



Fitchburg Housing Authority

Minutes of FHA Regular Board Meeting, October 21 2020 Canton Valley Community Room, Fitchburg, MA

A Regular Meeting of the Fitchburg Housing Authority was called to ordered by Chairperson, Linda Byrne at 8:30 AM on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 in the Canton Valley Community Room at 24 Valley Street in the City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

Present:

FHA Board Members:

Linda Byrne, Chair

Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair

David Rousseau, Treasurer

David Basilio, Assistant Treasurer

FHA Staff:

Douglas Bushman, Executive Director

Andrew Skoog, Deputy Director

Kim Hergert, Finance/HR Director

Yoko Ishii, Executive Assistant / Bookkeeper

Genesis Ruiz, Director, Family Housing

Douglas Carpenter, Maintenance Foreman, Family Housing

Christy Mylott, RSC/COVID-19 Coordinator

Roberta Kozak, Director, Leased Housing

Kathy, Wilda, - Tenants

Dr. Weiss, FSU, Coordinator Crocker Center

Nick Fortin, Nathan Walker, FSU Interns

Lt. Howe, FPD

Absent:

Adam Goodwin, Member

Quorum: Yes (Quorum Requirement: Three FHA Board Members)

1. Motion to Open Meeting

Chairperson, Linda Byrne opened the meeting at 8:30am.

Move: Mary Giannetti

Second: David Basilio

All in favor

2. Motion to Open Public Comments

Move: David Rousseau

Second: David Basilio

All in favor

Wilda, tenant claimed that any service at the FHA she is excluded from. The Board explained about the FHA policy about grievance hearing process to her. The Board will follow up after her grievance hearing which will take place on Friday October 30, 2020.

3. Review and Modification of FHA Personnel Policy Handbook, Revise FHA By-Laws

Douglas Bushman, Executive Director presented first Draft version of Personnel Policy & By-Laws. He will submit final Draft to the Board at Next Board Meeting. Mary Giannetti asked if the digital red-lined version of copy will be available. The Executive Director stated the personnel policy has completely changed, but will present a one-page overview which shows the revised points.

4. Motion to Move Executive Session & Agenda of Renewal of Executive Director's Contract to the end of the Meeting.

Move: Mary Giannetti

Second: David Basilio

All in favor

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5. **Motion to Approve Minutes of Meeting held on September 21st, 2020**

Move: David Rousseau Second: David Basilio All in favor

The Executive Director provided updated version of Robert's Rules & guide to the Board for future reference for the Board Meeting.

6. **Motion to Approve FHA Payables for September-October FY 2020 (Attachment A)**

Move: Mary Giannetti Second: David Basilio All in favor

7. **Motion to Approve January-September Financials FY 2020 (Attachment B, C & D).**

Move: Mary Giannetti Second: David Basilio All in favor

The Executive Director reported that Reserve point increased. COVID funds wisely used. In next year the FHA will face 4% reduction of subsidy, Maintenance money will be cut next year from the State. \$75,625.99 in uncollected rents, also 50% cut of the Solar Net Meter Credit. Income loss could be \$300,000 for the next FY year. The good news is we've decreased the use of outside contractors which will enable us to cut the line items of Contractor and Supplies budget in half. We will Pre-stock items this year. He will send a formal request to offset one year for Maintenance Money to DHCD. Next year will be tight. Will present draft budget in November and the Board will vote in December. Don't want to lose employees. The FHA will reduce supply cost and control sub-contractor cost.

8. **Recognition of FHA-FSU College Interns**

Second Year College Interns Nathan Walker & Nick Fortin were recognized with Dr. Weiss, Coordinator Crocker Center for Civic Engagement FSU.

9. **Review-Discussion of Public Matters with FPD Lt. Howes**

Lt. Howe updated that there were no Public Safety issues. Day Street became completely one-way. Main Street two-way street project is going on. Douglas Bushman expressed that Eviction issued yesterday was an alarming public safety issue.

