



FRANKLIN COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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MINUTES
RESCHEDULED REGULAR MEETING – April 11, 2016

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners conducted the regular meeting of the Authority on April 11, 2016 at the Greenfield Savings Bank located at 282 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Atwood called the meeting to order at 6:07 P.M.

Commissioners Present: J. Atwood L. Brown S. Cottrell
S. Hamdan L. Hoer D. Prest

Commissioners Absent: J. Banks S. Cummings B. Parkin J. Tuttle

Staff Present: F. Pheeny M. Taft-Ferguson

2. ACTIONS

Minutes: Commissioner Hoer moved and Commissioner Hamdan seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2016 regular meeting of the Board as prepared.

16-028 Voted 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstaining (L. Brown)

AP Warrant: Commissioner Hoer moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve the accounts payable warrant for March 2016.

16-029 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Western Massachusetts Homeownership Collaborative MOU: Commissioner Hoer moved and Commissioner Cottrell seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Director to execute a memorandum of understanding by and between the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Western Massachusetts Homeownership Collaborative regarding the goals and commitments of participating organizations.

F. Pheeny explained that for the last year and a half, HRA and other Western Massachusetts agencies have been participating in a feasibility study for working together on Homeownership Counseling issues. The results of that study indicated clearly that by working together, these agencies can access many more resources for pre- and post-purchase homeownership education (the focus of the collaborative) and down payment assistance. The Executive Directors of the participating agencies have already identified several funding sources to apply to as a group. Bringing multiple agencies and counties together will make the applications much more competitive, since by population alone, Franklin County applications would be at a competitive disadvantage.

The board was assured that the terms of the agreement ensure that all agencies will participate on an equal basis: although HAP will administer all funds, the website, and the marketing (and receive a fee

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Equal Housing Opportunity

for that work), administrative funding from grants will be equally distributed, and marketing in Franklin County will be specific to HRA.

16-030 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Design Work Order: Commissioner Prest moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Director to execute DHCD Work Order No. 1607 authorizing Bradley Architects, Inc. to perform design services for the Trombe Wall Glazing Removal project at Stratton Manor 667-1 Elderly Housing

F. Pheeny explained that the passive solar walls at Stratton Manor have deteriorated to the extent that they are not safe. Funding for their removal will come from DHCD as part of HRA's formula funding. They will not be replaced.

16-031 Voted 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining

Award a Contract: Commissioner Hoer moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to award a contract to Diversified Construction Services, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$129,425 effective March 23, 2016 in connection with the West River Street Public Housing Modernization Project (358074) in Orange and to authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract by and between HRA and Diversified Construction Services, LLC.

F. Pheeny explained that this contract is for work on the West River Street project in Orange, which has received both CDBG funding (through the Town of Orange) and public housing funding. Once begun, the project will move very quickly. These repairs significantly improve both the building envelope and the quality of life for tenants.

16-032 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Award a Contract: Commissioner Hoer moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to award a contract to Housing Authority Inspection Group, LLC (HAIG LLC) for HUD housing quality standards (HQS) inspection services at a rate of \$35.00 per completed initial, biennial, or complaint/special inspection report submitted and \$20.00 per completed re-inspection, emergency re-inspection, or no-show inspection for a period of one year beginning May 1, 2016 and ending on April 30, 2017, and to authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract by and between HRA and HAIG LLC.

F. Pheeny informed the board that HAIG LLC submitted a bid that was substantially lower than the two vendors who had been performing HQS inspections. These prices will mean a considerable cost savings for HQS inspection services, although HRA is retaining the ability to reach out to the two other vendors if HAIG LLC cannot perform on the contract. HRA has completed a thorough check on HAIG LLC.

