



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING – January 22, 2018**

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners conducted the regular meeting of the Authority on **January 22, 2018** at the Montague Town Police Department Community Room located at 180 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls, MA.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Atwood called the meeting to order at 5:08PM.

Commissioners Present: L. Brown J. Tuttle
 B. Parkin D. Prest
 M. Slowinski S. Hamdan

Commissioners Absent: D. Prest S. Cottrell

Staff Present: F. Pheeny J.Carey L. Cornish T. Dowd

Guest: Todd Bard from Lee Energy Group

2. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

F. Pheeny deferred her report to the end of the meeting so the Execution of Solar Power and Services Agreement could be discussed first.

3. ACTIONS

Minutes: Commissioner Parkin moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2017 regular meeting of the Board as prepared.

No further discussion.

17-123 Voted 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Solar Power and Services Agreement: Commissioner Parkin moved and Commissioner Brown seconded to authorize the Executive Director as contracting officer to execute the Solar Power and Services Agreement by and between BVD Solar and Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

Guest Todd Bard, owner and CEO of Lee Energy Group, presented a 20 year contract by Solar Net Energy for the public housing units owned by Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority. DHCD has already approved the contract and other housing authorities have signed on with Solar Net Energy. T. Bard informed the board that BVD should be up and running by May and then the savings from net metering will begin.

The housing authority will benefit from this contract in ways such as:

- The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority will be saving 15% on utility costs.

The solar field is in Pittsfield and will house the panels. For the first 10 years, if there's damage or something happens in the field, it is the developer's responsibility to fix it.

The amount of kilowatt hours purchased are transferrable to other housing authorities to prevent housing authorities from over committing.

Commissioner S. Hamdan inquired as to whether or not they were tracker solar panels. T. Bard informed the board that they are not tracker panels as those types of panels don't hold up well when exposed to snow and ice.

Commissioner L. Brown asked for clarifications regarding the 15% savings, as to whether or not if the rate fluctuates does the amount of savings fluctuate?

T. Bard explained that the 15% is a fixed rate, however the amount of savings will increase or decrease depending on the fluctuation of the kilowatt rates set by the electric company.

Commissioner M. Slowinski inquired as to what happens with the 20 year contract, for example, should the panels get destroyed by a tornado in the 10th year. Does the contract get extended? T. Bard explained that the contract wouldn't be extended. The contract is for 20 years and the time remaining between rebuild and the 20th year is the time that would be left on the contract.

T. Bard assured the members that the developer doesn't get the full value of the insurance unless he rebuilds. It would be a great loss financial loss for the builder to not rebuild.

AP Warrant: Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to approve the accounts payable warrant for December 2017.

No discussion.

17-125 Voted 4 in favor; 2 opposed; 0 abstaining

Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust Representatives: Commissioner Parkin moved and Commissioner Tuttle seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Director to execute the Designating Authorized Representative Resolution Form for MMDT, authorizing Frances Pheeny, Executive Director, as authorized Signer and Trader and Lisa Cornish, director of Finance, as Authorized Trader for FCRHRA.

F. Pheeny explained that this authorization will allow her and L. Cornish to access the account, which was still associated in D. Nelson's name.

17-126 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Staffing Services Agreement: Commissioner Parkin moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Director to execute the Staffing Services Agreement by and between Community Action Enterprises, d/b/a Harmon Personnel Services and Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, "The CLIENT", in which Harmon will provide skilled individuals to meet the short-term or long-term staffing needs of its third party clients with assigned employees best suited for the positions requested by CLIENT for a term of 12 months from the first date on which the parties have executed the agreement.

Commissioner S. Hamdan inquired as to why the agency was going through a staffing service to hire a temp, rather than interviewing for the empty position?

F. Pheeny explained that after several months of having a position open, it was filled then she stayed employed for about a month, leaving that position open once again. F. Pheeny informed the board that a temp was hired to cover for the front desk a few times as the receptionist was on vacation. Staff thought very highly of her. She was interested in the available position so by bringing her on as a Temp, it provides an opportunity to see if she can do the job and whether or not it's a good fit for the Temp and the agency.

Commissioner S. Hamdan inquired as to whether or not the agency needs to pay Harmon a fee.

F. Pheeny informed the board that the agency is invoiced by Community Action for the time worked by the Temp. However, should it be decided that the Temp is offered a part or full time position as an employee of the agency, there is a conversion fee to be paid to Harmon for their services.

17-127 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

OTHER BUSINESS

Executive Director's Report: F. Pheeny gave a brief overview of the negative impact that the Federal Government Shutdown has on the Agency. It's negatively impacts Section 8. While there is enough funding for the month of February, there are no additional monies to cover March and future months. F. Pheeny stated that hopefully the shutdown will end the next day and this will not negatively impact our current and future families who need this assistance.

