



FRANKLIN COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

241 Millers Falls Road • Turners Falls, MA 01376
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**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING – July 9, 2018**

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners conducted the regular meeting of the Authority on **July 9, 2018** at the Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority Agency Classroom located at 241 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls, MA.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Cottrell called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

Commissioners Present: L. Brown S. Hamdan
 J. Tuttle (by phone) S. Cottrell
 M. Slowinski J. Atwood
 D. Prest

Commissioners Absent: B. Parkin

Staff Present: F. Pheeney J. Carey L. Cornish

Guest: None

2. ACTIONS

Minutes: Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Atwood seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2018 regular meeting of the Board as prepared.

No discussion

17-173 Vote 7 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

AP Warrant: Commissioner Prest moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve the accounts payable warrant for June 2018.

No discussion

17-174 Vote 6 in favor; 1 opposed; 0 abstaining

Contract for DHCD #358104 Limited Interior Renovations: Commissioner Prest moved and Commissioner Atwood seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Director, as contracting officer, to execute a contract by and between Renaissance Builders and Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority to furnish all labor and materials required for DHCD #358104 Limited Interior Renovations in accordance with the accompanying plans and specifications prepared by Roy S. Brown Architects for the contract price of Sixty Eight Thousand Five Hundred Forty Two dollars (\$68,542.00), subject to additions and deductions according to the terms of the specifications.

F. Pheeny informed the board that DHCD sent approval last week to move ahead with the renovations. Only one bid was received and it was over \$50,000, requiring the approval process to go through the state.

She stated that originally when working with RCAT, they thought the work would be less than \$50,000. However, due to all of the electrical and plumbing work, as well as, installing a handicapped accessible ramp, the estimated renovation cost increased substantially.

F. Pheeny reminded the board that DHCD will be paying for 25% of the renovations. She also stated that originally it was budgeted to cost \$40,000 to move the Agency and to purchase all of the cubicles, but the actual moving cost and purchase of the cubicles came in under budget which was quite a savings.

17-175 Vote 7 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Lease Amendment: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Director to execute an amended lease for all of HRA residents in which a minimum charge of \$75.00 will be charged for all after hour lock-out calls between the hours of 4:30PM and 7:30AM, M-F and all day Saturday/Sunday.

F. Pheeny informed the board that many tenants lock themselves out of their units in the evenings, after business hours and on the weekends. currently the lease doesn't allow us to charge them for maintenance to let them back in, resulting in maintenance staff being paid at the overtime rate of time and a half for a minimum of 2 hrs, plus mileage.

F. Pheeny shared that she wanted to run this by the board before putting it into effect.

Commissioner Prest asked if this was a standard practice at other housing authorities.

Commissioner Cottrell stated that it is standard at other housing authorities, including the agencies that she manages.

Commissioner Atwood expressed concern about the fee being charged to tenants being significant, but she also stated she understands how it will help offset the cost of sending maintenance out after hours.

F. Pheeny stated that once the lease amendment is approved by the board, tenants at all HRA properties will be notified.

Commissioner Prest suggested changing the wording from 4:30PM and 7:30AM, M-F and all day Saturday/Sunday to "outside of working hours."

Commissioner Brown also suggests the wording of "outside of office hrs."

F. Pheeny stated the next steps will be for her to present the amendment to Atty. Liebel for him to review and update it with the appropriate wording.

17-176 Vote 7 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Signage Request in Charlemont: Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion that upon the recommendation of legal counsel the board declines the request of a trail blazing sign to be posted at 25 Main Street, Charlemont, MA, an HRA owned property.

F. Pheeny provided the board with documents and photo's regarding the trail blazing sign that G. Rowehl, from Berkshire Pizza, forwarded to T. Dowd in request of installing them at 25 Main St, Charlemont, MA.

F. Pheeny went on to explain that she has forwarded G. Rowehl's request to DHCD and spoke in great length with the Risk Management Attorney from DHCD regarding this request. The DHCD Risk Management Attorney strongly advises HRA to decline such posting.

F. Pheeny informed the board of the following reasons recommended to her by the DHCD Risk Management Attorney for declining such request:

1. An RFP would need to be put out by HRA to see if there are other businesses in the area that would also like to post signage on HRA property.
2. HRA would need to carry liability insurance should someone be injured by the sign

3. Posting signage on one HRA property could lead to other advertisement requests from private business to post on other HRA properties. Again, this would be a liability concern.

Commissioner Atwood summarized that it's important that G. Rowe know that the reason for declining his request is because of the recommendations from the DHCD Risk Management Attorney and the additional expenses HRA would need to take on for liability insurance.

17-177 Vote 7 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

FY19 RAFT Contract: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to authorize the Chair or Vice Chair to execute an amended contract with DHCD for the operation of the RAFT program in Franklin County with the revised contract dates of service being July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, and to authorize the Executive Director to execute the Signatory Agreement to Advanced Funding.

