



MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING –March 4, 2019

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners conducted the regular meeting of the Authority on **March 4, 2019** at the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Kulik Meeting Room , 241 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The executive session was convened after a roll call vote in regular session at 5:33 p.m.

Commissioners Present (by roll call): F. Williams D. Prest M. Slowinski
S. Hamdan J. Atwood S. Cottrell

Commissioners Absent: J. Tuttle

Staff Present: W. Abrashkin J.Carey L. Cornish H. Mackay

Guest: G. Ayers

Introductions were made among the Commissioners, welcoming potential HRA Board Commissioner Candidate, Glen Ayers, to the meeting.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to enter into executive session to review, approve and determine the status of executive session minutes because discussing this topic in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of HRA.

17-274 Voted by roll call with all Commissioners responding "Aye", none opposed and none abstaining.

The Board entered into executive session at 5:58PM.

Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Hamdan seconded a motion to adjourn executive session and reconvene in regular session at 6:07PM at which time the Chair announced that eleven votes had been taken in executive session including the vote to adjourn.

17-285 Vote by roll call with all Commissioners responding "Aye", none opposed and none abstaining

Interim Executive Director, W. Abrashkin, informed the Board that effective immediately, Commissioner J. Tuttle has resigned from the HRA Board of Commissioners due to health issues.

3. ACTIONS:

Minutes: Commissioner Prest moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2019 regular meeting of the Board as amended.

The Board asked that Commissioner Slowinski's last name be corrected under the minutes of the November 27, 2018 special meeting.

17-286 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

AP Warrant: Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve the accounts payable warrant for February 2019.

A question was posed regarding the note on the warrant next to the HAB generated AP that states "Needs Change."

L. Cornish stated that was a notation that should have been removed. The amount noted is correct.

17-287 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Amended Executive Administrative Assistant Job Description: Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to approve the amended Executive Administrative Assistant Job Description including the addition of responsibilities, but not including change of title.

W. Abrashkin presented the amended job description to the Board stating that this position functions more like that of a Deputy Director or Assistant Director and the change in title to Agency Administrator would be more fitting to the role. He also requested of the Board the approval for a pay increase which would compensate for the additional duties and current work load.

After review and discussion of the proposed amended job description the Board approved this position to receive an increase in pay; that the current job title of Executive Administrative Assistant will remain; that the duties listed under Principal Duties will remain as written with the exception of #2 as it will now read as, "Supervision of reception staff" instead of "Supervise support staff as assigned by the Executive Director."

17-288 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Discuss HRA Personnel Handbook Section 6.2.1 Accrual of Vacation Leave:

H. Mackay reported to the Board that the way in which the accrual of vacation leave currently reads in the Personnel Handbook is being interpreted by staff in different ways. Some staff members read the policy that the increase in the accrued hours begins at the start of their anniversary hire date, for example the start of their 4th year.

He stated that the way in which it is written in the Personnel Handbook and with how it is implemented in CheckWriters is that an increase in accrued hours begins at the end of the employee's anniversary hire date, for example at the completion of their 4th year.

L. Cornish suggested that under the "Years of Service" it is noted as "After the 1st year anniversary-3 years", "After the 4th year anniversary-6 years", "After the 7th year anniversary-9 years", "After the 10th year anniversary of more."

The Board's consensus is that they interpret the accrual of vacation leave as it is currently written in the Personnel Handbook and how it is currently implemented in CheckWriters and that by adding the word "After" to the "Years of Service" it will be clearer to HRA Personnel.

The Board asked that the above changes be made and be presented to them again for review and approval at the April board meeting.

Amendment to HRA Section 8 Administration Plan: Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to approve the proposed change to the Informal Hearing Office [24 CFR 982.555 (e) (d)] Section 8 HRA Administrative Plan.

W. Abrashkin reported that the current policy states that HRA has designated to serve as hearing officers: Attorneys admitted to the Massachusetts Bar Association. He stated that the previous representative for HRA, D. Crabtree, is not an attorney. This has raised the objection as being invalid, resulting in other litigation.

It has been determined that a hearing officer doesn't need to be from outside the agency nor an attorney as long as it is not a person who made the decision or someone s/he supervises.

The proposed change reads, "Informal hearings may be conducted by the Executive Director or by any person or persons the Executive Director designates, who shall be other than a person who made or approved the decision under review or a subordinate of this person."

17-289 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

W. Abrashkin reported that L. Cornish has done an incredible job with the budget for both RDI and HRA and will be presented to RDI at their next meeting scheduled for March 12, 2019. This will assist with clarifying the relationship between both RDI and HRA.

