

BURLINGTON HOUSING BOARD OF REVIEW

Monday, December 7, 2020

7:00 p.m.

The meeting will be entirely remote and virtual. You can join the meeting via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85800289838?pwd=T01TYTI3L2o1YkVhMkswbllwUFlGdz09>

Passcode: 927863

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Webinar ID: 858 0028 9838

Passcode: 927863

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85800289838?pwd=T01TYTI3L2o1YkVhMkswbllwUFlGdz09>

AGENDA

1. John Hanley, Laura Obregon (tenants); James Vincent & Pam Shea (landlords) (security deposit case)
re: 477 North St

The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information. The City is also committed to providing proper access to services, facilities, and employment opportunities. For accessibility information or alternative formats, please contact Human Resources Department at (802) 540-2505.

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AMENDED AGENDA

1. John Hanley, Laura Obregon (tenants); James Vincent & Pam Shea (landlords) (security deposit case) re: 477 North St
2. Ashleigh O'Hara (tenant); Paul Hendler (landlord) (security deposit case) re: 181 College St, Unit 211

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1. John Hanley, Laura Obregon (tenants); James Vincent & Pam Shea (landlords) (security deposit case) re: 477 North St
2. Ashleigh O'Hara (tenant); Paul Hendler (landlord) (security deposit case) re: 181 College St, Unit 211
3. Brock Kraemer (tenant); Susan Ames (landlord) (security deposit case) re: 41 Bilodeau Pkwy

Rev. 11/20/20

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Minutes

Board Members present: Josh O'Hara, Betsy McGavisk, Charlie Gliserman, Olivia Pena

Staff present: Lisa Jones

1. John Hanley, Laura Obregon (tenants); James Vincent & Pam Shea (landlords) (security deposit case) re: 477 North St
Case settled prior to hearing
2. Ashleigh O'Hara (tenant); Paul Hendler (landlord) (security deposit case) re: 181 College St, Unit 211
Present was: Ashleigh O'Hara who was sworn in. Board took evidence and testimony from O'Hara.
Hearing concluded.
3. Brock Kraemer (tenant); Susan Ames (landlord) (security deposit case) re: 41 Bilodeau Pkwy
Present were: Brock Kraemer and Susan Ames. All parties were sworn in.
Board took evidence and testimony from both parties. Hearing concluded.

At the conclusion of all hearings, Paul Hendler appeared. He had difficulty signing onto Zoom and that's why he was late. Board determined that because Hendler had technical difficulties his hearing would be rescheduled.

Meeting adjourned.

**In re: Request for Hearing of BROCK)
KRAEMER Regarding Withholding of) Security Deposit Appeal
Security Deposit by SUSAN AMES for)
Rental Unit at 41 Bilodeau Parkway)**

The above-named hearing came before the Housing Board of Review on December 7, 2020; the hearing was held virtually via Zoom. Board Chair Josh O’Hara presided. Board Members Charlie Gliserman, Olivia Pena and Betsy McGavisk were also present. Petitioner Brock Kraemer was present and testified. Respondent Susan Ames was also present and testified.

Findings of Fact

- 1

6. Respondent's statement of deductions did not include notice of the tenant's right to request a hearing before this Board to dispute the withholding of the deposit; respondent was unaware of the requirement to do so. In addition, interest was not credited to the deposit.

Conclusions of Law

7. The City of Burlington's security deposit ordinance, Minimum Housing Code Sec. 18-120, took effect April 10, 1986 and governs any rental arrangements for dwelling units in the City of Burlington entered into or renewed after that date.

8. The State of Vermont's Landlord and Tenant Act, now codified at 9 V.S.A. Sec. 4451-68, applies to rental agreements for residential property entered into, extended or renewed on or after July 1, 1986. Its terms are to "be implied in all rental agreements" to which it is applicable. 9 V.S.A. Sec. 4453.

9. Under the city ordinance, as well as state law (the terms of which must be implied in the parties' rental agreement), a landlord must return the security deposit to a tenant within 14 days from the date on which the tenant vacated or abandoned the dwelling unit, with a written statement itemizing any deductions. City ordinance also provides that the written statement must inform the tenant of the opportunity to request a hearing before the Burlington Housing Board of Review within 30 days of receipt of the landlord's written statement. Minimum Housing Code Sec. 18-120(c). The statement and any payment must be hand-delivered or sent by mail. Minimum Housing Code Sec. 18-120(c). If a landlord fails to return the deposit with a statement within 14 days, the landlord forfeits the right to withhold any portion of the security deposit. See, Minimum Housing Code Sec. 18-120(c) and 9 V.S.A. Sec. 4461(e).

10. A landlord who decides to retain all or part of a security deposit must comply with 3 specific requirements of the ordinance: the deposit must be returned within 14 days of the date

the tenant vacated or abandoned the rental unit with a written statement itemizing any deductions; the statement must contain notice of the tenant's right to appeal to the Housing Board of Review; and the statement must be hand-delivered or sent by certified mail.¹ See *Lieberman v. Circe*, No. S21-13 Cncv (Crawford, J., March 27, 2013) and Minimum Housing Code Sec. 18-120(c). The Vermont Supreme Court required the literal enforcement of these requirements in *In re Soon Kwon*, 189 Vt 598 (2011). Accordingly, a landlord who fails to meet all of these requirements forfeits the security deposit. In this case, respondent failed to comply with the notice requirements by failing to include petitioner's appeal rights in the statement. Therefore, the Board concludes respondent forfeited the right to withhold any part of the deposit.

11. Petitioner is entitled to recover interest on the security deposit. Minimum Housing Code Sec. 18-120(c). The Housing Code requires that the security deposit be held by the owner in an interest-bearing account with an interest rate equivalent to a current Vermont bank passbook savings account. Sec. 18-120(a). The Board applies the interest rate currently found in most bank passbook savings accounts – 0.25% simple annual interest.

Order

Accordingly, it is hereby ORDERED:

12. Petitioner Brock Kraemer is entitled to recover from respondent Susan Ames the following amounts:

a) \$513.34 of the principal amount of the security deposit improperly withheld after October 27, 2020;

b) Interest in the amount of \$0.44 on the entire deposit for the period August 15, 2020 to October 27, 2020; and

c) Additional interest of \$0.003 per day from October 28, 2020 until such date as the

¹An amendment to Sec. 18-120(c) removing the "certified mail" requirement took effect on January 7, 2015.

amount improperly withheld is returned to petitioner.

DATED at Burlington, Vermont this ____ day of December, 2020.

CITY OF BURLINGTON
HOUSING BOARD OF REVIEW

/s/ Josh O'Hara
Josh O'Hara

/s/ Betsy McGavisk
Betsy McGavisk

/s/ Charlie Gliserman
Charlie Gliserman

/s/ Olivia Pena
Olivia Pena