



Fitchburg Housing Authority

Minutes of FHA Regular Board Meeting, December 22, 2020

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 8:30 AM on Tuesday, December 22, 2020. 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 (Remote)
 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
 Erica Shorts, Director, Elderly Housing (Remote)
 Genesis Ruiz, Director, Family Housing
 Christy Mylott, RSC/COVID-19 Coordinator
 Yajaira Aldrich, Director, Customer Services
 Roberta Kozak, Director, Leased Housing (Joined at 9:55am)

Anonymous caller (by phone) left at 10:05am (Did not identify the name)

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

1. Motion to Open Meeting

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

Move: David Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

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

Move: David Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

3. Motion to Close Public Comments

Move: David Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

4. Motion to Approve Minutes of Meeting held on October 21st, 2020

Move: David Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

5. Motion to Approve FHA Payables for November-December FY 2020 (Attachment A)

Move: David Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

6. Motion to Approve Ex. DIR. FY2020 Mileage \$578.63 (Attachment B)

Move: David Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

Mary Giannetti Vice Chair suggested adding policy for Mileage in Personnel Policy.

7. Motion to Approve January-November Financials FY 2020 (Attachment C).

Move: David Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

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Douglas Bushman, Executive Director explained that late rent collection notices were sent out.

8. Motion to Approve Executive Director's Contract as amended (Attachment D)
Move: David Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin **All in favor**

The Executive Director explained that on December 11th, 2020, Evelyn Muasya, the FHA's DHCD assigned Housing Management Specialist returned the FHA's recently Board approved contract with the following comments:

- Submit extracts of FHA Board minutes referencing the new term: **three (3) year(s) from the Effective Date January 1, 2021 ending on December 31, 2023.**
- Submit a Mandatory contract cover sheet
- The contract references "personnel policy previously approved by DHCD". FHA would need to submit a letter showing DHCD approval of the policy or change selection to "in accordance with attached personnel policy" and provide a copy of the personnel policy.
- Personal hours cannot exceed state policy of 37.5 hours per year, and
- Travel reimbursement of 45 cents per mile cannot be exceeded

The motion to modify the previously approved Executive Director's contract would only modify those conditions and terms as required by DHCD.

9. Budget Update: Pause-FY2021 DHCD public Housing Notice 2020-30 LHA Budget Guideline. (Attachment E)

Douglas Bushman, Executive Director, updated the Budget, and the FHA's Fee accountant Sue Honeycutt suggested holding off the budget until such time that DHCD modifies Public Housing Notice 2020-30.

In response to DHCD PH Notice 2020-30, the Executive Director submitted a request for one year to pause the planned phase out of the maintenance budget employee exemption, which begins in January of 2021 with a reduction of \$100,000.00 (FY2020 \$182,000.00 to FY2021 \$81,000.00). At this time this request is still in review. (Attachment F)

And the Board decided that the January Board meeting will be changed to January 27th due to inauguration.

10. Motion to Amend for FY2021 Local2034 Maintenance Employee's Union Collective Bargaining Union Agreement (Attachment-G)

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

- Suspension of On-Call Beeper Pay
- Return to 2019 Vacation and Sick Leave Retirement Buyouts
- Implementation of swing shift position for weekend coverage

The motion would authorize the listed changes in the current collective bargaining agreement if DHCD implements the rental subsidy reductions.

11. Motion to Approve Expenditure for MA Bar Application & Training for Douglas Bushman, Executive Director

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

The Executive Director stated that this Motion authorizes expenditure for application and technological fees (\$815.00 + \$75.00=\$890.00) and bar prep (\$1,899.00) for the Massachusetts bar examination for the Executive Director. Total expense is \$2,789.00. David Rousseau, Treasurer, asked for the reason for taking the MA Bar Exam. The Executive Director replied that he currently holds only a Connecticut bar license, and he will supplement current legal services provided by outside counsel and allow the FHA to be in a better position to monitor such contracted counsel.

12. Public Safety Review-Discussion with FPD Lt. Howe- not attended

13. Review and Modifications of FHA Personnel Policy Handbook-Still in process.

Kim Hergert, Director of Finance/HR, updated that on December 7, 2020, both the Executive Director and Kim began their first review of the DRAFT. At current pace of the review, it is most likely a draft review by the Board will be ready at the February Board meeting. Linda Byrne, Chair, suggested adding a mileage definition in the policy.

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14. Record Destruction-Round 2-Completed

15. Review of Proposed Bylaws (Adopted May 17th, 1995 and Revised March 21st, 2012)

The Chair suggested for more discussion until spring. The Board agreed to establish subcommittee for the review.

16. Management Reviews and Audits-Completed, No findings.

17. Redevelopment of Day & Blossom Street with FSU

The Executive Director updated that he has been working with the city and the FSU officials.

18. COVID-19 Updates, Budget & Events (Attachment J)

The Executive Director applauded Kim Hergert, Director of Finance/HR, Christy Mylott, RSC & COVID coordinator, and Yoko Ishii, Executive Assistant for COVID related work. Cotton Masks were distributed to FHA residents and Voucher-held residents at the Fitchburg Place. The COVID coordinator explained the new educational program called Little Sprouts for children at the FHA family housing. The Finance Director is now fully set up at her home office and able to work 100% from home if needed.

