

Rome Housing Authority
Board of Commissioners Meeting
June 10, 2024
200 N. Levitt St, Rome, NY 13440

Call to Order: 4:52

Roll Call:

John Riley
Janet Milner
Denice Golden, Treasurer
Alan Spindler, Chair
Tami Lucia, Executive Director
Diane Martin Grande, Counsel (arrived approximately 4:20PM)

Stenographer

Michelle Nestlerode

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment:

Bonnie Platt – Dogs not on leashes. Pooping all over but never picked up.

Alan: Has this been reported?

Bonnie: Yes, it has been reported.

Alan: Do we know who this is?

Tami: Yes, we do.

Bonnie: One is Eileen's dog and 702 or 703's dog. State law says dogs have to be on a leash.

Denice: What is there an excuse?

Bonne: They say they are picking it up.

Alan: Isn't there a leash law? John, you'd know better than anyone.

John: Yes, there is a leash law.

Alan: So the next step is to give it to Diane?

Tami: Ok.

Reading and approval of May 14, 2024 minutes. 1st – John. 2nd – Denice. All in favor. Motion carried.

Financials:

Fund 100 – April 2024. 1st – John. 2nd – Janet. All in favor. Motion carried.

Fund 800 – April 2024. 1st – John. 2nd – Janet. All in favor. Motion carried.

Alan: Denice do you prefer the delinquency reports all be approved separately or all at once?

Denice: I think they should be done separately.

Delinquency Report: Colonial I – 1st – Janet. 2nd – John. All in favor. Motion carried. Colonial II – 1st – John. 2nd – Janet. All in favor. Motion carried.

Denice: How many tenants are in Colonial I & II versus Liberty Gardens?

Tami: There are 83 units in Colonial I and 74 in Colonial II. Liberty Gardens has 180 units.

Alan: LGA I delinquency. 1st – Janet. 2nd – Denice. All in favor. Motion carried.

Denice: Ok so we are collecting back pay here. When a tenant is back paying are they paying on the back rent or current rent?

Tami: If they have a repayment agreement in place they are supposed to give us a check to pay on that and a separate check for their rent. If they just give us a check with extra we apply it to their rent first then the back rent.

LGA II – 1st John. 2nd – Janet. All in favor. Motion carried. LGA III 1st – Denice. 2nd – John. All in favor. Motion carried.

Valentine delinquency. Janet: I have a question. The 61 to 90 days delinquent?

Tami: I just saw that. I will have to look at it. I think it is because I wrote off balances but I'll look.

Janet: Ok. You'll let us know?

Tami: Yes, I'll let you know.

Alan: We will table the Valentine delinquency till the July meeting: 1st – Janet. 2nd – John. All in favor. Motion carried.

Executive Directors Report:

Tami: In May HCR was on site for Colonial II. Only siting was for door stops. We did really good. Folders were good. They reviewed about 15 folders.

Still interviewing for maintenance positions. Posted on Indeed.

No exact date yet but hopefully Colonial II will be officially done in August.

In May staff trained on Nspire and HOTMA. We were notified by HUD that Nspire was put off another year.

No change to HOTMA yet. Going out for bid for a truck for Valentine and for an auditor. Received 3 bids for the roof repair but one is iffy. I asked Rick to get another bid. Going out for bid for the dead trees.

Alan: As far as the quotes for the auditor are we just not getting any bids?

Tami: We aren't getting any. We are advertising and I am going to post it on NYSPHADA on Thursday.

Alan: Where is it posted.

Tami: On our website and there is an email chain for housing authorities in NYS. I posted it there.

Alan: Ok. Any idea how long we have been looking for an auditor?

Tami: Me, personally? About a month.

Alan: And before you?

Tami: About 3 years.

Alan: We have been looking for over three years and gotten nowhere?

Tami: Nowhere.

Alan: Should we advertise in the newspaper?

Tami: We can. I think posting on NYSPHADA should work. Several agencies post there for services.

John: What are the particulars? Are we low balling? Why aren't we getting any interest?

Tami: Because everyone is very busy and we have so many things. I have an auditor that can do the financial part but isn't familiar with GASB.

Alan: So where are we with the audits we are behind on? What years do we need?

Tami: 2022 & 2023 are not done. We just submitted the unaudited 2024. I have spoken to our fee accountant and he thinks he has an auditor that might do it but we have not received a bid yet. He says sometimes it is easier to do 3 years than 1. The same files can be audited for all 3 years.

Alan: And when are we going to be ready to do all 3 years?

Tami: We are ready now. We can do the third now.

Alan: Are we in jeopardy with HUD? Have they said anything?

Tami: They have not said anything to me. Maureen said they mentioned it but I think they are letting it go because we are a small PHA. We are sliding under the radar.

Alan: Less attention but we don't need a surprise. We have had a lot of things corrected over the last couple years. We could probably reach out to Michael Syme to ask for auditors. Hopefully he wouldn't charge for that phone call just asking for names.

