



**DR. DEIRDRE WATERMAN**  
**MAYOR**  
**CITY OF PONTIAC**

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 25, 2019

**CONTACT:**

Deputy Mayor Jane Bais-DiSessa

248-758-3322

[jbais-disessa@pontiac.mi.us](mailto:jbais-disessa@pontiac.mi.us)

**MAYOR DEIRDRE WATERMAN TO REPORT RESULTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING & SAFETY'S ACTIONS TO RESTORE HEAT AT THE NORTH HILL FARMS APARTMENTS DURING FEBRUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2019 COUNCIL MEETING**

**PONTIAC** – During last week's historic low temperatures affecting all parts of Michigan, Pontiac Mayor Deirdre Waterman directed the Department of Building & Safety to deploy resources and investigate complaints that a local apartment complex has been left in the cold. North Hill Farms Apartments, a 525-unit affordable housing apartment complex located on the city's north side was said to have been experiencing on-going heating problems amidst frigid temperatures. Upon learning of these issues, Mayor Waterman immediately sprang into action. As a result of these efforts, city inspectors discovered 46 units were without properly working heat – some residents had been without heat for months.

North Hill Farms is an income-based community and is home to some of the city's most vulnerable citizens. The complex is managed by Legacy, LLC and reports that many residents have limited resources, have mental or physical health challenges or live under caregivers.

Several residents expressed fear of retribution by management and loss of federal Housing Choice Vouchers/Section 8 assigned to their units if they reported these issues directly to the city. Since the discovery, Building & Safety has already taken immediate action to ensure that these residents are protected. Notice provided to management prevents the cut off of essential utilities and citations were issued requiring 24-hour corrective action.

"We learned that about a dozen tenants had reported the problem to management, which had not adequately made repairs," said Building Official Michael Wilson. "Many residents felt marginalized and feared reaching out to city officials would not make a difference."

47450 Woodward Avenue • Pontiac, Michigan 48342  
Direct: (248) 758-3181 • Appointments: (248) 758-3326 • Fax: (248) 758-3292  
E-mail: [DWaterman@pontiac.mi.us](mailto:DWaterman@pontiac.mi.us) • [www.pontiac.mi.us](http://www.pontiac.mi.us)  
<https://www.facebook.com/pontiacmayor/>

After notice was given by the city, management responded by contracting two additional maintenance and repair crews on site. Within hours, heat was restored to most of the 46 units that had gone without. City officials were directed to go door-to-door to ensure that each and every resident has functioning heat and to provide opportunities for residents to voice any other grievances that may exist. To date, all 46 units have been repaired and heat restored.

“I want to ensure to these citizens and every citizen of Pontiac, that no matter what your circumstances are, your safety is top priority,” said Waterman. “This was a humanitarian action in which people who were being victimized were rescued by our city departments.”

The city will continue to work with management to ensure that a permanent solution is in place. Waterman has stated that she is seeking to develop a consortium between the city, mental health, and public service agencies to assist residents if their housing is declared unsafe.

The city attorney has been directed to review policy changes that would prevent situations like this from happening again. One option is to draft an ordinance that requires landlords to provide temporary housing if unsafe conditions are determined by the building official and repairs are not made in a timely manner. A presentation has been added to the agenda for Tuesday’s City Council meeting. Building officials and code enforcement officers will be in attendance to make reports and present findings of the investigation. North Hill Farms management and residents have been invited to attend.

“Our administration works to serve the safety and welfare of all of our residents,” said Waterman.

###