16-033 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

HUD Income Limits: Commissioner Hoer moved and Commissioner Hamdan seconded a motion to adopt the HUD income eligibility limits for Franklin County (except Sunderland) and the Springfield Metropolitan Area (for Sunderland) effective March 28, 2016 as follows:

| Number of People in Household | 30% AMI | 50% AMI | 80% AMI |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 | 17,500 | 29,150 | 46,000 |
| 2 | 20,000 | 33,300 | 52,600 |
| 3 | 22,500 | 37,450 | 59,150 |
| 4 | 24,950 | 41,600 | 65,700 |
| 5 | 28,440 | 44,950 | 71,000 |
| 6 | 32,580 | 48,300 | 76,250 |
| 7 | 36,730 | 51,600 | 81,500 |
| 8 | 40,890 | 54,950 | 86,750 |

F. Pheeny pointed out that the income limits have decreased from 2015, in some case by more than \$1,000. This could especially be an issue for tax credit developments, but there is no option to not adopt the new limits. Since allowable rents and incomes often move together, there is also likely to be a decrease in allowable rent. The public housing subsidy HRA receives from the state is not being increased to make up for these decreases.

16-034 Voted 5 in favor; 1 opposed; 0 abstaining

MRVP Income Limits: Commissioner Hoer moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to approve new income limits for determining income eligibility for the MA Rental Voucher Program in Franklin County, effective March 28, 2016, of 50% of the HUD Area Median Income, as follows:

| Number of People in Household | Maximum Income |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | 29,150 |
| 2 | 33,300 |
| 3 | 37,450 |
| 4 | 41,600 |
| 5 | 44,950 |
| 6 | 48,300 |
| 7 | 51,600 |
| 8 | 54,950 |

16-035 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Remove Signatory: Commissioner Hoer moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to remove Matthew Leger-Small as a signatory from all HRA bank accounts.

F. Pheeny explained that Matthew Leger-Small is now part of the finance department in his role as Chief Procurement Office, and as a matter of good practice, no member of the finance department should have signatory authority.

16-036 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Add Signatory: Commissioner Prest moved and Commissioner Hoer seconded a motion to add Jane Banks as a signatory on all HRA bank accounts.

16-037 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Remote Participation: Commissioner Prest moved and Commissioner Hoer seconded a motion to adopt the practice of remote participation for all meetings of the HRA Board of Commissioners and its committees, pursuant to Massachusetts Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25 and Attorney General's Regulations 940 CMR 29.10.

F. Pheeny suggested that the board take this step to adopt remote participation in order to ensure that Commissioners be able to offer their opinions and participate in discussions even if illness or disability (or any other of the five reasons permissible in the Open Meeting Law) renders them unable to attend in person. M. Taft-Ferguson shared with the board an email sent to the Attorney General's office to confirm the requirements of remote participation.

The board discussed how these requirements would be logistically met, and agreed that meetings where a speakerphone would be required could be held at the HRA offices, but that if no one needed to participate remotely meetings would still be held at Greenfield Savings Bank. The board expressed its appreciation that the subject had been researched so that all Commissioners could participate.

16-038 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

DOL Wage Rates: Commissioner Prest moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve an increase in minimum hourly wages paid to all Maintenance Mechanic/Laborers to \$22.98 per hour retroactively effective April 1, 2016, as per a notice from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, dated March 3, 2016, made pursuant to MGL Chapter 121B, Section 29 and to authorize an increase in the hourly wages paid to the Maintenance Custodian to \$20.71 per hour.

F. Pheeny explained that this is an annual notice that HRA does not have input on.

16-039 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

CFA Amendment #5: Commissioner Hoer moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to authorize the Vice Chair to execute a Standard Contract Amendment Form between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority to increase the value of the original contract for financial assistance 5001 to provide additional funding in the amount of \$196,124.00 (maximum obligation of \$1,036,073) to the formula funding master CFA for fiscal year 2018 –all developments – for the preservation and modernization of state-supported public housing and fund low bid approval for HILAPP project as specifics in the Contract for Capital Improvement Work Plan/Approved Budget.

Section 1. The Authority shall enter into a contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the form submitted at this meeting and contract in the name of the FCRHRA under its corporate seal, and the Secretary is hereby authorized to attest to the same.

Section 2. The Authority hereby requests the Director of the Dept. of Housing and Community Development (Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs) to enter into such contract with the Authority and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to approve such contract.