W. Abrashkin reported that he has had several meeting with individuals to establish closer community work between HRA and surrounding communities. As ideas emerge he will bring them forth to the Board.

He stated that due to the lack of funding, staff has to miss out on training and conference opportunities and won't be able to be attended until there are sufficient funds to do so.

W. Abrashkin asked for the Boards support in endorsing the Rent Arrearage Campaign which is working on restoring the statewide rent arrearage program. This program would provide direct cash assistance to cover the cost of back rent for low income individuals and families, prior to receiving an eviction notice.

The Board was in complete agreement to endorse this campaign but recommended that this require a Board vote and ask that it be placed as such on the April Agenda.

W. Abrashkin also provided the following updates:

1. The need to terminate HRA's participation in the contract with Orange School District McKinney Grant with the hope to determine services for next year.

2. M. Blake Human Resource Manager from Berkshire Housing attended a lunch meeting with HRA Managers to share her thoughts on making changes to the current HRA Personnel Coordinator Position, from a full time to part-time position. Until this

position is filled, H. Mackay continues in the role of Personnel Coordinator, as well as, being the new Director of Property Management. H. Mackay will provide a draft of the job description to M. Blake for review and following her review and suggestions, it will then be presented to the Board.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Leslie Brown RDI Update: Commissioner Brown reported that there wasn't an RDI Board Meeting held in February. She reported that G. Ohlund, Director of Community Development stated that if there is any outstanding litigation from the abutter regarding the Sunderland Senior Housing Project, then DHCD will not consider the One Stop Application until the matter is resolved.

Jessica Atwood provides update on Executive Director Search: Commissioner Atwood informed the Board that as of February 19, 2019 DHCD has approved the E.D. job advertisement.

An email went out to staff and the HRA, SHA, and RDI Boards announcing that the advertisement has been posted in The Recorder, On the HRA Website as well as on multiple online job boards. The due date for submittals are March 21, 2019 or until the position is filled. As of Friday, March 1, 2019 10 applications for the position were received.

On Tuesday, February 26, 2019 Commissioner Atwood spoke with DHCD, updating them on the progress of the search as well as informing them of the Board approved recommendation to submit the amended job description from 2015. She acknowledging that if that job description wasn't accepted, the Board had approved an alternate to submit.

She stated DHCD appeared to understand that their template was not applicable to HRA as we are a redevelopment authority, and also acknowledged that they are in the process of updating their guidance process for hiring Executive Directors.

DHCD stated they will review the job descriptions and then make contact regarding their decision.

Commissioner Atwood explained that the next Executive Director Search Committee is to meet sometime in March where they will focus on screening the received applications, with the hopes of determining 3-4 greatly qualified candidates to move forward with interviewing.

Public Housing Notice 2019-03- Vacancy Waiver Criteria for Delay in Reoccupying a Unit due to Multiple List Pulls

No discussion

Board Member contact information:

No changes

6. STAFF REPORT:

L. Cornish informed the Board that the first quarter results came in for HRA. She advised the Board that CDBG is greatly below being able to cover their admin costs due to several impeding factors such as it being winter when development projects are not as active and having the Rehab Specialist position vacant for approximately 6 months, delaying in further projects.

She stated that it is expected that the 2nd quarter will also be down but will work on offsetting this with some savings from other areas of the Agency.

She will be presenting RDI their budget, along with HRA's budget, showing revenue, shared costs, admin salaries, maintenance salaries and management fees at the next RDI Board meeting scheduled for March 12, 2019.

7. OTHER BUSINESS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE

8. DOCUMENTS USED

- Minutes of the regular meeting held February 4, 2019
- AP Warrant for February 2019
- Amended Executive Administrative Assistant Job Description
- HRA Personnel Handbook Section 6.2.1 Accrual of Vacation Leave
- Amended HRA Section 8 Admin Plan
- RAAC Campaign-prevent homelessness by funding the Rent Arrearage Assistance Program
- Public Housing Notice 2019-03
- Public Housing Notice 2019-04
- Staff Report February 2019

- MassNAHRO-Information Session on Executive Director Contracts
- MassNAHRO Weekly Wrap up article
- Annual Legislative Information Day article
- Financial Elements for Board members Workshop
- NAHRO News February 2019

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:33PM. The next *regular* meeting of the HRA Board of Commissioners is scheduled for **April 1, 2019 at 5:30PM** located at the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Kulik Meeting Room , 241 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

Respectfully submitted,



William H. Abrashkin, Secretary ex officio