to the language of its Pet Collection Policy effective immediately.

1. *Paragraph 17 of the "Rules" amended to read:*

   Pet owners shall be liable for damage caused by their pets. The Authority shall require a pet deposit of $150.00 per pet.

   If the tenant's pet deposit does not cover the damages, management and the tenant will agree on a payment plan to pay for the damage as well as replacement of the pet deposit. The initial pet deposit shall be $50.00, with increments of not less than $10.00, until the full deposit of $150.00 is reached.

Upon motion by Jim Zeh and second by Mary Teicholz the Resolution was adopted and approved.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon motion by Mary Teicholz and second by Stan Watkins, it was approved to adjourn the meeting at 6:20p.m.