



Fitchburg Housing Authority

Minutes of FHA Regular Board Meeting, May 28, 2021 C. J. Durkin Community Room, Fitchburg, MA

Pursuant to Massachusetts Governor Baker's Executive Order issued on March 12th, 2020 in response to the declared Covid-19 State of Emergency epidemic and per the guidelines set by DHCD's Public Housing Notice 2020-11, and 2020-16, a Regular Meeting of the Fitchburg Housing Authority was called to order by Chairperson, Linda Byrne at 9:00 AM on Friday, May 28, 2021. The FHA Board met remotely and physically in the C. J. Durkin Community Room in the City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts. The public was invited to listen to the meeting via phone and in person.

Present:

FHA Board Members:
Linda Byrne, Chair
Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair (Remote)
David Rousseau, Treasurer
David Basilio, Assistant Treasurer
Adam Goodwin, Member (Remote)

Absent: N/A

FHA Staff:

Douglas Bushman, Executive Director
Andrew Skoog, Deputy Director
Kim Hergert, Finance/HR Director
Yoko Ishii, Executive Assistant / Bookkeeper
Ron Hays, Director of Housing, Open Sky Community Services (Remote)
Officer Rouleau, Fitchburg Police Department (Remote)
Ismael Berroa, Fitchburg University College Intern
Janice Spillane, DH Tenant (Remote)

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

1. Motion to Open Meeting

Chairperson, Linda Byrne opened the meeting at 9:00am. (The Meeting was paused for a few minutes due to technical difficulties and resumed at 9:08am.)

Move: David Basilio

Second: David Rousseau

All in favor

2. Motion to Open Public Comments-No Public Comments.

Move: David Basilio

Second: David Rousseau

All in favor

3. Motion to Accept Juneteenth Holiday

Move: David Rousseau

Second: David Basilio

All in favor

Douglas Bushman, Executive Director introduced the PHN 2021-09- Juneteenth Independence Day Guidance dated on May 10, 2021. Marc Cunningham, Local Union President of 2034 gave an impassioned speech to the Board about the importance of honoring "Juneteenth". The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has added a new state holiday for Commonwealth Employees. Since Housing Authority employees are not considered Commonwealth Employees, our Board members had to vote on whether the housing authority was going to add this holiday to its personnel policy. The Board decided to vote, and the Motion was carried out unanimously.

4. Motion to Institute Juneteenth Holiday this year 2021

Move: David Rousseau

Second: David Basilio

All in favor

The Board voted to authorize the new state holiday of June 19th (Juneteenth Independence Day) as an official holiday of the Fitchburg Housing Authority, effective beginning this year (2021). The Executive Director had a speech in reference to this vote that we need to heal our divisions and appreciated the Union for honoring this new holiday.

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5. **Motion to Approve Minutes of Meeting held on April 28, 2021.**
Move: David Basilio **Second: David Rousseau** All in favor
6. **Motion to Approve Executive Session Minutes of Meeting held on April 28, 2021.**
Move: David Basilio **Second: David Rousseau** All in favor

7. **Audits and Management Reviews:**

The Executive Director updated the last Audit-DHCD required Agreed Upon Procedures Review (AUP) was conducted on site on May 19th and May 20th, and no critical issues were found except minor filing issues.

8. **Massachusetts NAHRO Convention September 19-22, 2021, at North Falmouth**

Linda Byrne, the Chair, recommended that the Board members to go to the convention. The Executive Director mentioned that the completers of the MPHA Certificate program will be recognized at the convention.

9. **Motion to Approve FHA Payables for April -May FY 2021 (Attachment A)**
Move: David Basilio **Second: David Rousseau** All in favor

10. **Motion to Approve January- May Financials FY2021 (Attachment B)**
Move: David Basilio **Second: David Rousseau** All in favor

The Executive Director is pleased that Maintenance Expense Costs were under budget because of reduction of the overtime by changes in the Work Order system and by supervision of overtime by Kim Hergert, Finance/HR Director, and Andrew Skoog, the Deputy Director. Compared to the Overtime 2020 (**Attachment C**) & 2021 (**Attachment D**) reports, the Deputy Director explained that there was an 80% reduction, and the Swing shift employee, Yaya Villar, contributed to save the time.