Section 3. The Officers of this Authority shall be, and they are hereby authorized and directed, on and after the execution of said contract by the respective parties thereto, to do and perform on behalf of the Authority all acts and things required of the Authority to perform fully all of its obligation there under.

Section 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately

F. Pheeny explained that this item is also related to the West River Street project.

16-040 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

3. OTHER BUSINESS

Regional Capital Assistance Team (RCAT) Status

F. Pheeny shared that starting in 2017, HRA will no longer internally control its formula funding, as the agency has not met formula funding thresholds for the past three years. The process will be handled by the Leominster Housing Authority. From 2012-2013 for example, HRA spent 24% of its formula funding. The board reviewed and discussed a summary report of capital improvement projects from the past three years.

S. Hamdan asked how HRA would regain control of capital improvement projects in the future. F. Pheeny replied that having a dedicated procurement officer up and running is a major step, and that other changes will be made around project development for public housing. DHCD has advised that HRA may choose to opt out of the RCAT program in 3 years, if HRA can demonstrate how minimum thresholds will be met.

Net Metering

F. Pheeny explained that in the interim between when HRA received a proposal for solar net metering and the meeting date, the legislature changed the value of net metering credits, so the company rescinded their offer. HRA is on hold until the new law is signed into effect and more direction is given as to how that law will play out for public agencies.

4. REPORTS

F. Pheeny reported that DHCD had reduced funding in the public housing budget submitted by HRA in September. F. Pheeny had a meeting with DHCD last week, wherein DHCD agreed to replace a portion of reduced amount, and the rest will need to come from reserves. DHCD will be sending a letter to the Board of Commissioners regarding the public housing budget and requested changes to the budget. F. Pheeny reviewed the details of the discussion with DHCD and plans for examining the public housing budget.

L. Hoer drew the board's attention to the fact that the number of families receiving shelter in motels has declined dramatically. The board agreed that the staff had done a phenomenal job in making that happen. Discussion on the funding sources for supporting families in hotels and shelters, Homebase was reviewed. In addition there was discussion on the RAFT program to help families avoid homelessness and the increased need for the program.

F. Pheeny shared that the HRA office now has a new phone and internet system through Comcast, which is a huge improvement. She added that Larry Knowlton, HRA's part-time IT person, deserves exceptional credit for handling a major unexpected issue with rewiring the telephones on the day of installation. In addition, the monthly cost for phone and internet service will be lower now.

The CHAPA FY17 state budget priorities have been provided for the board's information. F. Pheeny highlighted the public housing operating subsidy: the request from CHAPA is that that be increased to \$72 million, from \$64 million for the past several years.

F. Pheeny reported that HRA has posted the HCEC Director position and has two finalists, and hopes to reach a decision by the end of the week.

The board then discussed the AUP audit. Although DHCD has decided not to enforce the findings of those audits this year, F. Pheeny suggested that HRA make the recommended changes to procurement, re-certifications, and credit card policy as a matter of good practice. She advised the board to expect to see a revised credit card policy next month.

5. DOCUMENTS USED

- Minutes of the regular meeting held 03-07-2016
- AP Warrant 03-2016
- Western Massachusetts Homeownership Collaborative MOU – March 2016
- Work order No. 1607 for Trombe Wall Glazing Removal
- Contract between Diversified Construction Services, LLC and HRA, and approval documentation
- Contract between Housing Authority Inspection Group, LLC and HRA, and approval documentation
- Request from the Leased Housing Department for Board approval to implement new income limits for all of HRA's programs
- Email from Sarah Glassman regarding AUP audits
- DOS notice of minimum wage rates
- Amendment #5 to Capital Improvement Work Plan 5001
- Analysis of Capital Improvements Spending 2011-2015
- Notice from DHCD regarding operating budget
- Net metering analysis
- Seaboard Solar, LLC response to RFI for net metering agreements
- CHAPA's FY17 state budget priorities
- Staff report dated 04-04-2016

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Atwood adjourned the meeting at 7:09 P.M.

The next regular meeting of the HRA Board of Commissioners is scheduled for May 2, 2016 at 6 P.M. at the Greenfield Savings Bank located at 282 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Pheeny, Secretary ex officio