



Ipswich Housing Authority (IHA)

May 5, 2020 IHA Board of Directors (Board) Meeting Minutes

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held remotely pursuant to Open Meeting Law waiver/guidance contained in Governor Baker's 3/12/20 Executive Order

1. Roll Call

On 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 Kate McGuire, IHA Executive Director (ED); and Alex Russell, IHA Maintenance Director (MD). Chair Allen brought the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Query Time

NO QUERIES.

3. Bills

Board members reviewed recent IHA expenses and had no questions. Richard Kallman made motion, seconded by Susan Monahan, to approve payment of bills. Vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

4. Minutes of the regular meeting of April 7, 2020

Judy Butterly stated her name was misspelled in one instance. Motion by Monahan to approve 4/7/20 minutes with corrected spelling of Butterly. Seconded by Gibbs. Vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

5. Correspondence: NONE

6. Executive Director Report

ED reported on the following matters:

IHA Actions on COVID-19 Update

ED updated Board on the IHA response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The office continues to be closed to the public and staff are working remotely. One staff member is in the office each day on a rotating schedule. Maintenance staff are working on emergency work orders, vacant units and the grounds. ED stated that HUD and DHCD have released a number of notices on modified operations during the pandemic. DHCD has waived all late rent fees for until further notice and instituted an upward rent freeze for income deriving from wages and/or unemployment until August 2020. The IHA will continue to complete interim recertification for residents whose income has decreased. The moratorium on evictions continues, so the IHA is informing residents of overdue arrearage but not sending out eviction notices.

ED reported that she set up a weekly call with the Town's Health Director Colleen Fermon and COA Director Sheila Taylor and management of Oak Hill and Harborlight elderly housing developments to receive regular updates on the pandemic and its spread in Ipswich.

ED stated that she asked the Town Manager and the Health Director to issue an emergency regulation restricting social guests at multi-family properties and requiring masks to be worn in public areas of multi-family dwellings. They declined to do so, but ED indicated she will continue to communicate with them on this matter. Kallman asked how the emergency order on wearing masks in Ipswich will affect the IHA developments. ED said that the order does not specify multi-family dwellings and is geared more towards businesses and in public places where social distancing is not possible. Monahan asked what other North Shore communities are doing. ED stated many are issuing orders for multi-family dwellings and LHA properties and ED has shared these notices with the Town Manager and Director of Health.

Allen asked the ED about her communication with the Local News. She said she informed them that the IHA can not release any information on it's knowledge of COVID-19 cases at the IHA.

ED briefed the board on a number of waivers from HUD, which do not require approval from the board. ED stated that HUD has given LHA's with the Housing Choice Voucher Program some funds through the CARES Act to help offset costs associated with operations during the pandemic. She is working with the fee accountant to work out which costs can be covered.

ModPhase

ED reported that ModPhase project is continuing since the work is being conducted in vacant units. IHA plans to move tenants into new units in mid-June. Tenants who don't want to relocate during the epidemic will not be required to, but ED does not think any will choose not to move back in June. Kallman asked if there will be any delay getting a Certificate of Occupancy. ED doesn't think so since the Town Building Department is still working.

Agawam Village Update

ED stated that she is continuing to work with MHP and DHCD on the Agawam Village rehab. project. There have been a number of legal hurdles regarding DHCD releasing the properties so she is continuing to work with DHCD on them, with assistance from attorney Kurt James.

Creative Placemaking Update

ED informed Board that she submitted the application for the Creative Place-making Grant. She thanked Gibbs for his huge contribution in getting the grant written. In response to a question from Allen, ED said that DHCD allocated about \$5 million statewide for the program, and that about 35 LHA's applied. The maximum grant award is based on the number of units in each LHA. Thus, the larger LHA's can receive significantly more money than a smaller one like Ipswich. ED knows that some larger LHA's did apply, but not how many.

7. Write offs

ED presented list of Tenant Accounts Receivable that need to be written off. ED said that most of the accounts are from deceased tenants, while for some the IHA has tried to collect and not been successful. The total for 667 program units is \$9,429 and \$19,89 for the 200 program units. Motion to approve Write offs made by Kallman, seconded by Monahan. Vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

8. Maintenance Report

MD informed Board of one vacancy at Caroline Ave. that the team is working on. All other vacant units are offline due to capital improvements. The maintenance team is on a rotating schedule to allow for social distancing and all common areas are being cleaned and sanitized 7 days per week. Kallman asked what time of day the sanitizing takes place - MD stated it is usually first thing in the morning. Kallman asked if there was a way to show the Board's appreciation for the maintenance staff during this difficult time. Board members and ED support the idea. ED will leave it up to MD to decide how to thank the maintenance staff, although giving staff members a gift card was one idea mentioned.

9. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the Board, a motion to adjourn was made by Kallman, seconded by Butterfly. Motion passed unanimously.

Documents/Exhibits Used at Meeting

- IHA Vendor Accounting Check Register for Checks dated 5/5/20
- 1/14/20 and 2/4/20 IHA Meeting Minutes
- Executive Director Report: May 5, 2020
- Creative Place-making Grant Application

5/5/20 minutes prepared by Julie Spencer and approved by the Board at its meeting of _____, 2020.