

Fitchburg Housing Authority Minutes – Regular Meeting

CJ Durkin Community Room, Fitchburg, MA

November 14, 2018

PRESENT:

Linda Byrne, Chair
Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair
David Rousseau, Treasurer
David Basilio, Assistant Treasurer
Andrew Van Hazinga, Member

ALSO PRESENT:

Benjamin Gold, Interim Executive Director
Denise Ivaldi, Recording Secretary
Sheila Lancelotta, Director of Finance

1. At 9:55 a.m. the meeting opened. The Chair declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order.

2. The minutes of October 17, 2018 were presented. Mary Giannetti asked if Ben Gold had met with the FHA staff yet; Ben said once the new E.D. was selected he would. A discussion followed on employees, office space and E.D. configuration. Mary Giannetti made a motion to accept the minutes. David Basilio seconded; all were in favor.

3. Executive Director Report:

- Three new offices are now finished. We will start putting people in place early December.
- Ben will be out of the office December 3-4 at the NAHRO Fall Conference.
- LHA/FHA update – E.D. Search. Linda Byrne stated that she and David Rousseau interviewed five individuals and would like to bring two individuals before the board.

4. Financial Report (October 2018):

Sheila Lancelotta was present to go over the October financials and then the 2019 Budget.

- Financials look good, DHCD gave us an operating subsidy of \$936,000.
- Bottom line of \$764,000 looks like a profit but DHCD is supporting the housing authority to keep the reserves up.
- Revenues – DHCD has cushioned the reserves to keep them at 20% or higher.
- Administrative – we have \$26,000 that wasn't spent; hope to keep until the end of the year.
- Utilities – spending more than expected.
- Ordinary maintenance is over.

Mary Giannetti made a motion to accept the October financial report. David Basilio seconded, all were in favor.

Sheila then moved to Resolution 2018-11-01 2019 4001/689C/MRVP Operating Budget Submission. She went over the budget with the following highlights:

- The Administrative line item is increasing for 2019 as Leominster H.A. is no longer paying Management Fee to Fitchburg H.A.
- Fitchburg H.A. is no longer paying Management Fee to Leominster H.A.
- Total Administrative line item decreased by \$56,424.
- DHCD has a cap for line items.
- General Expenses jumped up due to the City's charge to Fitchburg H.A. for pensions.

SUBMISSION OF 2019 4001, 689-C AND MRVP OPERATING BUDGETS

RESOLUTION 2018-11-01

WHEREAS: The Fitchburg Housing Authority is required by DHCD to submit approved 4001, 689-C and MRVP Operating Budgets for State-Aided Housing for Fiscal Year 2019 and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

That the Fitchburg Housing Authority Board authorizes submission of the 4001, 689-C and MRVP Operating Budgets for State-Aided Housing for Fiscal Year 2019 to the Department of Housing and Community Development, as directed by DHCD, and recommended by the Executive Director,

RESOLVED, Motion made by Mary Giannetti to submit the 2019 4001, 689-C and MRVP Operating Budgets for State-Aided Housing of the Fitchburg Housing Authority to the Department of Housing and Community Development.

SECONDED, Andrew Van Hazinga seconded the motion, and the motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

5. Modernization Report:

- 689-3 240 Ashburnham Driveway and Fence Replacement – Punch list items to be addressed.
- 200-1 Green Acres Basement Moisture Remediation – State received revised cost estimate, in discussions with State now.
- 689-1 76 Mechanic Fire Sprinkler Installation – Will be doing a pre-inspection walkthrough with the Fire Department. Project is almost complete.
- 667-1/705-2 Canton Valley Fire Alarm Upgrade – Testing came back with less than 1% asbestos, moving forward.
- 200-1 Green Acres Toilet Flange Replacement – In negotiations with Garofalo Design Associates for bid package.

6. State-Aided Housing Report:

- We received 88 standard applications in October (22 elderly/young disable; 66 family).
- We have 2,835 applicants on the waiting list; 1,005 are local residents.
- We received 66 emergency applications (for all five housing authorities), two were hurricane victims. To date 17 emergency applicants were housed.
- There were 11 lease-ups and 11 vacancies for the month.
- We are at 89.78% overall occupancy.

A board member asked if the MOC units would be used as a meeting space for the board.

7. Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Report:

- 98% allocated.
- MRVP – 67% allocated.

8. Old Business: None

9. New Business: The following resolutions were presented:

RESOLUTION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A PAYMENT STANDARD FOR THE SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM (HCVP)

RESOLUTION 2018-11-02

WHEREAS: The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) publishes the Fair Market Rents (FMR's) for each standard, metropolitan, statistical area in the nation, and

WHEREAS: The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has established the Fair Market Rents (FMR's) for the Leominster/Fitchburg area, and

Whereas: The published FMR's are below and above the actual rents in Fitchburg Housing Authority's service area,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That in accordance with 24 CFR 984.3, the Fitchburg Housing Authority will set the payment standard at the percentage needed to maintain the current payment standard, or they will use 100% of the FMR and increase the payment standards. They will be calculated between 100%, and 110% of the fair market rents in accordance with the regulations of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Fair Market Rents as published by HUD and effective January 1, 2019. (See Attached)

RESOLVED, Motion made by Mary Giannetti to approve the 2019 FMR payment standards.