No discussion

17-178 Vote 7 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

FY19 HomeBASE Contract: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to authorize the Chair or Vice Chair to execute an amended contract with DHCD for the operation of the HomeBASE program in Franklin County with the revised contract dates of service being July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, and to authorize the Executive Director to execute the Signatory Agreement to Advanced Funding.

17-179 Vote 7 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Revised Job Descriptions for the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist, Affordable Housing Property Manager and RAFT Administrator: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to approve all 3 revised job descriptions.

Commissioner Prest suggested the wording of #7 under General Qualifications on the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist job description is standardized wording also used on the other 2 job descriptions so they all read as "Valid Massachusetts driver's license, good driving record and access to reliable transportation required. Position requires ability to drive to and conduct comprehensive visual inspections of private residential properties located in 26 towns of Franklin County."

17-180 Vote 7 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

F. Pheeny informed the board that the Personnel Committee, comprised of S. Cottrell, L. Brown and D. Prest, along with the Staff Committee lead by Finance & Personnel Coordinator, H. Mackay and the Employment Attorney have spent the past few months reviewing and revising the Agency Personnel Handbook.

F. Pheeny stated that the board will be sent electronic copies of the previous Personnel Policy, as well as the revised Personnel Handbook to review in time for the regular August board meeting. She stated that she would like the policy to be the main topic for the August agenda and would also like to invite the Staff Committee to join the meeting that evening to be involved with the discussion and review of the revised handbook.

F. Pheeny reviewed the information from the policy that prompted the most discussion, being Comp Time, Personal Time and Dress Code. Regarding Comp Time, L. Cornish stated that through our current payroll system it is not trackable. It is a manual process and suggested that comp time be maxed out at 3 weeks of accrual. F. Pheeny stated that the Staff Committee wanted to keep it as it currently reads and encourage staff to take the time as they accrue it. She asks the board to consider the best option when reviewing this part of the handbook.

F. Pheeny stated that regarding Personal Time, there was confusion to the purpose of its use. Some staff had the understanding that sick and personal times were two separate benefits. F. Pheeny clarified with staff that personal time is 3 days within the sick time benefit for staff to use in place of sick time.

F. Pheeny stated that regarding Dress Code, much time was spent on discussing safety attire. We want the maintenance staff to conform more to the OSHA guidelines. Maintenance staff is supportive of this. She stated that funds need to be set aside to use a local vendor that will supply waterproof jackets, boots, safety goggles, puncture resistant gloves, etc. Previously maintenance staff could shop anywhere to obtain the necessary clothing items and would be reimbursed for up to \$200. F. Pheeny stated that all maintenance staff will be required to wear long pants in all kinds of weather.

F. Pheeny went on to inform the board that the other discussion regarding dress code was with personal appearance. The Staff Committee expressed that the wording of "suggestive or revealing attire is not acceptable under any circumstance" is open to personal interpretation and is not specific enough.

Commissioner Atwood suggested using the wording of "professional attire."

F. Pheeny asked that if members of the board can't attend the August 6 regular board meeting to please provide any comments and/or suggestions to J. Carey or Commissioner Cottrell.

Commissioner Atwood informed the board that she will not be able to attend the August 6 meeting.

F. Pheeny briefly reviewed the CIP report with the board, informing them that it's provided to them this evening for their review and that T. Dowd will make his presentation on it at the August board meeting. She stated that T. Dowd doesn't anticipate a lot of changes to the report by the August meeting.

F. Pheeny referred to the article from D. Kowacki of the Franklin Regional Retirement System. She stated this article clarifies information previously sent about a rule change that stated, "Working member continue to contribute retirement deductions regardless of a reduction in meeting membership eligibility criteria. Within the ruling there was allowance for ceasing deductions when a member resigned, retired, or died."

F. Pheeny stated the change noted in the article is that "deductions will continue if someone resigns but then returns to employment in a less than position" and the reference to the section that lists "resigned, retired or died", has been completely removed.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

Leslie Brown RDI Update: Commissioner Brown informed the board that the RDI board meeting was held on June 12, 2018. She stated that the Ashfield House and Taxes Settlement Agreement is for a total of 5 years. There will be a budget figure for the next 3 years and the last 2 fiscal years will be adjusted accordingly.

Commissioner Brown stated that F. Pheeny presented the RDI board with RainMaker Consulting service for strategic planning, but the board felt due to the cost, they would like to look into another option which was to possibly consult with B. Breitbart who is very experienced with strategic planning for small rural counties.

Commissioner Brown ended her update with information about the Sunderland Project. G. Ohlund is working on a grant to assist with the project.

F. Pheeny stated that he's looking for \$500,000.00 in grant funds and \$80,000.00 as debt.

F. Pheeny briefly mentioned the following articles, "Formula Funding FY21, Budget approval from DHCD, Analysis: HUD plan would raise rents for poor by 20 percent" and the "NAHRO Newsletter", for the board to review when it was convenient for them.

F. Pheeny informed the board that the "Out of Reach 2018: Massachusetts" article really shows how difficult it is for a person to afford an apartment in Franklin County.

