

Ipswich Housing Authority (IHA)
One Agawam Village, Ipswich MA 01938
Minutes: January 14, 2020 IHA Board of Directors (Board) Meeting

On a roll call vote, Board members Charlie Allen, Chair; Richard Kallman, Vice-Chair; Susan Monahan, Treasurer; Judith Butterly, Secretary; and Glenn Gibbs all voted present. Also present were staff Kate McGuire, IHA Executive Director (ED); Gary Dean, IHA Maintenance Director (MD); and Julie Spencer. Chair Allen brought the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Query Time

Manuel Estrella, a resident of Agawam Village, asked if IHA would put up new building numbers next to apartment entrance doors. His concern is that current numbers aren't easily discernible in the dark, and thus visitors have difficulty finding their destinations. ED asked MD to look into the matter.

Correspondence

NAHRO NEWS, bi-monthly newsletter from Mass Chapter of National Assoc. of Housing & Redevelopment Officials

Bills

The Board reviewed list of recent IHA expenses. Gibbs asked about two expenses: *OD Answering Service* and *In Lieu of Taxes payment to Town of Ipswich*; ED explained each. Gibbs made motion, seconded by Kallman, to approve payment of all bills. Vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Approval of Minutes -- 12/3/19 Meeting

Gibbs brought attention to a few typos and grammatical errors that were corrected. To save time at future meetings, Gibbs offered to review draft minutes before they are sent to Board. ED said that going forward staff will email him initial draft of minutes for his review. Motion to approve amended 12/3/19 minutes made by Kallman, seconded by Monahan. Vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

ED Report: January 14, 2020

Budget 2021: ED is working with Paul Pavia from Fenton & Ewald, the Board's accountants, on the 2021 Budget, which ED will bring to the Board at its March meeting. ED is seeking Board input on several budget items:

1) *administrative staff salaries.* ED recommends 3% increase, which conforms to guidelines established by State for budget year. Board expressed support for salary increase. (During consideration of this item, discussion ensued about staff performance reviews. ED supports concept but does not conduct them, out of concern they could be disruptive to her staff if they resulted in differing pay increases. She acknowledged, however, that performance reviews would not be problematic if they were not tied to compensation. Allen observed that some staff may welcome a formal evaluative process, as it can provide opportunity for self improvement.)

2) *\$5,000 tech allowance:* ED would like to use these funds to purchase computers for the community hall, thus allowing the public to apply for housing online. Board expressed support of the concept.

3) *\$31,200 health and safety allowance* (\$28,800 for 400-1 funded units and 2,400 for 689 funded units): ED is seeking ideas for use of these monies, which can fund walkways, paving, porches, and similar improvements for state-subsidized units. (As example, Hamilton is using its allowance to replace porches, and Salisbury to install storm doors and restripe a parking lot.) IHA needs to describe in the budget how it will use the allowance. Allen asked ED and MD to advise Board on how to spend the allowance, whether it be for specific projects or general categories of use. Board concurred with Allen's request.

4) *Vehicle purchase:* ED would like Board to authorize purchase of vehicle (minivan or small pickup) for use by administrative staff. IHA has two trucks and a van used by maintenance staff, but administrative staff drive their personal vehicles and receive modest mileage reimbursement. ED said that vehicle could be purchased with funds allocated for Agawam Village. Discussion ensued about potential cost sharing with Salisbury and Hamilton. Consensus was that ED should explore possibility of IHA purchasing vehicle and charging other authorities for sharing in its use. ED and MD will identify a vehicle and list in the budget. Monahan requested that selected vehicle be fuel efficient.

Creative Place Making Grant: ED provided update on IHA's plan to seek \$220,000 Creative Place Making grant from DHCD, noting she met with Gibbs, Ipswich Recreation & Culture Director Kerrie Bates, and Sara Grow of Open Door to discuss potential improvements to IHA's land surrounding building occupied by Open Door. Concept is to create a community square that includes seating, a play area, and landscaping. Seating would benefit not only residents but also Open Door patrons waiting for service outside building. ED will ask tenant/graphic designer Ben Libby to attend next subcommittee meeting on February 3rd. Libby, who designed IHA's logo and website, is an enthusiastic and talented designer who ED believes will bring a lot to the process.

Mod phase: Mod phase construction has started, with the contractor working on roof replacement and window installation, and the asbestos abatement vendor removing asbestos from the unit interiors. The entire project should be completed by July. One renovated unit will be handicapped accessible and have its own parking space.

Public Housing Authority (PHA) Plan: ED presented draft 5-Year PHA plan, which IHA must submit to HUD every five years. The proposed plan, which includes a mission statement and goals and objectives, is largely the same as the current one. ED sought public input by writing to participants and posting announcement on IHA website. Gibbs suggested some revised wording for one of the objectives, which was acceptable to Board and ED. Motion to approve 5 year plan made by Gibbs, seconded by Kallman. Vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Contract for Financial Assistance #10: ED reported additional FY2023 Formula Funding award of \$240,663 and additional Modphase admin and designer fee funding of \$52,891. Motion for Board to accept additional funds made by Monahan, seconded by Butterly. Vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Tax Credit Conference: ED expressed interest in attending three day conference in Boston about the federal affordable housing tax credit program. Discussion ensued. Allen supported idea of ED learning more about the program, but thought there might be better mechanism for doing so than the conference she identified. He suggested she look at the conference agenda, and also see if NLHA (National Leased Housing Association) might have some programs that would be better. ED agreed to do so and also talk to a colleague who is familiar with tax credit forums. Discussion concluded with Board expressing support for ED attending a program on tax credits.

Monthly Maintenance Report

MD informed Board of two vacancies, units 2D and 10D at Caroline Avenue. He also noted with regret that the tenant of unit 16 at Southern Manor recently died. The unit is on-hold until the mod phase improvements have been completed. Other units on hold are 2A and 2B at Caroline Avenue. MD explained that on-hold units are not assessed fees for being unoccupied.

MD completed his report by saying that the Maintenance Department is keeping up well with its work load.

There being no other business to come before the Board, a motion to adjourn was made by Kallman, seconded by Gibbs. Vote to adjourn passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:19 pm.

These minutes were prepared by Julie Spencer and approved by Board at its meeting of _____, 2020.