SECONDED, David Basilio seconded the motion and the motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

RESOLUTION TO AMEND UTILITY ALLOWANCES AND UTILITY REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENTS OF THE FITCHBURG HOUSING AUTHORITY TO ALLOW THE USE OF A NEWLY DEVELOPED UTILITY SCHEDULE FOR THE SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

RESOLUTION 2018-11-03

WHEREAS: The Department of Housing and Urban Development requires the Public Housing Authority to maintain a utility allowance schedule for all tenant paid utilities under the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, and

WHEREAS: The Fitchburg Housing Authority has contracted on an annual basis with Northeastern Utility Consultants, LLC to prepare such a schedule based on the typical cost of utilities and services of the location, size and type of utility. The LHA reviews current costs, determines if the costs have risen/dropped by 10% or more and updates the utility schedule accordingly on an annual basis. The schedule covering the fiscal year January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019 is attached.

WHEREAS: Fitchburg Housing Authority will incorporate the new utility allowance prepared by Northeastern Utility Consultants, LLC effective January 1, 2019.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

RESOLVED, Motion made by Mary Giannetti to establish the utility allowance schedule for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) effective January 1, 2019.

SECONDED, David Basilio seconded the Motion, and the Motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMITTAL OF HUD FORM 50077-CR CIVIL RIGHTS CERTIFICATION

Resolution 2018-11-04

Whereas: The Fitchburg Housing Authority is required to annually submit HUD Form 50077-CR Civil Rights Certification.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

That the members of the Fitchburg Housing Authority Board of Commissioners have approved and authorized the execution and annual submittal of Form HUD-50077-CR Civil Rights Certification.

RESOLVED, Motion made by Mary Giannetti to authorize the Executive Director to submit HUD Form 50077-CR Civil Rights Certification.

SECONDED, David Rousseau seconded the motion, and the motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE SEASONAL PURCHASE OF ICE MELT

Resolution Number 2018-11-05

Whereas: The Fitchburg Housing Authority solicited for winter 2018/2019 seasonal purchase of ice melt on an as-needed basis, and

Whereas: Three firms responded to our solicitation (see attached memorandum), and

Whereas: W.B. Mason submitted the lowest responsive bid in the amount of \$9.04 per 50lb bag or an estimated purchase of \$10,983 for a product called Meltco.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

That the Fitchburg Housing Authority Board of Commissioners approve the contract award to W.B. Mason, the low responsive and responsible bid, to purchase ice melt on an as-needed basis throughout the winter 2018/2019 season in the total estimated amount of \$10,983.

RESOLVED, Motion made by David Basilio to award a contract to W.B. Mason to purchase ice melt on an as-needed basis throughout the winter 2018/2019 season in the total estimated amount of \$10,983.

SECONDED, David Rousseau seconded the motion, and the motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

10. Other Correspondence:

- PHN Notices
- NAHRO November Newsletter
- Wallace Towers Newsletter

11. Resident Participation: None

12. There being no further business, motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:16 a.m. was made by Mary Giannetti. David Basilio seconded; all were in favor.

Fitchburg Housing Authority

Minutes – Special Meeting

Canton Valley Community Room, Fitchburg, MA

November 19, 2018

PRESENT:

Linda Byrne, Chair
Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair
David Rousseau, Treasurer
David Basilio, Assistant Treasurer
Andrew Van Hazinga, Member

ALSO PRESENT:

Benjamin Gold, Interim Executive Director
Denise Ivaldi, Recording Secretary
Douglas Bushman, E.D.

1. At 11:00 a.m. the meeting opened. The Chair declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order.

2. Chair Linda Byrne introduced Douglas Bushman to the board as one of the finalists for the FHA Executive Director position. Mr. Bushman is currently at the Marlborough Community Development Authority (MCDA).

Mary Giannetti welcomed Mr. Bushman. She said they hear of many safety issues from residents before the board meetings on drugs in the buildings, etc.

Mr. Bushman thanked the board for having him here today. He shared the following with the board:

- In the early 60s/70s, he realized there was public/affordable housing; that's why he went into public housing. He stopped by the Green Acres complex this morning, noticed some lights out; Canton Valley needed work on the walkways. He provided board members with a MCDA handout on work orders noting there was a drop in the number of work orders for lights out for 2018 versus 2017.
- MCDA conducts a Triple I CORI check.
- MCDA has an agreement with the Marlborough Police Department on what to look for at housing authority sites. If they see trash, broken windows; they call the work order line. This is one way to attract and keep good tenants.
- Grandparents who allow children and grandchildren to stay with them are called into the office and reminded of the 21 day rule. The resident is also asked if they are safe; we try not to evict.
- Work with the Bay Path Elder Services Program and Circle of Public Safety.