11. **Personnel Policy- On Hold.**

12. **FHA Bylaws Discussion**

The Board discussed the Bylaws. The Chair commented about compensation level. The Executive Director suggested that the Board needs to define the compensation level, and what items will be compensated. They need to be addressed to the Chair and the Executive Director before the next meeting.

13. **Directors and Officers Liability Insurance (Attachment F)**

The FHA received a quote for D&O Liability Insurance for \$3922.00 per year. This has been purchased and contract was effective on May 13, 2021.

14. **Review-Discussion of Public Safety Matters with FPD**

Officer Rouleau warned that people solicit for donations to the Police Department and it is a scam. The scam training was held virtually, and the recorded video will be posted on Facebook and the FHA website.

15. **New FSU College Intern**

Ismael Berroa Jr. was introduced to the Board as a new College Intern. He is our part time summer intern, majoring in Computer Information Systems with a concentration in Cyber Security at Fitchburg State University.

16. **COVID-19 Corner-Updates**

Outdoor mask mandate will be lifted tonight. The Executive Director mentioned that the remote meeting and voting will go away once the Executive Orders are rescinded. David Rousseau, the Treasurer clarified the mask mandate that indoor mask mandate remains. Christy Mylott, the FHA's Family Resident Service Coordinator/COVID-Coordinator will be awarded the Commonwealth Heroines of 2021 on June 23 remotely.

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17. Vacancy & HAFIS Reports (Attachment H-Vacancy Report)

The Deputy Director was pleased to announce that the Vacancy rate is now under two (2) percent excluding units offline for FISH construction. The Vacancy rate for May 1st, decreased from 35 units to 27, and the vacant unit days increased from 9,198 to 9,344. The vacant days dropped to 588 excluding offline units. Of the 27 vacancies, 1 unit is Ready to Occupy (RTO), 16 units are off-line for asbestos at Wallace Tower, 3 units are off-line for handicapped remodel at C.J. Durkin, 1 unit is offline for ADA accessibility project at Canton Valley, leaving only 6 needing rehab. Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair gave kudos to the FHA.

18. SHERA Program (Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistant Program) (Attachment I)

The Deputy Director explained that the FHA registered for the SHERA program.

19. Update on Disposition Status of 132 Pleasant & 16 Prospect St (Attachment J & Attachment K)

The Executive Director announced that the sale of 16 Prospect St will close today. The Deputy Director updated that the FHA received a letter from Paul McPartland, Esq., DHCD Asset Manager, describing \$159,000 from the sale of the previous 3 houses of Clinton, Congress, Pearl St. could be used for the other 705-project plus the FHA can keep the proceeds from 132 Pleasant & 16 Prospect St. This letter was first sent to the FHA in 2017, but was only recently brought to the attention of the Deputy Director. This letter also indicates that the FHA may use the proceeds from the sale of 132 Pleasant and 16 Prospect Street for capital projects at other 689 properties.

20. Granted Award-LUK & FHA Public Safety Youth Violence Prevention Grant

The FHA and LUK will have an ice-cream event at 3pm at Green Acres.