10. **Motion to Approve DHCD Annual & Capital Improvement Plan (Public Hearing)**

Move: David Basilio Second: Mary Giannetti All in favor

As approved by the FHA Board at the July 2020 meeting, the FHA staff is now preparing to submit the Capital Improvement Plan and the new DHCD Annual Plan. Both the CIP and new Annual Plan must be formulated with input from the tenants and their recognized Tenants' Associations. Following are the schedule for the Annual and CIP Plans for submission.

- Thursday August 6, 2020-posted DRAFT Annual and CIP Plans (46 days before hearing date).
- Thursday September 8, 2020-Reviewed the Draft Annual and CIP Plans with the Licensed Tenants' Organization (LTO) at C.J. Durkin Apartments
- Monday September 21, 2020-held Public Hearing to review Annual and CIP Plans
- Wednesday, October 21, 2020-FHA regular Board meeting, Board members will review and vote on the Annual and CIP Plans.
- Before/On Saturday October 31, 2020-Annual and CIP Plans MUST be submitted to DHCD.

The Executive Director updated that 2021-2025 there are 59 construction projects- 22million plus extra \$600,000 for Canton Valley Project. Every property will receive some improvements including creating a lock replacement project and fixing the roof ventilation in the C. J. Durkin Apartment and Parking lot Paving at Daniel Heights. (Attachment E-Capital Improvement Plan 2021-2025)

11. **Record Destruction-Round2**

Thanks to College Interns, it was submitted. Now Round 3 will be scheduled next spring.

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12. Audit & Management Reviews

The Executive Director updated No Financial Issue was found and File issue was improved.

13. COVID-19 Updates, Budget, & Event

Christy Mylott, RSC & COVID Coordinator updated there will be Halloween door-to-door delivery events. Also updated current COVID cases. Lt. Howe stated that FPD doesn't force the wearing Masks order. David Rousseau, Treasurer requested Notice be sent to everyone in the building about wearing masks. Professional Cleaning at Fitchburg Place, Durkin offices are scheduled. Department Head will get a laptop for remote working. Home Office will be created for Director of Finance & HR in case the FHA has to partially or fully shut down the administrative offices. The Executive Director stated the FHA will not shut down the offices & services. The Board discussed the working environment, COVID childcare, sick bank in the FHA employees.

14. Reopening of Massachusetts Courts for Housing Matters:

Andrew Skoog, Deputy Director reported that the FHA can serve eviction notices, and Public safety issues will be aggressively sought after. The FHA will work out repayment agreements if the tenant is willing for cases of non-payment of rent. There is still a CDC order that would prevent an eviction for non-payment if a tenant signs the CDC declaration form indicating they have lost income and/or cannot make rent payments due to COVID.

15. HUD Five-Year, Annual & CIP for Fitchburg Place -Public Hearing November 18th, 2020. (Attachment L-HUD Public Hearing Advertisement)

16. Grievance and Complaint Polices (Attachment M & N) -has been implemented as of January 2017 and November 18, 2010 respectively. The Deputy Director explained current complaint and grievance policy procedure by using flow chart. The Executive Director stated that the FHA is engaging the firm of Driscoll & Driscoll, PC to update the Complaint and Grievance policies. The updated policies which may be combined into one policy, should be ready for the Board to review at November or December Board Meeting. The Board discussed that the process should be simple for the tenants to comprehend easily. Resident Service Coordinators have been assisting through incident reports, and also new tracking software system is used for incident report for the solutions.

17. Vacancy & HAFIS Report (Attachment O)

The Deputy Director updated the vacancy rate for October 1st increased from 26 units to 30 and the vacant-units days increased from 6,213 to 6,518. However, of the 30 vacancies, 4 are Ready to Occupy (RTO) units, 14 units are off-line for asbestos, 2 units are off-line for handicapped remodel, leaving only 10 needing rehabs. Due to COVID, it slowed the operation down in GA office. The Board discussed about Community Center, Homework Center, Health clinic office, security camera at GA and WIFI system will be available at CV/DH Community Room. Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair suggested speed bumps in GA.

