

**WENHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY
LARCH LANE
MINUTES
June 13, 2023
4:00 PM**

Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 PM by Chairperson, Martha Carr. Other member(s) present were, Suzanne Thomas, Elizabeth Craig-McCormack, and Susan Herrick. Also, present, Paula Mountain, Executive Director, and tenants, Diane Osborne, Linda Brown, Tony DiStephano, Anne Shaffer, Tracey Metzger, Cecille Mazzella, Marie Schimmelbusch and Judy Gazzola. Also present, Janet Burt, Martha Brennan and Freelance Writer Bonnie Smith

Reading of Minutes

- May 9, 2023 Regular Session

A motion was made by S. Herrick second by E. Craig-McCormack and unanimously approved to accept the minutes from May 9, 2023 board meeting as presented.

Bills & Communications

- Check Disbursements for May 2023 (cut after the May 9,2023 meeting)
- Debit Card Disbursements May 2023
- Payroll from May 2023
- Financials from April & May 2023
- Credit Adjustments requested – None

A motion was made by S. Thomas seconded by S. Herrick and unanimously approved to accept the Bills and Communications as presented.

Executive Director Report and Communications

- 6- Vacant Units
- Update on Hallway Project- Project is on schedule and should be complete within the next few weeks.
- Update on 85 Larch Lane Kitchen Project, project is moving slowly, cabinets are in.
- Rent reviews are near completion.
- Starting in July 2023 and continuing once a quarter the Executive Director plans on having a Tenant / Executive Director Meeting. Tenants will be asked to pre-submit questions pertaining to day-to-day operations to the director. These meetings will be in the community hall and will last no longer than 45 minutes.

A motion was made by E. Craig-McCormack second by T. Reid and unanimously approved to accept the Executive Director Report and Communications.

New Business

- Board vote on revised Income Limits for Admission & Fair Market Rents set by HUD

A motion was made by S. Thomas, second by S. Herrick and unanimously approved to accept the 2023 Income Limits and Fair Market Rates set by HUD.

- Review of Electricity Supply Agreement signed with Constellation New Energy, Inc from 12/27/2018-12/26/2023. The board was given an Electric Cost Analysis for the contract period stated above. The performance of this contract proved to be favorable over the 5-year period with a savings of \$157,560.75.
- Proposed new Electricity Supply Agreement- Tabled
- Open Meeting Law Complaint- Chairperson M. Carr presented the filed complaint by Janet Burt. Ms. Burt contends the following:

1. The WHA violated the OML, and “believes that there was not enough notice on the agenda that a vote would be taken on 85 Larch Lane additional monies that were needed and believes that this is a violation of the OML.

The WHA believes that a violation has not occurred in that The Wenham Housing Authority did not note that there would be an update to the kitchen project at 85 Larch Lane. This was noted under the Executive Director Report and Communication. It is the practice of the Executive Director to put an item such as a Change Order under new business. The Change Order information was not received until 1 hour prior to the Board Meeting. As referenced above *a public body may consider a topic that was not listed in the meeting notice if it was not anticipated, the Attorney General strongly encourages public bodies to postpone discussion and action on topics that are controversial or may be of particular interest to the public if the topic was not listed in the meeting notice.* Change Orders are often requested in construction projects, and in this case a kitchen floor for \$3800.00 would not reasonably be considered controversial or of particular interest to the public.

2. Ms. Burt second complaint pertains to Public Input as an agenda item. Ms. Burt is of the view that Public Input should not be included as an agenda item if there is no input anticipated at the time the meeting notice is posted.

The Board of the WHA recently addressed Public Input at its March 21, 2023, Board meeting.

The following is an excerpt from this meeting:

- Chairperson M. Carr, reviewed the change in Public Questions to Public Input.

On the advice of counsel for the WHA, the time that the Board Chair, at previous meetings, allowed public questions after all agenda items were addressed, will now be called Public Input. Anyone who would like to have input at a board meeting should see the Executive Director prior to the Wednesday before the scheduled meeting to ask to have an item placed on the agenda. Wednesday is when the notice is sent to the Town Clerk to be posted. Public Input only pertains to issues that are board or policy related. Not day to day operations. All day-to-day operation issues or questions should be directed to the Wenham Housing Authority Management Office. Unlike at prior meetings Public Input is not a time to ask questions. A response will not be given. The speaker will have no more than 3 minutes to talk.

There was no Public Input at the March 2023 meeting. The meeting was used to clarify the change in the process.

A motion was made by E. Craig-McCormack seconded by S. Herrick and approved with a vote of 4 Ayes (Thomas, Carr) and 1 Nay (Reid) to accept the change in Public Questions to Public Input.

The heading of Public Input is just that, another category. It is bolded and underlined as all agenda categories are. If someone was going to speak under Public Input, it would be bullet pointed to be referenced.

It is the position of the Wenham Housing Authority that no remedial action is appropriate for either of the alleged violations. A response from the chair will be sent to the Attorney General and Ms. Burt.

Old Business

Public Input

- None

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:49 PM upon a motion by S. Herrick and second by S. Thomas. There will be no July meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 8, 2023 @ 4:00 PM