

2024 APR -8 A 8:36

The Committee on Government Operations, Public Safety & Public Service met on Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 6pm in City Council Chambers.

The meeting was recorded by ECTV and can be viewed on the City of Everett website.

Members present were Councilor Stephanie Martins, presiding and Councilors Peter Pietrantonio, Holly Garcia and Guerline Alcy Jabouin.

The Committee considered a Resolution offered by Councilors Stephanie Martins and Stephanie Smith : That a health check of the Everett Housing Authority be performed for transparency and to ensure all paperwork and vouchers are in order, and residency compliance requirements and condition of the homes are being met for the well-being of our residents.

Everett Housing Authority Board Chairman Dominic Puleo and Councilor Stephanie Smith, the Sponsor were also present. Stefan Gilliam, Jim Peteresen and Christina Quinones of AMA Consultants were present remotely through the Zoom application.

Chairperson Martins informed the Committee that she had recently attended the Congressional Conference of Cities and met with the consultants regarding the work they do with public housing authorities and invited them to speak about the work they do with the hopes that a partnership could be developed with the Everett Housing Authority. Mr. Gilliam explained that they were an affordable housing government consultant firm that provides a diverse viewpoint to public housing authorities to help them in determining if they operate in the most efficient manner. He noted that they would review policy and procedure documents and propose revisions and updates, perform inspection of units in conjunction with Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, develop operational blueprints, perform file checks and quality control to insure that eligibility determination were done correctly, conduct budget and accounting reviews as it relates to HUD requirements, complete staff interviews to determine behavioral assessment. Ms. Quinones provided an overview of the reporting process upon conclusion of all the reviews and inspections and noted that it would be a comprehensive list of opportunities and recommendations. Chairperson Martins thanked the guests for their presentation and remarked that it was a great service and recommended that Mr. Puleo consider retaining their services. Mr. Puleo responded that a lot of the work they perform is already being done and that four (4) audits on EHA is performed annually, an annual inspection of all the properties is done, Landlords for Section 8 tenants are required to make repairs within 30 days, a work order system is already in place which has received a 100% rating from the audits, eligibility reviews are also performed during the audits, but he agreed to discuss the AMA Consultants presentation with his EHA Board members. Councilor Pietrantonio asked if AMA was a private organization and Mr. Gilliam responded yes, Councilor Pietrantonio asked if they had been to Everett and Mr. Gilliam responded no in which Councilor Pietrantonio remarked that EHA must be doing a good job then. Councilor Pietrantonio asked if they could help with the Section 8 voucher process and Mr. Gilliam stated that they could help with the wait list as well as conduct a purge of the current list. Mr. Puleo informed the Committee that EHA has six (6) properties which are State funded and Section 8 is funding through Federal Housing noting that there could be a wait list as long as eight years also noting that the voucher can be used anywhere in the United States. Councilor

Pietrantonio asked how many Section 8 vouchers for the City of Everett and Mr. Puleo agreed to look at the formula to determine that number. Mr. Puleo noted that even with a Section 8 voucher the Landlord could charge more for rent than the value of the voucher and it would be encumbered to the voucher holder to pay the difference in rent. Councilor Garcia asked what the rates were for public housing and Mr. Puleo responded between 25-75% of gross income, but noted that affordable housing rates are set by the private developers. Councilor Smith noted that the affordable housing rates are based on the average median income, but mentioned that she plans to present a proposal to the Council soon that would set it at a certain percentage. Councilor Alcy Jabouin remarked that EHA would benefit from the services offered by AMA and that hopefully they will think about it. Chairperson Martins inquired to the cost of the audits performed for EHA and Mr. Puleo responded that it was through the RFP process, but noted that EHA would have to find funds to hire a consultant firm. Chairperson Martins asked Mr. Puleo to provide the members with an update on the EHA tower air condition unit issue and Mr. Puleo announced that EHA has started the process to purchase air conditioners for all the units in the tower and have gone out to bid for 12,000 BTU AC units along with installation with the goal to have them installed for the summer months, however he mentioned that National Grid has still not confirmed a date in which to expand the service. Councilor Alcy Jabouin suggested that EHA have the State perform an audit and Mr. Puleo responded that he didn't believe the State would do so since they consider Everett a model agency. Councilor Alcy Jabouin remarked that she was disturbed to hear that. Mr. Puleo stated that he was sorry to hear the Councilor feel that way and suggested that the Councilors upon receiving a complaint from a EHA resident to reach out to the Executive Director of himself to have it addressed. Councilor Garcia asked if EHA had interpreters and Mr. Puleo confirmed they had an Interpreter service. Councilor Garcia asked Mr. Puleo for his help with a Laundry room in tower and Mr. Puleo agreed to look into it. Councilor Pietrantonio asked how many unit and Mr. Puleo responded 670 units with 11 maintenance employees that have a work order system. Mr. Puleo concluded the meeting by reiterating his earlier remarks that the work EHA does is in line with what AMA does, but he agreed to share the presentation and conversation with the Board members.

The Committee voted: To report back to the City Council with a recommendation to refer back to Sponsor

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Burley
Clerk of Committees