

RECEIVED FOR FILING  
East Haven  
DATE 01/08/2024 TIME 01:30 pm  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
EAST HAVEN, CONN  
*Lisa Butler*  
TOWN CLERK

## **Housing Authority**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, January 8, 2024**

**Town Hall, Mayor's Conference Room**

**250 Main Street, East Haven, CT 06512**

**7:00 PM**

- Call meeting to order at 7:00PM
- Roll call taken:

#### **Present:**

Barbara Natarajan (Chair)

Anthony Moscato

Michael Enders

Michelle Benivegna (EHHA Director)

**Meeting minutes from 4/3/23 for approval** – Anthony Moscato made motion to approve the minutes from 4/3/23, Michael Enders seconded the motion, all in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, minutes approved and motion carries.

#### **Directors report given by Michelle Benivegna:**

- **New Fair Market Rents (FMRs):** HUD published new FMRs for 2024. Effective January 1, 2024 the payment standard has been adjusted based on HUD's criteria to set the payment standard within the basic range of 90 to 110% of the FMR. As you may recall last year's payment standards were set at 120% of the FMR via HUD's approved regulatory waiver. The waiver expired 12/31/2023. Imagineers continues to believe that setting the payment standard using the highest percentage possible will allow the flexibility necessary to make sure that voucher holders are able to use their vouchers and help with rental assistance and to also ascertain that there is a better utilization rate for East Haven's voucher program.
- **Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP):** Imagineers will be preparing to submit HUD's SEMAP certification 60 days after EHHA's fiscal year end. Imagineers expect that EHHA will continue to meet the designation as a "High Performer".
- **Utility Allowance Schedule:** Imagineers have submitted the utility consumption bills from the program participants and our reports to our software vendor in order that they do the analysis for this year's utility allowance schedule that will be effective 3/1/24.

- **HUD's Requirement for EHHA to have an updated 5 Year PHA Agency Plan** - The 5 Year PHA Agency Plan will need to be drafted for the upcoming five-year term. Imagineers will contact Michelle for the first steps in preparing for this requirement.

The preparation of the plan included the following steps:

1. Draft the 5-year plan which includes identifying goals and objectives in serving the needs of families for the next 5 years and progress report on previous 5-year plan.
2. Legal Notice needs to appear in the New Haven Register announcing the public meeting 45 days prior to the hearing date.
3. 5-year plan and invite to solicit comments or suggestions needs to be mailed to random current program participants and landlords.
4. State certification needs to mail out to the authorized representative at the State to confirm that EHHA's 5-Year PHA Plan is consistent with their consolidated plan.

After the public hearing is held, we will record any comments or suggestions received for the 5 Year Plan. The 5-Year Plan will be finalized and will also include the certifications from the State and the Civil Rights Certification signed by the Executive Director and the Board Chairperson; we will then submit these documents to HUD electronically.

- **Two New HUD Program Changes:** We will need to “get ready” for the changes that are anticipated to be executed for the Housing Voucher Program (HCV) for this year. Some of the “get ready” preparation include webinars and trainings. There will also need to be adjustments made to the Administrative Plan as these new requirements are implemented after HUD's effective dates are realized.
  - **New Inspection protocol:** HUD is reforming the inspection requirements of Housing Quality Standards (HQS) to a new set of standards and rules called NSPIRE – (National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate). The new standards are focused on identifying and reducing health and safety hazards with a focus on living conditions in units. NSPIRE also will align multiple HUD programs to a single set of inspection standards so that the same expectations of housing quality can be achieved across HUD programs.
  - **Adjusted Income and Family Assets** (Section 102 and 103): the new rule modifies the rules for determining household income and assets in HUD's Section 8 programs. These changes affect household eligibility and rent payments and sets limits on assets for families. Please see below reference:

Section 102 revises the definition and calculation of annual and adjusted income and addresses how income and eligibility is determined, including the frequency of income reviews.; increases the threshold for certain deductions made when calculating adjusted income (for instance there will be an increase for a program participant with a head, co-head, or spouse who is elderly or a person with a disability); creates financial hardship exemptions for adjusted income; and eliminates the use of the Earned Income Disallowance.

Section 104 defines net family assets, establishes an asset limitation for families based on the value of net family assets and property ownership, and provides exceptions for certain investments, including retirement savings and modest increases in income.

### **Program outline:**

As you may be aware before October 1, 2022, the EHHA had a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved baseline of 46 Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV). In August of 2022 HUD notified the EHHA that it was awarded three (3) new vouchers. These new vouchers are not special vouchers

but regular incremental ones. HUD awarded about 19,700 of these new vouchers to PHAs to be used for new lease ups (new admissions onto the program). Therefore, as of October 1, 2022, the new baseline program level for the EHHA is 49.

Currently 49 vouchers are being utilized by program participants. There are 48 program participants that have chosen to use their vouchers in East Haven and there is 1 program participant that has used their voucher to lease up outside of East Haven in Hartford. The City of Hartford Housing Authority has been billing the EHHA for the participant practicing portability in Hartford. Additionally, the EHHA currently administers 65 port-in vouchers from other initial PHAs due to program participants choosing to use their vouchers in the town of East Haven.

**Budget information:**

East Haven Housing Authority was awarded budget authority of \$631,056 in 2023. The average housing assistance payment (HAP) is \$1,073 monthly. EHHA is at a 100% of its unit utilization.

**Wait list data:**

As you may recall, the EHHA opened its waiting list in 2016 through an online web-based application system process. It advertised that it was to accept 500 applications over a 3-day period. During the open wait list period a total of 7,012 applications were received and 500 applications were randomly selected through a computer-generated lottery process. Currently there are 108 active applications on the wait list; many were removed via a purge that was conducted as applicants did not respond or the correspondence was returned from the post office undelivered. The wait list preferences that EHHA has include the following: Involuntary Displacement (disaster, government action, action of housing owner, inaccessibility, property disposition, victims of domestic violence); having extremely low incomes (incomes that fall below the 30% area median income levels) or being or having disabled/handicapped family members (disabled/handicapped as defined in Section 223 of the Social Security Act).

**Calendar for 2024** was discussed. The following dates were proposed:

April 8, 2024

July 8, 2024

October 7, 2024

January 6, 2025

Anthony Moscato made a motion to approve the proposed dates, Michael Enders seconded the motion, all in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, calendar dates approved and motion carries.

**Old business:** There was no old business for the EHHA to review or take action on.

**Public Comment:** there was no public in attendance and no correspondences to present to the EHHA.

**Adjourn:** A motion was made by Anthony Moscato to adjourn meeting, motion was seconded by Michael Enders, all in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, and motion carries. Meeting was adjourned at 7:27PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Michelle Benivegna*

Michelle Benivegna

EHHA Director