21. Activation Fund Grant-Waiting for the invite from the Grant.

22. 689 Housing Programs

a) Motion to Approve New Lease Agreement and Rental Rate for 240 Ashburnham Street **Move: David Basilio Second: David Rousseau All in favor**

Ron Hays, Director of Housing, Open Sky Community Services joined the meeting remotely. The Motion would authorize the FHA to enter into a new **five (5) year lease term** starting with a rent of **\$3,250** along with the existing COLA formula and would forgo the COLA(Cost-of-Living-Adjustment) arrangement of \$7033.88, provided that the lease agreement contains all of the other DHCD 689 terms and conditions. This is a Four-Party agreement (Open Sky-DHCD-DMH-FHA). (Attachment L)

b) Motion to Accept Our Father's House (Elizabeth's House) at 76 Mechanic Street to Pay Outstanding Water Bill (Attachment M)

Move: David Rousseau Second: David Basilio All in favor

The Executive Director stated that, as per the current lease, OFH is responsible for the water and sewage bill, but they have never paid them. They have agreed to pay all invoices for water and sewage from January 2020 through the current invoices and going forward while they are occupying 76 Mechanic Street.

c) Motion to Approve Procurement of 76 Mechanic Street for Hard to House Low Income Populations (Attachment N)

Move: David Rousseau Second: David Basilio All in favor

Our Father's House is technically not a part of the 689 Program. DHCD stated that the 76 Mechanic St rent has to go out to BID because the previous agreement was made in 2000 and it has not been renewed since then. The FHA can consider limiting the prospective bidders to sober house program or any other special needs or hard-to-house low-income population. The proposed motion would authorize the procurement of the leased space but limit the offer to Hard-to-House low-income. Our Father's House can submit a bid only if they are current with all rent and utility bill payments, including the water and sewer bills.

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- d) **Motion to Approve that 76 Mechanic Street has Month to Month Lease**
Move: David Rousseau **Second: David Basilio** **All in favor**

DHCD is recommending that the FHA continues a month-to-month lease with OFH and allow them to continue use and occupancy of the premises, paying each month the same amount as it had been previously paying for rent (\$1500.00). Also, recommended OFH to continue to occupy the space and to pay use and occupancy until a new contract is procured. The Board discussed the RFP and relocation issue of the current residents. The Executive Director, Massachusetts Certified Procurement Officer will prepare the RFP under DHCD's clarification of "Hard to House Low-Income" and the relocation transition process. The Board requested to review the RFP before going out to BID. The Deputy Director stated "90 day" window for the relocation time frame is appropriate. The FHA will seek DHCD's guidance on this issue.

23. FISH097076 Green Acres Basement Project

The Executive Director stated that the City of Fitchburg plumbing inspector noted that there has been a change in the code and the back flow valve system drawings need to be redone, hopefully we will be back on track by November.

24. FISH097122 76 Mechanic St Window Project-Completed

25. FISH097124 CSI Comprehensive Sustainability Initiative Grant Project (Canton Valley)

The FHA is going out to BID on this 1.7-million-dollar project, received the notification from DHCD yesterday.

26. FISH097127 AUI -Finalized cost for \$800,000.

27. FISH097129 Canton Valley Roof Project – will start any day.

28. FISH097131 Exterior of Wallace at the FHA was awarded \$124,665.00 in compliance Reserve funds to cover asbestos abatement costs related to the overall MODPHASE project.

29. FISH097153 GA Gateway cities Project-New Admin Office/Community Building location (Handout was distributed to the Board).

The Executive Director explained that there are three options for the Admin Building locations by ICON. The Board discussed the selection of the location and micro park option. The Board voted to have a site tour at the next Board Meeting (Meet at Canton Valley at 9am for a tour of the site then have a Board Meeting at 10am at Canton Valley Community Room on June 16th.) Mary Giannetti, the Vice Chair, suggested that Tenants input is needed.

30. FISH097132 Wallace Tower MOD-Phase -First Floor - The ED will meet with the tenants at 1:30pm.

31. Two Single Family homes almost done. -Punch list was made. 24 Forest & 28 Taft Street

32. Fitchburg Place – Air Conditioning problem

Mary Giannetti, the Vice Chair questioned if this issue was resolved. The Executive Director will have Roberta Kozak, Leased Housing Director respond.

33. Motion to Adjourn (Meeting adjourned at 11:12am) -No Executive Session
Move: David Rousseau **Second: David Basilio** **All in favor**

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