MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners of the Dracut Housing Authority met at a regular meeting on November 17, 2014 at 65 Phineas Street, Dracut, MA 01826. Vice-Chairwoman Debra DeWitt Ahern opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and upon roll call vote those present were as follows:

Present: Brian J. Bond

Debra DeWitt Ahern

George M. Nangle

Jesse Forcier

Absent: F. Russell Taylor

MINUTES

The minutes from last month’s board meeting have not been completed. That item will be put over to next month’s agenda.

BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A motion was made by Commissioner Nangle to approve the warrant. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Forcier. Upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Nangle to approve the financials. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Forcier. Upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

**a.** **A vote to allow the Executive Director to sign a contract with Lodestar Energy.**

The contract is in the packet. Commissioner Forcier made a motion to allow the Executive

Director to sign a contract with Lodestar Energy. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner

Nangle. Under discussion, Commissioner Bond stated that he would like an attorney to

look over the contract. Commissioner Bond stated that he thinks it is a good contract but

would like to have something in writing from DHCD’s attorney stating that the contract is fine.

Vice Chairwoman DeWitt Ahern asked if the Attorney from DHCD has approved this contract

and the Director stated yes. She asked if it met DHCD’s specifications. The Director stated yes.

Commissioner Forcier made a motion to withdraw his previous motion. Commissioner Nangle

also withdrew his second. All were in agreement. Commissioner Bond made a motion that we

have the Executive Director sign the contract with a letter stating that DHCD has reviewed the

contract and everything is fine. Said motion, with discussion was seconded by Commissioner Forcier. Commissioner Forcier stated that we are authorizing the Executive Director to sign

the contract as long as the letter is with the contract. Upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

b. Vacancy Report:

The Board received a copy of the vacancy report.

c. Work Order Report:

The Board received a copy of the work order report. We are still working on the inspection

work orders that were done a few months back.

d. 2015 Budget Guidelines:

The Board received a copy of the 2015 Budget Guidelines. The Director stated that she just

received the Budget Guidelines last week. They were put in the Commissioner’s packet to

review the guidelines. We have 45 days to submit the budget. The budget will be brought

forth at the December 2014 Meeting. Commissioner Bond asked if we were going to have

several meetings prior to the Budget. The Director stated that last year we had a budget

meeting prior to the regular Board meeting. Commissioner Bond asked if there is a way

to get the budget at least a week before the meeting. The Director stated that she would

try and get the budget to the Board at least a week before the regular meeting.

e. Signature on DHCD’s Schedule of Positions and Compensation Form.

The Director informed the Board that this form must be signed and submitted to DHCD.

f. Year End Financial Statements Certification.

The Director informed the Board that this form must be signed and submitted to DHCD.

g. Discussion on replacement of maintenance personnel due to retirement.

The Director informed the Board that one of the Maintenance staff will be retiring as

of January 2, 2015. The Director discussed this situation with the Fee Accountant.

The Fee Accountant explained that one of the issues of hiring a full time staff person

is the cost of the benefits. Next year the consolidated budget will be carrying $20,000

more as well as a portion of the cost of the retiree’s health insurance and retirement.

The Fee Accountant suggested that we could possibly hire two part time personnel. They

would each work 18 hours a week. Eighteen hours a week would not trigger benefits. There is

also the possibility that someone could be retiring next year and if that were the case we

would be able to move up one of the part time people to full time. These are some things

that the Board could think about as they are reviewing the budget guidelines. It is the state

budget that is the issue. Our 971 budget as well as our federal budget can handle the salaries

as well as the benefits. However, DHCD does not allow us to hire someone for just one

development. The salaries have to be pro-rated across all projects. Commissioner Bond asked

if we were looking into hiring someone with a plumbing, electrical, or a HVAC background. The

Director stated that if we were to hire a licensed plumber or electrician than we would have

to pay a plumber’s or electrician’s hourly rate. The Division of Labor & Industries dictates

what we pay our maintenance staff. Commissioner Bond stated that the maintenance staff

should not be doing electrical and plumbing work. The Director stated that we have an

electrician and a plumber under contract. Commissioner Bond stated that maintenance staff

should not be changing lights or switches and if we were to hire two part time people we may

be able to get a plumber and an electrician. Commissioner Bond stated that we may be able

to get someone who is retired who is a licensed plumber or electrician. The Fee Accountant also

suggested that we might be able to save some money by contracting out our snow removal. Last year approximately $9,000 was paid in over time for snow removal. There is also the cost

of shovelers, wear and tear on vehicles, gas, etc… Commissioner Bond stated that over time is a

nice benefit for the maintenance staff and the Director agreed. The Director stated that she

wanted to bring this information to the Board. Vice Chairwoman DeWitt Ahern stated that she

thinks we should have a separate budget meeting to discuss these issues. Commissioner Forcier

asked if there was any liability having shovelers working during a snow storm. The Director

stated that they had to be 18 or older. Commissioner Forcier said it appears as though we need

to start work on this position as soon as possible. The Director stated that she will advertise the

week of the 15th. Commissioner Nangle stated that he does not want the over- time taken away

from the Maintenance Staff. Vice Chairwoman DeWitt Ahern stated that we should schedule a pre-budget meeting. It was decided that there would be a budget meeting on December 8, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at 971 Mammoth Road.

Committee Reports:

Housing Sub-Committee:

Commissioner Forcier stated that there has been some replies to the RFQ that was put out. The Director, the Town Manager, and the Assistant Town Manager met today to review the

qualifications. A firm was chosen to conduct the feasibility study. We are currently waiting to

see if we get funded on the PATH application. At that point the Town Manager suggested that it might make sense to have a joint meeting with the Dracut Housing Authority as well as the Dracut Board of Selectmen.

Heating Sub-Committee:

No updates.

Old Business:

DHA by laws. The Director stated that to date she has only received two by-laws. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern stated that she has done some research and the final version of the revised

by-laws would have to be submitted to the Attorney General’s Office for their approval.

Commissioner Bond believes that the entire Board should have input on the new By-Laws. He

also believes that the Board of Commissioners should sign the minutes of each meeting. Every

other Board in Town signs the minutes after they are approved. Commissioner Bond thinks

that everyone should sift through the by-laws and assist in updating them. Commissioner

Nangle believes that all board members should review the by-laws and come up with some

ideas.

New Business:

Commissioner Nangle stated that he believes the staff does a good job and have worked hard all year. We had a great audit report. Commissioner Nangle stated that he would like to make a motion to give the staff a ½ day off before Thanksgiving and a full day off the day after.

Commissioner Forcier seconded the motion. Commissioner Bond stated that he didn’t think

that you could make a motion under new business. Commissioner Bond stated that we could

discuss it and put it on next month’s agenda. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern stated that the

staff does work hard and typically we have given them a day off after thanksgiving and a ½

day before. Commissioner Bond stated that personally he believes that the Executive

Director should make that decision. Commissioner Forcier stated that it could be on Old

Business at next month’s meeting.

The Director informed the Board that we have a REAC Inspection on December 1, 2014 at 65

Phineas Street.

Vice Chairwoman DeWitt Ahern said that next month’s agenda should reflect the days off

for the Christmas Holiday.

Resident and Public Participation:

None.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Bond. Said motion was seconded by

Commissioner Forcier. Upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.