



# Fitchburg Housing Authority

## Minutes of FHA Regular Board Meeting, August 11, 2021 Canton Valley Community Room, Fitchburg, MA

A Regular Meeting of the Fitchburg Housing Authority was called to order by Chairperson, Linda Byrne at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, August 11, 2021, in the Canton Valley Community Room at 24 Valley Street in the City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

### **Present:**

FHA Board Members:

Linda Byrne, Chair (Left at 9:45am)  
David Rousseau, Treasurer  
David Basilio, Assistant Treasurer  
Adam Goodwin, Member

FHA Staff:

Douglas Bushman, Executive Director  
Kim Hergert, Finance/HR Director  
Yoko Ishii, Executive Assistant / Bookkeeper  
Jose Lopez, Director of Facilities  
Genesis Ruiz, Family Housing Director  
Roberta Kozak, Leased Housing Director  
Leah Gachuhi, Ismael Berroa-FHA Interns

Margarita Morales, MUPHT (Massachusetts Union of Public Housing Tenants)

FHA Tenants:

Canton Valley-Kathy Deery, Deborah Voisine, Miguel Rosario, Martha Perez, Denise Emond, R. Moyes

### **Absent:**

Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair

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

#### **1. Motion to Open Meeting**

Chairperson, Linda Byrne opened the meeting at 10:00am

**Move: David Basilio**

**Second: David Rousseau**

**All in favor**

#### **2. Motion to Open Public Comments.**

**Move: David Basilio**

**Second: Adam Goodwin**

**All in favor**

The Chair commented that public comment should not address the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health of staff or agents of the FHA and that each comment should be no longer than four (4) minutes. Denise Emond asked if the Board Meeting is a social activity since the FHA sent a robocall saying social activities are not allowed as of this past Monday. Douglas Bushman, Executive Director, spoke about increase in COVID. Kathy Derry, President of Canton Valley Tenant Association asked how come we can have the Board Meeting. The Executive Director answered that the agenda was posted on Friday per posting regulations. Kathy continued to request that she wants to accelerate the neighbor being moved, to resolve trash problem, which is not enough trash barrels at Canton Valley, Furniture replacement request at Canton Valley Community Room, and Door lock problem at Canton Valley Community Room. The Executive Director will look into the Door Lock system, and Furniture is on order, and the garbage issue will be solved with large dumpsters as the new sidewalk project is done. Deborah Voisine requested a private meeting with the Board. Kathy Derry said that Canton Valley wants to have an election on September 30<sup>th</sup>. She said it is illegal that FHA is involved. The Chair said the FHA is responsible and should be present at the election. The Chair asked David Rousseau who observed the election as LTO as a volunteer if the election was legitimate. Margarita Morales, Representative of Massachusetts Union of Public Housing Tenants, referred 760 CMR 6.09 (2) 8. David Rousseau said yes, it was legitimate. Denise Emond said that she understood the grey area and lack of communications and said you should not promise if you cannot keep the promise. Martha Perez request that Canton Valley needs a smoking gazebo like Day Street has.

#### **3. Motion to Close Public Comments.**

**Move: Adam Goodwin**

**Second: David Basilio**

**All in favor**

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4. **Motion to Approve Minutes of Regular Meeting held on July 21, 2021.**  
**Move:** David Basilio      **Second:** David Rousseau      All in favor
5. **Motion to Approve FHA Payables for July-August FY 2021 (Attachment A)**  
**Move:** David Basilio      **Second:** Adam Goodwin      All in favor
6. **Motion to Approve January-July Financials FY2021 (Attachment B)**  
**Move:** Adam Goodwin      **Second:** David Rousseau      All in favor  
The Executive Director updated that 689 revenues will be going up after negotiation of the proceeds of the house sales with the State.
7. **Massachusetts NAHRO Convention September 19-22, 2021, at North Falmouth**
8. **Third Annual FHA Employee Appreciation Picnic Postponed due to the recent Covid issue.** -Summer interns are coming back at the picnic. The Executive Director is asking the Board for rescheduling of the Picnic on any Wednesday in September once the guidance from BOH is made.
9. **Motion to Revise Schedule of Meetings**  
**Move:** Adam Goodwin      **Second:** David Basilio      All in favor
- **September 22 at Canton Valley at 10am**  
The meeting venue will be changed from Daniel Heights to Canton Valley, and meeting time is changed to 10am for the FHA application event.
  - **October 6 Special Board Meeting at Daniels Heights**  
The meeting venue will be changed to Daniels Heights from Durkin
10. **Resuming: Review and Modifications of FHA Personnel Policy Handbook**  
The Executive Director stated it should be ready to review the draft for the Board in September, after that the Executive Director suggested that the board hold a special meeting in November.
11. **Audits**  
The Executive Director updated that mandate review is taking place, and they are collecting the data back and forth.
12. **Annual and CIP Plan Dates:**  
The Executive Director explained that Construction prices going up is delaying all projects.
13. **Recognizing Summer Interns**  
Kim Hergert, Director of Finance/HR spoke about this year's summer Interns- Leah Gachuhi & Ismael Berroa. The Board recognized their achievements, and the certificates were given to them.
14. **The Board introduced themselves**  
Denise Emond, tenant of Canton Valley, requested the Board Members introduction. The Board introduced themselves.
- David Basilio-works for Union issues, Fitchburg resident, FHA Assistant Treasurer**  
**David Rousseau- Resident of C.J. Durkin, President of LTO, FHA Treasurer**  
**Adam Goodwin-New Board member, Fitchburg resident**  
**Linda Byrne- FHA Chair, former city councilor, Fitchburg resident**  
**Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair was absent**
- The Executive Director will order name plates for Board members.