Tami: I will do NYSPHADA /PHADA this week. I did find a new procurement site that is for housing authority's all across the state but there were some from Utica, Syracuse and Albany. You do it all on the website and it will email all the auditors on the website.

Alan: We will wait u

John: The maintenance position. Is that hurting us getting things done at the facilities? Maintenance? Guys doing repairs or mowing lawns or all of the above?

Tami: Yes, all of the above. I have one guy out right now. Mowing the lawns takes a lot of time. We just did inspections, so we have a lot of work orders from that. They say one maintenance person for every 50 units. We are down 2 right now.

John: So where is short right now? Do you have a head of maintenance?

Tami: Yes, Rick. We have one guy going between the buildings. We need one here and at Colonial.

Denice: Is that official yet? Has he been appointed?

Tami: I have asked him but he hasn't answered me yet. He is doing the job of a maintenance supervisor and I want to compensate him for that.

John: Does he want to be compensated?

Tami: Yes, he just hasn't answered yet.

Alan: So the people doing the outside work. Are they regular maintenance or what?

Tami: Yes, they are regular maintenance.

Alan: Is it worth using an outside vendor? Even if it was only until we are back up to speed?

Tami: I have a couple calls out but I haven't heard back yet.

Alan: I have a couple names I can give you.

Tami. Great. Thank you.

John: Is there any liability? Can we use college kids?

Tami: We have talked about that. I know the housing authority has always asked for insurance. I don't know the actual rules about hiring college kids. I think they would have to be put on the books.

Janet: Seems if we were going under the city if the city hires them for the parks services could they loan them out?

Tami: We could piggy back off the city.

John: It would be a lot cheaper than hiring them.

Tami: I thought of that but I thought it would be too late to hire them. The college kids all have jobs by now.

Janet: Try reaching out to the city just to see what they say.

John: Going forward I'd like to have it where the landscaping is already scheduled prior to summer. We have these nice facilities, and we should have landscaping scheduled to come every year and take care of the lawns. I don't think having the tenants helping out is the proper way to do business.

Tami. We have had Hillside scheduled to do this building, Colonial I and Colonial II.

John: So we have had that every year?

Tami: Well, no we didn't but we will.

Denice: We have tenants that do that? Wouldn't that be a liability? What if they trip or..?

Tami: We have tenants at every building that help pull weeds, pick up trash and clean and whatever. They don't operate heavy machinery or go in the garages. They fall under community service. I have to report them to our insurance every month. They get a stipend towards their rent.

Alan: It's not a worker's comp type exposure right?

Tami: No, we have always had community service workers from PA.

Alan: John we can ask Diane when she gets here if she knows of any legality. She might have experience from the city from when she served as Corp Counsel if we are picking up any additional liability doing that.

John: These guys and girls are working really hard and if you have some young kids coming to do a little weed whacking that would be huge. They'd probably really like that. I'm proactive. I want to get it done before it needs to be done. I've driven by here and see that it needs to have some work done.

Tami: It is 12 acres. A lot needs to be done.

John: You say you are advertising for maintenance, but you aren't getting any responses?

Tami: No. My nephew does but I don't know if that is a conflict.

John: As far as a conflict you mean? Isn't that a board decision? I mean if we have a guy that wants to work? Its not like he is going to be the head of maintenance.

Denice: Doesn't he have to sign something?

Alan: Can you get us all a copy of this conflict of interest? It might be too late for this year but maybe next year.

John: What is the salary?

Tami: Starts at \$20 and ends at \$31. We have a separate position that is part-time and that starts at \$17.

John: What is minimum wage right now?

Janet: See what the city says.

Tami: \$15.

Alan: Going back a few months when John you brought getting maintenance that have specific trade skills rather than a person that is responsible 150 – 200 apartments and for doing everything from fixing a doorknob to fixing the floor to whatever. My hope is that with Duncan's consultant work we could iron those things out. We can get a broader view of how to do that on an annual basis or summer versus winter.

John: I know we are in good shape now but what about 10 years from now?

Tami: A year from now we will be doing the tax credits all over again. It will be a huge overhaul. Moving forward with just having the staff we need. Having a maintenance supervisor that we haven't had for years. As people retired, they were not replaced. Getting things on a schedule will help. Rick is meticulous about stuff. He will get everything on a schedule. He is ready to move forward.

John: We aren't going to hire plumbers or carpenters. I just don't want it where it is rigged up. I want it done correctly.

Tami: I agree.

Alan: Speaking of maintenance. Did the situation that you and I discussed get resolved?

Tami: All resolved.

Alan: Problem with Colonial I. The refuse bin for recycling was being used as a catch all. After speaking with Tami it is a matter of being short staffed. Everyone is short staffed.

Tami: Between the heat and having a compactor. After it sits there on a Saturday and Sunday it isn't the cleanliest.

Alan: Ok. So I believe that is it for the Executive Director's report. Do I have a motion to accept? 1st – John. 2nd – Janet. All in Favor. Motion carried.