She went on to review the Public Housing Notice stating that the Agency will be part of a centralized waiting list with hopes of getting staff trained on it.

Board Member contact information:

No changes

5. STAFF REPORT:

L. Cornish informed the board that the Orange Teen House Audit is due in 2 weeks and it's looking good.

F. Pheeny stated that she will be taking measures to seek compensation from the contractor who installed the flooring at Orange Teen Housing. His company stapled the new vinyl boards over the original pine floors that had holes in them. The holes were never filled in, so when the vinyl floor was installed, it was stapled into nothing. She stated that due to this error the sub floor rises and the vinyl floor is peeling back. She went on to state that over \$11,000 has been spent to fix 3 units.

Commissioner Prest asked if there are any other problems with the building other than the flooring.

F. Pheeny stated that currently it appears that is the not the only problem. Due to this problem 6 months of rent has been lost. The condenser that is only 2 years old has stopped working as well. The Orange Teen Housing Board has been very supportive with pursuing the contractor for means of compensation.

6. OTHER BUSINESS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE

Tracker Systems, Inc. Agreement for Services: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Director, as contracting officer, to enter into an agreement made on the 1st of July, 2018, and shall continue for twelve (12) consecutive months, by and between Tracker Systems, Inc.

(referred to herein as "TSI") and Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (referred to herein as "THE CLIENT") for scope of support services.

F. Pheeny informed the board that this is the system that HCEC, HomeBASE and RAFT Programs work with which is contracted by DHCD. She stated that Tracker is now moving all of its services to a web based system. This is requiring that not only do we need to provide them with all of our account information, but they are also requiring having access to produce our signatures.

F. Pheeny stated that while most other Agencies haven't expressed concerns, she wanted her own discomfort with providing her signature acknowledged by the board. She stated that this is a contract enforced by DHCD that needs to be signed and approved by the board, but she will be speaking with them further about the concerns with providing her signature.

Commissioner Brown expressed that she is not as worried about her signature going on a check by mistake. She stated she's one of three people that review things before they're sent out. She stated she feels HRA has a good handle on what they send out, but she doesn't feel the same about Tracker.

Commissioner Prest asked if the contract documents steps regarding the steps something should be done in error.

F. Pheeny replied that while the contract has to meet all of the state vendor guidelines, there is no mention of liability if Tracker makes an error. The state is liable.

L. Cornish suggested sending a file to the bank and then nothing would be cashed that's not in the file.

17-181 7 vote in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Accountemps: Commissioner Brown moves and Commissioner Prest seconds a motion to approve the 11%, \$4400 placement or any lower sum we are able to negotiate downward with Accountemps in order to hire the temp Bookkeeper as a full time employee of Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

L. Cornish stated she went directly to Robert Half. The Agency is looking to hire again an HRA staff accountant. She stated the current temp is helpful, and there is a quick turnaround for June for HRA so she can adjust the budget for the end of July. In the meantime she'll continue with the temp, but she's been looking outside to fill that position as well. She stated that she has 2 good candidates and will be offering employment to one of them this week.

Commissioner Slowinski inquired as to what happened to the previous accountant.

L. Cornish replied that she couldn't work within the set boundaries. She wanted things procedural, but I needed her to work on fixing the errors.

Commissioner Prest asked how long does Robert Half guarantee the fee?

F. Pheeny replied that in the past they have grant the Agency 90 days.

17-182 7 vote in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

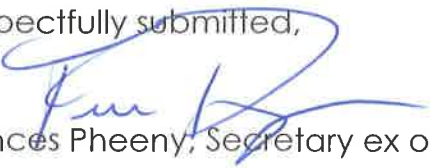
7. DOCUMENTS USED

- Minutes of the regular meeting held June 4, 2018
- AP Warrant for June 2018
- Form for General Bid
- Owner-Contractor Agreement Renaissance Builders
- Limited Interior Renovations Project Manual
- Lease Amendment email proposal charging a fee to tenants for after hour lock outs.
- Signage request in Charlemont documents
- Raft Funds Contract
- HomeBASE Funds Contract
- Housing Rehabilitation Job Description
- Affordable Housing Property Manager Job Description
- RAFT Administrator Job Description
- Franklin County Retirement Plan document
- Formula Funding award for Fiscal Year 2021
- Budget approval from DHCD
- Article: Analysis: HUD plan would raise rents for poor by 20 percent
- Article: Out of Reach 2018: Massachusetts
- Public Housing Notice 2018-10-CHAMP Rollout in Concert with Blanket Waiver to 760 CMR 5.00
- NAHRO June 2018 Newsletter
- Staff Report
- Tracker Systems, Inc. Agreement for Services
- Proposed Personnel Policy letter
- Personnel Handbook Revisions letter
- Capital Improvement Plan Excel Sheet
- Accountemps proposal

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 PM. The next regular meeting of the HRA Board of Commissioners is scheduled for August 6, 2018 at 6:00PM located at Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority, 241 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls, MA.

Respectfully submitted,



Frances Pheeny, Secretary ex officio