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## **15. COVID Corner**

The Executive Director said that FHA reinstated wearing a mask order, disinfecting twice a day 5 days a week, closed community rooms due to recent COVID increasing. FHA has concerns about the outbreak. The Chair explained that Resident Service Coordinator-COVID Coordinator, has resigned.

The Executive Director updated about SHERA program (**Attachment C**). Also, spoke that Green Acres had a COVID Vaccine Clinic on July 29 by teaming up with Cynthia McMillian, the Immunization/COVID vaccine Program Manager of Community Health Connection.

## **16. Vacancy & HAFIS Reports (Attachment D-Vacancy Report)**

The Deputy Director said that the Vacancy rate for August 1<sup>st</sup>, had 28 units, and the vacant unit days increased from 10,533 to 11,027. The vacant days drops to 369 when offline units are excluded. Of the 28 vacancies, 16 units are off-line for asbestos at Wallace Tower, 3 units are off-line for handicapped remodel at C.J. Durkin, 2 units are offline for ADA accessibility project at Canton Valley, leaving only 7 needing rehab.

## **17. Proceeds of Sale of the house (689 Program)**

The Executive Director update about the proceeds. Most will go to 76 Mechanic St. because it needs a lot of work.

## **18. Resident Services**

- **First Thursdays**-Erica Shorts, Director of Elderly Housing, and Liz Resto, Assistant Housing Manager, Marc Cunningham, Assistant Foreman held a booth. It was great publicity. (**Attachment-E**)
- **Newsletter at Elderly Housing**- David Basilio, Assistant Treasurer, gave compliments on this.
- **Birthday Event at Elderly**- The Elderly housing Department is doing Every month -Erica and Liz are doing a great job.

## **19. 689 Housing Program**

The Executive Director stated that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for 76 Mechanic Street has been finalized. We are Anticipating a new lease in November. (**Attachment F**)

- Bid Released to Public: Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Site Inspection: Tuesday September 14<sup>th</sup>.
- BID Due Date One: Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30am.
- BID Due Date Two: Friday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30am

## **20. Construction Update**

### **a. FISH097076 Green Acres Basement Project -Variance Approved. (Attachment G)**

For Cost issue-so far it is quiet.

#### **Arborist Report -suggesting 19 trees need to be removed (Attachment H)**

The Chair had a concern about removing the trees. The Executive Director suggested that Jose Lopez, Director of Facilities, contact the arborist and pick the dates for the Board to walk around at GA, and ask for suggestions on what type of tree needs to remove or replace trees.

### **b. FISH097122 76 Mechanic Street Window Replacement Project-Completed**

### **c. FISH097124 CSI-Comprehensive Sustainability Initiative Grant Project (Canton**

**Valley) -TO BE RE-BID** – The construction cost almost double the amount of the planned funds. 3 Dumpsters being added in the request.

### **d. FISH097127- AUI** – Drawing is completed. It is now on DHCD's side.

### **e. FISH097129 Canton Valley Roof Replacement-** It is completed. After this meeting, the board can see it. Bill MacDonald, Family Housing Foreman, has done a phenomenal job.

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**21. Motion to Approve Change Order for Wallace Tower Exterior Project FISH097132 (Cost not to exceed \$12,000-Attachment I)**

**Move: Adam Goodwin                      Second: David Basilio                      All in favor**

The Executive Director noted a public event will be held at the front of Wallace Tower for this Exterior project.

**22. FISH097132 Wallace Tower Interior MOD-Phase**

The Executive Director updated for the Wallace Tower first floor re-design, and he was asking for clarification to DHCD due to increased cost as a concern. The Chair suggested that minimum security system is needed at front for now even though the FISH Interior Project will re-install new security system. The Executive Director updated that Jose Lopez, Director of Facilities has been working on the Duct cleaning quote and found that the cost will be around \$18,000-\$30,000 or more. We will talk to a tenant about transferring the unit rather than cleaning the duct of whole Wallace Tower because the new duct will be installed as part of the FISH project.

**23. FISH097147 Subcontractor Bid-Green Acres Air Source Heat Pump Pilot Program (4units) (Attachment J)**

The Executive Director updated that the bid went out and the General Bid is due on August 19, 2021. David Rousseau, Treasurer, asked if the Annual Plan has replacing the heating system at Durkin by 2022. The Executive Director will look into the Five-Year Plan.

**24. FISH097156 Creative Place Making Grant**

Allen & Major was Selected as a Design team. Fitchburg Art Museum (FAM) will help with artists.

**25. Federal Housing**

28 Taft & 24 Milk St have been completed. 174 Milk Street- Interior work will be done by FHA maintenance.

**26. Motion to Approve HUD Section 8 Utility allowance 2021-2022 (Attachment K)**

**Move: David Basilio                      Second: David Rousseau                      All in favor**

Roberta Kozak, Director of Leased Housing, spoke about all the utilities went up this year based on the study conducted by Northeastern Utility Consultant inc.

**27. Motion to Enter Executive Session (at 11:44 am)**

**Move: David Basilio                      Second: David Rousseau                      All in favor**

**28. Motion to Return to Regular Meeting (at 12:05pm)**

**Move: David Basilio                      Second: Adam Goodwin                      All in favor**

**29. Motion to Adjourn (Meeting adjourned at 12:05am)**

**Move: Adam Goodwin                      Second: David Rousseau                      All in favor**