New Business:

Tami: The original hot water heater they put in at Colonial II was not running efficient enough to pass the test or us to get our certificate. We had to be able to raise the temp to 140 then we could drop it back down to 120. We passed now.

Alan: Was that an engineering issue? Did we pay for that?

Tami: No. We did not pay for that. No one wanted to take the blame for that.

John: What is your over all feeling regarding the tenants? Are you hearing good things or will they always complain?

Tami: You mean Colonial II? I think the majority are happy. With everything new the only major complaint is about the people that need to be evicted.

Tami: SEMAP. We scored a standard. We are not a troubled housing authority. This was for period 4/1/23 – 3/31/24. Everything is submitted. We passed. Don't have to deal with that till next year. We also submitted our unaudited FDS as well.

Alan: Ok. If there is nothing else let's set the meeting for next month. Then we will go into Executive Session:

Denice: When we go in and out of Executive make sure you mention the times. Michelle cannot hear you.

Alan: So July 9, 2024 at 4:45. No meeting for August. No other new business anyone? No. Ok. I need a motion to move into executive session.

John: Do we want to talk to Diane about hiring outside help.

Alan: Oh yes. Diane we were having a discussion about maintenance issues with lawn mowing and lawn clean up. Maintenance is doing it all. Lawn mowing, fixing things etc. We discussed summer help. Is there a liability we are entertaining by bringing in summer help?

Diane: Yes, there is always liabilities. We would have to bring them in as employees. Would we need to give them worker's comp and disability insurance, NYS retirement etc?

Tami: Yes, we would have to offer them NYS retirement at least but it is optional. They would have to opt in. I just had a meeting with them and I would have to start reporting all income regardless of whether they are in or not.

Diane: I think hiring a company is much easier. We just 1099 them and we're done. It is their equipment and their time and their employees. We are just going to write a check. That is much easier. I have a couple questions for Tami though. Is there any union we need to worry about? Is there any concern that an employee will saying we are giving away employee work?

Tami: No, unions and no we won't have any issues with an employee saying we are giving away work.

Alan: With the city when they bring in summer help, I know when my girls were doing it, it was non-dangerous work. When we bring in a 15yo and we are putting a machine in their hands with a lawn mower. Is that even doable? Is there an age requirement?

Tami: Yes, there is an age requirement.

John: With what Diane said about the liability why even bother with that? That's not a risk we even need to take. Lets just get the quotes on that.

Tami: Even just getting a lawn service for here. It really isn't an issue at the other facilities. It takes like 2.5 days to complete the lawns here.

Diane: You are going to get some sort of bids for work but it is kind of late in the season. I don't know what you are going to get. Then ultimately evaluate bringing in a contractor against hiring somebody?

Tami: Yes

Diane: Hiring as a seasonal employee?

Tami: We could do that too. We do need 2 more maintenance employees though.

Diane: Are you are having a hard time finding someone?

Tamie: Yes.

Diane: Ok I'd get quotes and go from there.

Alan: Motion to move to executive session at 5:31. 1st – John. 2nd – Janet. All in favor. Motion carried.

Adjourn to executive session 5:32PM.

Alan: This is regarding finalizing your contract. You have not had a lot of say about that so this is about that. What we are going to do is a motion that someone is going to make. What we want to see is if your benefits, not salary, but benefits meaning vacation, sick time etc. It has been inclusive in your contract. It has been with previous Executive Directors, not just Maureen, but other previous Executive Directors.

Tami: Yes. Ok.

Alan: It looks like John is making that motion?

John: Yes. I'll make the motion.

Alan: Ok. Do I have a second. 2nd – Janet. Simply what we are doing here is making sure that nothing slips backwards from your time here. How long have you been here?

Tami: 9 years

Denice: What is your date of hire?

Tami: 11/2/2015

Denice: Who is doing the time now? Is it back to Michelle?

Tami: What time?

Denice: Accrument. Is Someone double checking it?

Tami: I was doing it. It is mixed between us and our fee accountant. And we have the Actuary checking it too.

Alan: Any other questions? No? There being none is everyone in favor of John's motion? Anyone opposed?

No? Ok. All in favor. Motion is carried. Need a motion to adjourn. 1st – John. 2nd – Janet. All in favor.

Motion carried.

Tami: What about Kathy?

Alan: 5:55 – Meeting opened back up.

Alan: Can you give me a 90 second summary about what she is attempting to put together. Wait – we need a motion to go into executive session.

Alan: Motion to approve reinstating Kathy Stockbridge to the title of Housing Coordinator effective 3/2023. RCP can be dated backwards. And to follow with the finalization with the appropriate pay back to the same date.

John: I'll make a motion.

Alan: Do I have a second? Janet.

Janet: I'll second.

Alan: Any other questions or comments? All those in favor. I don't normally vote but I'm going on record has approving so it shows that it was unanimous. Motion carried. Now I need a motion to really adjourn the meeting.

John: I'll make a motion.

Alan: Can I get a second?

Janet: I'll second.

Alan: All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned 6:10PM

