

LITCHFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY

SPECIAL MEETING AUGUST 24, 2020

REMOTE MEETING BY LIVE INTERNET VIDEO STREAM AND TELEPHONE

Called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairperson Sandra Becker

Commissioners present: Sandra Becker, Bob Miller, Tom McClintock, Ruth Torizzo, (Resident Commissioner), Executive Director Jim Simoncelli Jr.

Absent: Commissioner Barbara Spring and Administrative Assistant Beth Graziani

Tenants present: No tenants were present.

Others present: First Selectwoman Denise Raap

**Minutes:**

Motion made by Tom McClintock to accept the minutes from the Regular Meeting on July 28, 2020 as presented. Motion seconded by Bob Miller. Motion passed.

Jim Simoncelli Jr. asked First Selectman Denise Rapp to comment on how other Town Boards are conducting meetings; are they still doing Zoom meetings or starting to meet in person. Denise Rapp stated that some Boards are still using Zoom and others are starting to meet in person following social distancing guidelines. Denise also stated that the LHA Board of Commissioners could meet at the pavilion at Community Field or in the old courthouse room at the Town Annex if that would be easier for the Board to follow social distancing guidelines.

**Report of Executive Director:**

A. Housing Authority Update

Jim Simoncelli Jr. reported that he worked with the Possum Queen, Litchfield Community Service Fund, Litchfield//Morris Rotary Club, Salvation Army Service Unit of Litchfield Hills, and Litchfield Social Services and collected \$3000.00 worth of Stop & Shop gift cards. These gift cards were for the residents of Bantam Falls and Wells Run to help replace food that spoiled due to the 4-5 day power outage caused from the storm.

Jim Simoncelli Jr. stated that the storm caused a power outage for 4 days at Bantam Falls and 5 days at Wells Run. The Community Room at Bantam Falls was opened for residents to heat food, recharge batteries, and sit in the air conditioning if needed. Chairs were placed 10 feet apart and posted rules. Wells Run organized a bus to the Litchfield High School so residents could take showers and charge their cell phones. Jim Jr. was extremely disappointed that he witnessed residents at Bantam Falls with no masks moving chairs and socializing in the Community Room.

Jim Simoncelli Jr. reported that the office expansion at Bantam Falls has started. A wall was removed in the office and new walls were built in the new kitchen. Jim Jr. stated that the contractor renovating the office has run into a problem with replacing the old kitchen door with a window. Per the Litchfield Fire Marshall, the window must maintain the fire rating of the existing fire wall (wall between the office and hallway) while

having a fire rating of its own. This change (per fire code) will increase the project cost of approximately \$1000.00.

#### B. LHA/MHA Food Pantry Update.

Jim Simoncelli Jr. stated that the last food delivery will be on August 28, 2020. The LHA/MHA Food Pantry has distributed over 2,210 bags of food to the residents of Bantam Falls, Wells Run and Eldridge Senior Housing since March 20, 2020.

Jim Simoncelli Jr. stated that he will be speak with John Mckenna to issue thank you cards to all donors, volunteers and staff involved with the LHA/MHA Food Pantry.

#### C. Resident Communications

Nothing to report at this time.

#### D. Capital Improvements

Jim Simoncelli Jr. reported that the back sidewalk at Bantam Falls was postponed by the contractor due to equipment breakdown, inclement weather, and the power outage at the LHA.

Jim Simoncelli Jr. said that he will be ordering material for the renovation of the Community House at Wells Run within the next 2 weeks.

#### E. Other Updates

Jim Simoncelli Jr. reported that the LHA RSC (Resident Service Coordinator) will begin outside activities for the residents starting in September.

Jim Simoncelli Jr. stated he will be meeting with the LHA Arborist on Wednesday, August 26, 2020 to discuss the 10 Honey Locust trees at Bantam Falls. Jim Jr. will get a “conditions” statement determining what the current condition of the trees are. The statement will also give a solution if the condition of the trees can be improved.

### **Financial Report**

#### A. 2018-2019 Audit

Jim Simoncelli Jr. stated that the audit has been completed by Maletta & Company. Jim Jr. distributed a narrative written by Jason Geel (LHA’s auditor from Maletta & Company) which highlighted the important points from the audit. Some of the points were as follows:

- “The Audit includes an Unmodified Opinion over the Financial Statement with no Audit Findings or written comments to management.”
- “Notably that Revenues continue to be maximized, with little vacancy loss and a reduced reliance on Excess of Base to fund operations. 2019 Excess of Base Revenue \$65,085 or 17% of Total Revenue.”
- “On the Balance Sheet we noted that Unrestricted Net Position has been steady over the last four years. Improvements to Cash management occurred during the 2018 and 2019 periods

with Operating cash being limited to about a month's worth of expenses, with all excess invested in Interest bearing STIF account. This translates to roughly 4 months of operating expenses and indicates a healthy reserve.”

### **Commissioner Comments**

- a. Sandra Becker – Sandra Becker once again commended the entire staff of the LHA for their hard work, especially during the pandemic and power outage. She also spoke about the concerns about re-opening the Bantam Falls Community Room due to the behavior of the residents during the temporary re-opening of the Community Room during the power outage. Sandra also commended the Food Pantry and all the volunteers that worked together to gather and distribute food to the residents at the LHA.
- b. Bob Miller – Bob Miller stated that the LHA should proceed with the Fire Marshalls requirements to complete the renovation and expansion of the office at Bantam Falls.
- c. Tom McClintock – Tom McClintock stated that he was very proud of our staff. Tom also agreed with Bob Miller that the office should be completed based on the Fire Marshalls requirements.
- d. Ruth Torizzo – Ruth Torizzo mentioned that the residents at Bantam Falls were extremely grateful for the gift cards they received from Stop & Shop that were donated from various charitable organizations.

### **Motions**

No motions made.

### **Adjournment**

Motion made by Bob Miller to adjourn meeting. Motion seconded by Tom McClintock. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Simoncelli Jr.  
Executive Director  
Litchfield Housing Authority