Penns Grove Housing Authority

40 South Broad Street

Penns Grove, NJ 08069

Minutes of the Meeting October 7, 2020

The meeting was opened with a reading of the Sunshine Law. A motion was made by Karen Wright and seconded by Hersell Smith. The motion was unanimously approved by all present.

ROLL CALL

Present: Karen Wright, John Washington, Hersell Smith, Dorraine Robinson, Carolina Valdez, and Catherina Rutland

Absent: Ignacia Washington, Margie Pollard and Laverne Hill

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular minutes of the September 2, 2020 meeting was made by John Washington and seconded by Hersell Smith. The motion was unanimously approved by all present.

**OLD BUSINESS**

STATUS REPORT

Catherina went over the status report. She stated we currently have three vacant units at Penn Towers and no vacant units at Silver Run Park.

Catherina reported that we had one case for eviction for non-payment of rent. However, due to the Coronavirus courts are closed for non-essential legal matters.

She stated that the municipal court has not scheduled a second zoom meeting for our harassment case.

Catherina presented the monthly maintenance and unit report with pictures demonstrating the work the maintenance staff has completed under David’s direction. She applauded the wonderful job that the entire staff is doing even during this pandemic. The Board acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the PGHA staff.

She stated that she will have our next tenant meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 via Google Meet video and phone. Catherina reported that our Tenant Community Watch program meeting went well on September 8th. She explained that there were no concerns that were brought up at the last meeting except guests misusing the laundry room.

Catherina reported that we have ordered laptops for our contest winners. She noted that they are on back order due to COVID. She enclosed a flyer that we delivered to all tenants announcing our winners.

Catherina stated that they also ordered the children’s books from a non-profit organization named First Books to distribute to the children of Silver Run.

Catherina presented a flyer for our Columbus Day BBQ at Silver Run scheduled for Monday, October 12, 2020. She stated they will invite the seniors at Penn Towers. She invited all Board members to attend as well. She stated that they will schedule a BBQ for Penn Towers in the Spring.

Catherina reported that they placed an ad for a temporary Maintenance position for approximately three months. She provided a copy of the ad in their folder. She explained that she received no inquires or applications. She also noted that this position was necessary to cover one of our maintenance staff members who would be on leave for three months this year. She informed the Board that they had decided to contact Protocol Temp agency to send us a temporary maintenance staff member to cover his position.

Catherina stated that the annual Thanksgiving dinner sponsored by the Borough of Penns Grove is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17th, 2020. She explained that due to COVID, they would be delivering all meals to the tenants by 1:00PM that day.

Catherina presented a TV Raffle flyer for December with tickets to the Board for our non-profit agency. She stated that she will pick the name of the winner of the TV at the Penn Towers tenants meeting on Tuesday, December 8, 2020.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Catherina stated that there were no new cases of the Coronavirus that was reported at this time.

There was some discussion about the matter.

CARE STIMULUS FUNDS

1. Additional Seating for Social Distancing

Catherina presented an e-mail that the tables and chairs would be delivered by October 30th. There was some discussion in the matter.

1. Playground equipment

Catherina informed the Board that the price presented last month for the playground equipment did not include removal and installation of new equipment. She presented the lowest quote for removal and installation of equipment which was $9800.00. She explained that due to this increase in project cost, she would recommend not spending the extra funds in turf mat flooring and consider mulch as an alternative. There was some discussion on the matter. After the discussion, John Washington made a motion to proceed with the playground equipment minus the turf mat flooring and it was seconded by Dorraine Robinson. The motion was unanimously approved by all present.

PENN TOWERS HALLWAY FLOORING

Catherina stated that enclosed in their packet was the RFP for the Penn Towers hallway flooring project. She stated she had Mr. Grace review it and the ad has been placed in the paper with a due date of October 20, 2020. There was some discussion on the matter.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

Catherina presented to the Board an Emergency Procedures Plan for our tenants. She also included an American Red Cross Emergency Card for them to fill out as well as a check list of items they would need to have prepared in case of an emergency. The Board approved the distribution of the Emergency Procedures Plan.

In addition, Catherina reported that she contacted the Fire Chief and he would schedule a fire drill for Penns Towers. There was some discussion on the matter.

NEW BUSINESS

SECTION 8 ACCOUNT – FRAUD

Catherina presented documents reflecting that fraudulent transactions occurred with our Section 8 TD Bank Account. She gave copies of the checks that were duplicated with very clear errors on the checks including the spelling of Penns Grove Housing Authority as “Peens Grove Housing Authority”.

She stated that she called TD Bank and the Penns Grove Police Department. She reported that the account had to be closed and a new account re-opened and that the TD Bank Fraud department is now handling the investigation. There was some discussing on the matter.

MISCELLANEOUS

Karen Wright asked Charles Fiore of Marmero and Associates, who was present at the meeting to introduce himself. He stated that he began working for the firm that Monday and that he has experienced in working with municipalities. It was stated that our solicitor since 2017 James, K. Grace no longer worked for the firm.

Catherina stated that she did receive a call from Mr. Grace notifying us of the change but never received any contact for anyone at Grace and Marmero now known as Marmero and Associates including Mr. Fiore. She was unaware that anyone from the new firm would be attending the meeting.

She stated that she believes the firm should have contacted us and given us options on how to move forward with either our current solicitor or with a new solicitor at their newly organized firm. There was some discussion on that matter. After the discussion, John Washington made a motion to terminate the contract with Grace and Marmeo/Marmero and Associates with a 30 day notice and re-bid legal services for the remainder of the year and it was seconded by Hersell Smith. The motion was unanimously approved by all present.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

A motion to approve the bills listed below was made by Hersell Smith and seconded by John Washington. The motion was unanimously approved by all present. General Fund checks 15080 thru 15161, and check 2520 for MOD, Congregate or Dial-A-Bus. Also Supplemental Bill Lists were approved for General Fund, Security Deposit, Rental Checks, Payroll Checks, Mod, Section 8, Congregate, and Dial-A-Bus, representing checks issued after the September Board meeting.

PUBLIC PORTION

No public comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by John Washington and seconded by Hersell Smith. The motion was unanimously approved by all present.