F. Pheeny spoke next about the relocation of the agency. F. Pheeny, along with L. Cornish, guided the board through the Agency Relocation Binders, reviewing financial information, comparisons of commercial buildings and building space needs.

F. Pheeny shared several insightful and exciting pieces of information with the board regarding the relocation process.

A. HRA monies, originally identified as unattainable can now be used as collateral towards the future purchase of a building for the Agency.

B. DHCD has informed F. Pheeny in writing that they are strongly considering contributing 25% towards the agencies acquisition and relocation costs. Once a letter of commitment is received, F. Pheeny will have more information to share with the board.

The general consensus from the board is:

A. Moving from 42 Canal Rd. is vital for the health and safety of the employees, due to the severe deterioration of the building and needs to occur as soon as possible.

B. The purchase of a new building needs to be financially reasonable, spending as little as possible on renovations and build outs and needs to be easily accessible to the families served.

F. Pheeny updated the board on the Sunderland Senior Housing Project. A meeting with the local Senior Center/Council on Aging is slated for January 31. The anticipated zoning process with Sunderland ZBA will begin later in January or early February.

No discussion.

Leslie Brown RDI Update: L. Brown informed the board that at the January RDI Board Meeting, the auditors presented the FY17 report and there were no findings. L. Cornish added that RDI has 9 months of cash to cover operating expenses, while the 3-6 months is the norm. L. Brown also informed the board that the relocation binder was reviewed and the board had requested addition information be presented at the next meeting

No discussion.

PHN 2019-02 FY2018 Budget Guidelines: F. Pheeny informed the board that there's a 10% increase to the allowable non-utility expense level. The guideline also provides for a one-time DHCD direct cost exemption of \$10,000 per LHA for a "tech allowance". The budget guidelines are also being released along with a completely revised Executive Director Salary and qualifications schedule.

F. Pheeny received this information on January 2. After reviewing the information it was determined that a fee accountant is needed to come in and assist with the understanding of the new guidelines set forth for this budget. A negative outcome of these guidelines is that DHCD is basing the director's salary on the number of housing units owned by the Agency and not inclusive of the departments that are being overseen to provide the many number of services for clients and families.

Commissioner J. Atwood stated that we can't be the only agency that runs like FCRHRA.

F. Pheeny agreed and the fee accountant to be working with the Agency has a lot of experience with housing authorities like that of FCRHRA.

F. Pheeny stated on a positive note, the increase will allow the Agency to hire a 4th maintenance person, which will result in lowering overtime costs. The budget guidelines will also provide us with a technology upgrade which will allow the maintenance staff to document their time and work jobs electronically instead of on paper.

No further questions or discussion.

NAHRO December and January Newsletters: F. Pheeny informed the board they are in their packet for review.

FRRS FY2019 Assessment Changes Analysis: F. Pheeny informed the board that this information came from the retirement board. Assessments are up because people are living longer.

Staff Report: F. Pheeny informed the board that the report was included in their package for review.

T. Dowd gave a brief report on the units. The turnaround time for work orders have dropped dramatically. Work orders are presently completed in as little as 2-3 days, where as in the past there would be documentation of orders for 40 days or more. T. Dowd did explain that the high number was contributed also by work orders not being closed out once completed.

F. Pheeny shared with the board that this year is the 45th Anniversary of the agency. F. Pheeny feels that once we move into the new site, this would be a great opportunity to not only celebrate the 45 years in business, but would also provide opportunities for funding and fundraising.

Other Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance:

RH Customer Agreement for Placement Services: Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Parkin seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Director to execute a Customer Agreement for Placement Services by and between Robert Half Finance and Accounting and Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

F. Pheeny and L. Cornish informed the board that the staff accountant position has been vacant since spring of last year. There was an temp working in that department but they weren't qualified to continue in the position. F. Pheeny expressed to the board that by hiring a staff accountant through Robert Half Accounting services, the position could be filled quickly, as there is currently a qualified candidate available to start.

L. Cornish shared that she has interviewed the candidate and she feels she would be an asset to have in that department. She has a master's in accounting and strong background experience in payroll. The candidate has committed to working with the agency for a year.

F. Pheeny confirmed that Robert Half Accounting will be paid 20% for the staff accountant, however this is a cost savings as their normal rate is 25-30%.

No further discussion.

17-128 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

4. DOCUMENTS USED

- Minutes of the regular meeting held December 4, 2017
- AP Warrant December 2017
- Solar Power and Services Agreement

- Massachusetts Municipal Depositor Trust(MMDT) Form
- Harmon Staffing Services Agreement
- Agency Relocation Binders
- Public Housing Notice PHN 2018-02 FY18 Budget Guidelines
- NAHRO December and January Newsletter
- FRRS FY2019 Assessment Changes Analysis
- Robert Half Finance and Accounting Customer Agreement for Placement Services
- Staff Report
- Section 8 PIC Review for HAID MA094

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Parkin seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Pheeny, Secretary ex officio