18. Self-Sufficiency Program Grant

The Executive Director updated that the FHA didn't get the grant.

19. Update: Security Camera at C. J. Durkin

The Deputy Director updated additional camera was added and will be repositioned next week.

20. Update on Disposition of 132 Pleasant & 16 Prospect Street.

- A. The Sale for 132 Pleasant is moving forward with our legal counsel preparing the final closing documents. The Executive Director expressed that he will write a letter to DHCD to keep the sales proceeds for Mechanic Street Capital Issues.
- B. The DHCD rejected both 16 Prospect submitted Option A. It will put back on market. The Board discussed about the issues on the offer on Option A.

21. Fire Department Fire Prevention Training -went well at Durkin, Wallace, Daniel Heights

22. Congregate Housing Management

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The Executive Director updated that MOU Agreement with Summit will be done by November. Erica Shorts, Director of Elderly Housing and Frances Nolivos, Resident Service Coordinator are now assisting for Congregate Housing. The Deputy Director updated about Renovating the whole area in the Congregate Housing including flooring, cabinets, and repainting the ceilings. Linda Byrne, Chair mentioned it was a beautiful job and the FHA staff did a great job. Summit doesn't need an office in the Congregate, the FHA could maximize the rental profile.

23. Construction Update:

- Gate Way project-hopefully SOS for architect for designer selection issue shortly.
- Creative Placemaking -DHCD will start shortly, collaborations with the City, Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg State University needed. Mayor is supportive.
- Design Phase for Wallace MODPhase- has just began. The Chair is happy for the Designer firm's communication skill. (Attachment R)
- FISH097136 Conversion from DHCD to HUD Housing: The Executive Director updated an issue on asbestos payment.
- FISH097137 Boilers at GA-Another failure yesterday.
- FISH097076 Green Acres Basement Project-The Chair will sign the contract today.
- FISH097134 Overland Driveway-Notice to Proceed Signed, Construction Phase will get started.

24. Motion to Approve Lowest Responsive BID FISH097122: 76 Mechanic Street Window

Replacement Project

This project was part of the FHA's approved five-year CIP. GCE Architecture is the A/E for this project. Diversified Construction Services LLC is the lowest Bid \$51,872.00. GCE has reviewed the bid and the qualification of Diversified and recommends that the bid be approved. (Attachment S)

Move: Mary Giannetti

Second: David Rousseau All in favor

25. Motion to Approve Lowest Responsive BID -Canton Valley Roof Replacement Project

FISH 097129

This motion will authorize the Chair to approve the lowest eligible and responsive Bid after approval by the architect and FHA staff. The architect is Next Phase Studios, Inc. (Attachment V)

Move: Mary Giannetti

Second: David Rousseau All in favor

26. Letter to HUD to Revise Payment Standards

The Executive Director explained that the FHA is requesting an exception of 120% for 1BR FMR to schedule the HUD Fair Market Rent rates in order to ensure that Section 8 Voucher holder can find suitable living accommodations. (Attachment W)

27. Motion to Approve HUD Section 8 Utility Standard

On an annual basis HUD requires LHAs that administer Section 8 vouchers to conduct a study to determine the average utility rate and officially adopt. The FHA traditionally contracts for this service. The rate will be retroactively applied for October, 2020. (Attachment X)

Move: David Rousseau

Second: David Basilio All in favor

28. Motion to Allow FHA Board to Enter into Executive Session

Move: David Basilio

Second: Mary Giannetti All in favor

29. Motion to End Executive Session

Move: Mary Giannetti

Second: David Rousseau All in favor

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30. Motion to Adjourn Meeting adjourned at 11:10am
Move: Mary Giannetti Second: David Rousseau All in favor

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