

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Rent Control Board on Thursday, February 20, 2020 beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 600 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey.

Call to Order:

Municipal Clerk reads notice of Open Public Meetings law. The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been satisfied with respect to this meeting; specifically, the time, date and location were included in the annual notice of meetings adopted by the governing body, posted in the Municipal Building, and sent to the official newspapers of the Township, the Verona Cedar Grove Times and the Star Ledger. Additionally, the agenda for this meeting was posted in the Municipal Building and sent to the two newspapers before 4:30 p.m. on the Friday preceding this meeting.

Roll Call:

Willola Ashley, Sean Byrnes, Patrick Hanley, Robert Narucki, Gerard Tamburino, Rent Control Board Attorney Alex Graziano, Esq., and Board Secretary Jennifer Kiernan are also present.

Chairman Patrick Hanley leads the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: None.

New Business:

Mr. Graziano advises the Board that the Verona Association of Tenants has settled with Fieldstone, LLC in an amicable manner and the Verona Association of Tenants have withdrawn their complaint.

Chairman Hanley states that the Board has received the rent rolls for the current year and a number of violations have been identified. Mr. Graziano opines the same. He states that in the past the Board has directed the attorney to send written notice to each landlord advising them that their rent increases are not in compliance and the Board is prepared to levy a fine, pursuant to Chapter 112 of the Code of the Township of Verona, and allow two (2) weeks' notice to comply with the ordinance.

Mr. Tamburino suggests a motion to accept the 2020 rent rolls and requests a vote from the Board on levying fines. The motion is moved by Ms. Ashley; seconded by Mr. Narucki.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Ashley, Byrnes, Narucki, Tamburino, Hanley

NAYS:

Mr. Graziano asserts a point of clarification and states the Board can impose penalties and abate said penalties if the landlords comply within a set time frame. The fine imposed can be up to \$1000.00 pursuant to Chapter 112 of the Code of the Township of Verona.

After Board discussion, and unanimous consent to allow a period of time for landlords to adjust the disparities in their submission, Mr. Tamburino suggests the Board set fines in the amount of \$250.00 per unit to the 12 properties where landlords are delinquent in submitting their 2020 rent rolls. The letters, which will be sent by the Board Attorney should also direct the landlord to comply with Chapter 112 of the Code of the Township of Verona and immediately decrease the rent charged to the tenants of the units. He also suggests that upon re-submission of corrected rent rolls, the letter should also direct the landlord to attest, in writing, to the Board that they have corrected the violation and rebated/refunded the tenant, stating the amount rebated/refunded. It is also suggested by Mr. Tamburino that the Board direct the landlord that if they comply with the directive and with Chapter 112 of the Code of the Township of Verona by filing a new rent roll and letter of certification within 21 days from March 9, 2020, the Board will refrain from taking the above actions. However, failure to comply will result in the Boards filing of a complaint with the Municipal Court of the Township of Verona seeking imposition of the fines, as well as the penalties set forth in Chapter 112 of the Code of the Township of Verona. These include a fine of up to \$1,000.00, as well as imprisonment for up to ninety (90) days, and the forfeiture of all allowable increases for all rentals in the property concerned for a one-year period.

Mr. Tamburino moves to have the letter sent by the Board Attorney to the two (2) landlords who have yet to submit their 2020 rent rolls stating that the Board is directing them to immediately comply with Chapter 112 of the Code of the Township of Verona and immediate file their rent rolls within 30 days from March 9, 2020. Should said rent rolls, when submitted are determined to be in compliance with the CPI, the Board will refrain from taking further action. However, should a landlord refuse to comply within that time period will result in the Board's filing of a complaint with the Municipal Court of the Township of Verona seeking imposition of the fines and penalties set forth in Chapter 112 of the Code of the Township of Verona. The letter will also inform the landlord that they will be subject to a fine of up to \$1,000.00, as well as imprisonment for up to ninety (90) days, and the forfeiture of all allowable

increases for all rentals in the property concerned for a one-year period.

The Board also directs the Board Attorney to state in the letters that any questions should be directed to the Board Attorney directly. Motion moved by Mr. Tamburino; seconded by Mr. Narucki.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Ashley, Byrnes, Narucki, Tamburino, Hanley

NAYS:

The Board directs Mr. Graziano to send signed letter for all landlords to the Board Secretary to be mailed via regular and certified mail no later than March 9, 2020.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn is made by Ms. Ashley; seconded by Mr. Byrnes is made at 7:36 pm. The next regular scheduled meeting is April 14, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jennifer Kiernan*

Jennifer Kiernan, RMC

Rent Control Board Secretary

APPROVED: April 14, 2020