19. Motion to Uphold, Reject, or Modify Decision of Hearing Officer regarding Ms. Jean's Complaint & Grievance(s) (Attachment L, M and N)

Although Erica Shorts, Director of Elderly Housing, and Elizabeth Resto, Assistant of Elderly Housing, brought an invitation to Ms. Jean's home with the detailed instruction of the virtual meeting on Friday, December 18th (3:30pm), she didn't attend or call.

20. Vacancy & HAFIS Reports (Attachment O)

Andrew Skoog, Deputy Director, updated that the vacancy rate for December 1st increased from 28 units to 34 because of the delayed lease-up due to COVID, and the vacant unit days increased from 6,961 to 7,604. However, of the 34 vacancies, 9 are RTO units, 15 units are off-line for asbestos, 2 units are off-line for handicapped remodeling, leaving only 8 needing rehabs.

21. Vacancy HAFIS Fee (Attachment P)

The Deputy Director updated HAFIS Vacancy Fees. Of the \$4,543 in vacancy waiver fees that were incurred in the third quarter of 2020, \$4,037 were for vacant units in congregate housing that have been repurposed for FHA offices, and have been offline since 2016. Each of these units has a current waiver in HAFIS that covers the vacancy until June of 2022. The FHA has reached out to our DHCD Housing Management Specialist to dispute the HAFIS waiver charges and look for clarification as to why they appeared in this quarter.

22. Submittal of MA NAHRO Agency Award: didn't receive the award,

23. New Public Housing Filing System Updates- will be done in January

24. Update on Disposition Status of 132 Pleasant Street & 16 Prospect Street:

A. Sold -Disposal of 132 Pleasant St. for \$117,000. Received a check.

After deduction of our expenses, the Executive Director made a formal request to DHCD to keep the balance of money in order to maintain the 689-Program. The FHA's 689 program has NEGATIVE reserves and there is an urgent need to update the alarm systems. (Attachment Q)

B. Update on disposal of 16 Prospect St.-The Bid offers didn't meet qualification.

The Executive Director updated that Mr. Paul McPartland, from DHCD, has reviewed the submittal and determined that it does not meet the requirement for prior relevant affordable housing experience. In addition, he reviewed the next Option-A proposal from crossing Over Inc. and determined that it also didn't meet the Option-A requirement.

25. Motion to Approve MOU with Summit on Congregate Housing (Attachment R)

Move: David Basilio

Second: Adam Goodwin

All in favor

The Executive Director stated that the FHA has an excellent relationship with SUMMIT and we strongly believe they can provide excellent services to our tenants that reside in the Congregate care unit.

26. Construction Update

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- 1) Award Letter \$671,547.00 in Formula Funding for FY2024 (Attachment S)
- 2) Architectural Services Bid Released FISH097153 for Gateway Cities Revitalization. (Attachment T & U)-33 companies requested RFS. BID due date is 12/23,2020.
- 3) Creative Place Making Grant FISH097156
- 4) FISH097131 Design Phase-Wallace Tower MOD-PHASE EXTERIOR (CBI Consulting) January 7, 2021 - Advertise BID
- 5) FISH097132 Design Begin-Wallace Tower MOD PHASE (Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc) On Dec 11, a site inspection was conducted, a conference call follow up is scheduled for Monday December 21.

27. City of Fitchburg CDBG Application

FDPW Commissioner Nicholas Bosonetto has asked the FHA to provide a letter of support for the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for sidewalk on Day Street. The application due date is Jan. 8th, 2021.

28. Motion to Approve MOC Utility Grant for Daniels Heights (Attachment V)

Move: Dave Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

Montachusett Opportunity Council has awarded the FHA two utility conservation grants totaling \$323,817.00

- \$264,900.00-New Boilers
- \$58,917.00-New Exterior Common Area Lights

29. Motion to Approve Change Order #01 & #2 Overland FISH#097134 Driveway & Sidewalk Replacement Project-Construction Phase (Attachment W)

Move: Dave Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

30. Motion to Approve Change Order #8 /FISH 097136 Conversion from DHCD to HUD Housing 24 Forest Street \$4,741.81 (Attachment X)

Move: Dave Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

31. **FISH 097127 Accessibility Unit Initiative:** we are anticipating the BID for construction will be happening in March, 2021.

32. **174 Milk Street Roof Replacement Project -the work will start in January.**

33. **114 Arlington Driveway + Sidewalk project- work competed**

34. Motion to Approve Updated Section 8 Standards Effective Oct 1st, 2020 (Attachment Y)

Move: Dave Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

Roberta Kozak, Director of Leased Housing explained the difference between payment standards and Fair Market Rent.

35. Motion to Approve COVID Related Administrative Waivers (Attachment Z)

Move: Dave Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

36. **Ms. Jean's issue-** Since Ms. Jean didn't attend this meeting, the Board discussed about the next month's agenda for her, and the Board voted that next month is the final discussion with her about her case in the Board Meeting.

Move: Dave Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

37. **Motion to Adjourn.** (Meeting adjourned at 10:07am)

Move: Dave Basilio Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor

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