

**Waterbury Housing Task Force Thursday, March 20th, 2025**

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Steele Community Room

MINUTES: Present: Joe Camaratta, Skip Flanders, Alyssa Johnson, Em Lamson, Chris Bolzano, Owen Sette-Ducati, Eliza Novick-Smith

Absent: Kati Gallagher, Dana Allen,

Called to order: 6:02pm

Agenda adjustments: Moving VHIP conversation to start of the agenda while a quorum is present

*Housing Trust Fund Programs*

Joe Camaratta presents a table comparing and contrasting the Waterbury VHIP to the state-level VHIP. Joe makes the point that reimbursements for past expenses up to 6 months before the signing of the grant would be eligible.

Confirmed last session that there was no way we could do a loan, and can only offer a 5-year grant. Lifting the requirement from the grant to work with a coordinated entry organization.

The state program has a credit score requirement, not requiring a credit score of more than 500. Keep the month's deposit. Unit rehab is mentioned.

It is proposed that FMR is pegged to 110% of Fair-Market Rent Calculations for Washington County

Em Lawson mentioned that the credit score language was slightly confusing regarding if it was requiring a maximum credit score versus a minimum credit score. Language is adjusted to "credit score requirement at landlord discretion."

Skip Flanders asked which organization was handling compliance going forward. Joe mentioned that Downstreet was handling the grant disbursement and the town would handle rent compliance going forward.

Mention of the rental covenant and if we plan on allowing the rental covenant to continue. Joe mentioned we will maintain the rental covenant as outlined.

Alyssa Johnson points out if we are asking for the housing trust fund will be explicitly used only for the Trust Fund and if fees will come out of the housing trust fund. Alyssa asks Joe Camaratta

to state that fees will come out of the housing trust fund. Alyssa also states that clarification would be needed around housing trust fund usages.

Joe proposes that we make the money available for 6-9 months. Alyssa says we should anticipate how the money will be used, and if we would like to offer a maximum of 3 awards or something along those lines.

Joe suggests we use the amount that was allocated in 2024, which is up to \$100,000.

Payment terms will be added to the chart as well as a few other items.

Alyssa mentioned that this might be two separate items in the meeting. One would be finalizing the usages of the Housing Trust Fund, and a separate would be a request to use the 2024 funding for up to three awards.

Joe mentioned that it was never really formalized how the money should be used.

We can make the recommendation that the program be extended. Joe makes a movement to approve the program as stated in the document.

Skip moves to approve the motion. Owen seconds. Motion carries.

All present were in favor of the motion.

Joe makes a movement to move to utilize up to \$100,000 to the Waterbury VHIP program for the stated movement.

Chris moves to approve and Skip seconds. Motion carries with all present in favor.

Joe states Downstreet be engaged to administer the application and distribution of funds and that the amount allocated to the trust fund in 2024 be used for a combination of program funding and administration.

Chris moves to approve and Skip seconds. Motion carries.

All present were in favor of the motion.

Sandy mentions the administration fees, is that per-award or are their additional fees. Alyssa mentioned that she believes it's per award for staff time.

Alyssa stated we could do the first meeting in April if available.

6:34pm

Joe asked when vacancies would be advertised. Alyssa stated that 4/17 is when vacancies would be advertised and solicited for all boards and committees.

Em asked if the positions would be advertised as supporting specific roles. Joe mentioned that Peter had resigned.

Alyssa Johnson mentions that you should require information and can go from there.

Joe mentioned that he would look for someone to work as vice chair.

Alyssa mentioned that there are not any select-board specific legislative updates but there is some work on obtaining the cornfield from the state for flood mitigation.

Joe mentioned that the rental registry was on the agenda and asked how that was going. Alyssa said mainly date adjustments and a few other items.

6:40

Alyssa Johnson leaves the meeting.

Eliza Novick-Smith joins the meeting.

Joe Camaratta provides an overview on previous discussion to Eliza Novick-Smith

Joe Camaratta mentions that we should switch gears and discuss the education series.

### *Continue Education Series*

Cheryl Casey provides an overview of workshop #2. A total of 11 people who were not formally part of the housing task force. Survey responses totalled 6, were primarily positive. Cheryl says that we should keep doing what we're doing. No complaints about technology.

One person mentioned that Greg Montgomery was quite solid from a design standpoint.

It's important to continue to remind folks that this series is supposed to function as a coherent whole and not just pockets of information.

Skip asked if there was only one person who was at both workshops. Cheryl states that that is correct and online forms were different.

Cheryl stated that the Zoom recording was smooth and audio levels were better, but we need to work on repeating the questions.

Discussion of technology on Zoom and microphones. Cheryl mentioned that she is ok with positing the Zoom.

Em mentions should we consider doing a short recap of the zoning application process?

Joe thanks Cheryl for the prep work with the presenters, and Joe stated that the visuals were significantly better than previous agendas.

We have an individual from Community Bank presenting, as well as Owen Sette-Ducati.

Cheryl mentioned that she wanted to brainstorm with other solid speakers. Carie Griffin was mentioned in regards to a VHIP speaker. Cheryl mentioned that it was useful to have the succession of speakers into a resident's actual on the ground experience for that.

Cherl mentioned that it flowed quite well this time.

Sandy mentioned that a discussion of the Waterbury VHIP should occur if it's passed by the Selectboard.

Joe mentions that he'll reach out to Downstreet to see if they can present, in order to bring them in. Owen could present on the Waterbury program and Downstreet can present the VHIP and then the Waterbury VHIP.

The last bit of follow-up from this week is just updating the website. Before the weekend is out the website will be updated.

Joe Camaratta mentions that there was a grant for the promotion of the Waterbury VHIP program.

Tom Leitz is very seriously wanting to create a position for a monthly municipality newsletter in regards to the manner in which information is disseminated through the community.

Joe Camaratta mentioned that he is having difficulty finding an individual who could speak on becoming a landlord.

Jonathan Griffin who was a landlord and rents and is involved in housing capacity who could present hypothetically.

Jeff Larkin or Nicole Grenier were mentioned.

Outreach was mentioned.

Sandy mentions VHSA in terms of individuals who could accommodate for the task force.

Legal advisor on tenant-landlord laws. Eliza mentions that her friend did tenant representation for subsidized housing, she mentioned that there's not a ton of legal variance between subsidized and non-subsidized.

7:11 roundup

#### *Volunteers Needed for April Meeting*

Joe has mentioned that he will not be here for the April 17 Meeting. Joe asked if someone would be able to step in as interim chair for the upcoming meeting. Three days before the meeting we would have an agenda.

Owen offered to be interim chair for the next meeting.

Joe had mentioned we will need an interim secretary for the upcoming months. Eliza said in theory she will be there for the April meetin and will not be available for the May, June, and July meetings.

Joe said we will handle this on a round-robin basis until she gets back.

Eliza said it's possible she gets back in July.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:17pm.**