Andrew Van Hazinga inquired about Mr. Bushman's resume and what he has been doing. Mr. Bushman replied with the following: Developed affordable housing, finished law school. Involved with a \$6M project and a \$1M parking expansion. Always exceeds the budget for a project, getting money from DHCD. If the property looks nicer you keep good tenants.

When asked how he would turn around the units at Green Acres with their design issues, he replied he would meet with the tenant day one and through inspections, both routine and annual. In preparation of board meetings the floor would be washed/waxed, paper towels in the bathroom, maintenance would have uniforms with name tags.

He added he has been in Marlborough since 2012. They work with Elder Services, Meals on Wheels and have a 24/7 work order line. Maintenance are trained; they were never trained before. Some employees chose to leave, some stayed.

David Rousseau asked Mr. Bushman how he gets people to participate in these programs. He replied that there is a social service component. They work with Bay Path Elder Services and Meals on Wheels, though he added it is hard to get residents to participate.

Mary Giannetti asked Mr. Bushman if there was a Tenant Association in Marlborough. He replied there was and he meets with them monthly. He added residents come to him before they go to the board.

Mary Giannetti stated that as Fitchburg moves from management with Leominster H.A., we are looking for an Executive Director to be a face in the community and with the tenants. She asked Mr. Bushman if he will spend time on both roles, he replied as follows:

- Works with his staff.
- Fitchburg has two individuals/representatives that he will work with.
- He currently meets with the Chamber of Commerce to get small contractors engaged in the process.
- He sits with City Hall to get money through CDBG grants.
- The water bill can decrease if the money is put into the complexes.

Chair Linda Byrne asked Mr. Bushman to talk about the Section 8 program, as she was impressed with his first interview. Mr. Bushman replied that a Section 8 audit leads to termination; 10% of voucher holders should not have vouchers. Mary Giannetti asked how he would get more vouchers issued. Chair Linda Byrne noted that some Fitchburg landlords are not good; should not be on the program. Mr. Bushman stated he works with non-profit organizations.

David Basilio asked Mr. Bushman if this was a full time position or if he did lawyer work as well. Mr. Bushman replied one night a week he works as an adjunct lawyer.

David Rousseau asked Mr. Bushman about his relationship with staff and residents. He added employees don't know what is going on. Mr. Bushman replied Marlborough has a notification system in place for emergencies, etc. as well as a Facebook page.

Andrew Van Hazinga asked Mr. Bushman where he sees himself in 10-15 years. Mr. Bushman replied he has two massive projects going on in Marlborough. He likes a challenge and would rebranch Fitchburg Housing Authority with their separation from Leomisnter Housing Authority. He added he could see himself being at Fitchburg H.A. until he retires.

Mary Giannetti said that is a good way to characterize the disparity at Fitchburg Housing Authority, she credits the Leominster Housing Authority. Staff who stuck through need to feel connected.

Chair Linda Byrne asked Mr. Bushman how soon he could start if the board offered him the position. Mr. Bushman replied early January as he would need to notify his employees, the Marlborough Board and DHCD.

Mary Giannetti asked Mr. Bushman if he had a transition plan in place. Mr. Bushman replied that he had his first day planned out, he would meet with the employees. He would then look at IT, payroll and maintenance. David Rousseau asked if he could look at things before January 1st. Mr. Bushman replied once you enter into contract negotiations, then see how things go.

Mary Giannetti asked Mr. Bushman if he participated in NAHRO, he replied yes.

Andrew Van Hazinga noted that Mr. Bushman lived in Dudley and asked how long it took him to get to Fitchburg. Mr. Bushman replied an hour and 15 minutes.

At this time Chair Linda Byrne and the board thanked Mr. Bushman for coming in to meet the board and answer any questions they had; Mr. Bushman then left the meeting.

The Chair informed the board that the second finalist, Michelle Booth, would not be coming in to meet the board. She notified Denise Ivaldi she was not available and had accepted a position in Providence.

The Chair asked for a roll call to enter into Executive Session at 11:45 a.m. to discuss the interview with Mr. Bushman and noted the board would return to Regular Session. Roll call was as follows: Mary Giannetti – aye, David Rousseau – aye, David Basilio – aye, Andrew Van Hazinga – aye, Linda Byrne – aye.

The Chair then made a motion to end the Executive Session at 11:52 a.m. and return to Regular Session. David Rousseau seconded, all were in favor. The Chair asked for a roll call vote which was as follows: Mary Giannetti – aye, David Rousseau – aye, David Basilio – aye, Andrew Van Hazinga – aye, Linda Byrne – aye.

Andrew Van Hazinga made a motion to offer Douglas Bushman the position of Executive Director contingent upon reference checks and CORI. David Rousseau seconded, all were in favor. The Chair will contact Mr. Bushman and ask for references.

David Rousseau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:20 p.m. David Basilio seconded, all were in favor and the meeting adjourned.