



MINUTES

REGULAR & ANNUAL PLAN MEETING – July 6, 2020

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners conducted the regular meeting of the Authority on **July 6, 2020** via GoToMeeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to call the meeting to order at 4:35 PM.

Commissioners Present: D. Prest L. Brown M. Slowinski
 F. Williams J. Atwood S. Cottrell

Absent: S. Hamden

Staff Present: G. Govoni J. Carey K. Reardon H. Mackay

Guest: None

2. ACTIONS:

Minutes: Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Atwood seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2020 regular Board Meeting as prepared.

No discussion.

17-4127 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

AP Warrant: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Cottrell seconded a motion to approve the accounts payable warrant for June 2020 as presented.

No discussion.

17-4128 Vote 6 in Favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstained

Section 8 HRA Admin Plan Chapter 4: Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve the Section 8 HRA Admin Plan Chapter 4 as amended.

K. Reardon reported that the following information has been added to Chapter 4 of the Admin Plan:

1. Ten Mainstream Vouchers were awarded in November 2019 and another 3 in June 2020. These vouchers provide housing assistance to a family with a disabled person aged 18-61 in the household.
2. The plan no longer excludes residency preference for the Town of Greenfield for those families who live, work or has been hired to work in all Franklin County towns and the Town of Athol.
3. The same policy is now adopted to add or modify waitlist preferences for opening and closing waitlists. Public notice is published on the HRA website, The Greenfield Recorder, Athol Daily News, El Mundo, and with Franklin & Hampshire County area social service agencies and providers.
4. Added information defining homeless in which there are 4 categories of definition along with the required documents to prove homelessness status.

17-4129 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Section 8 Landlord Incentive Program: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Cottrell seconded a motion to approve the Section 8 Landlord Incentive Program to increase landlord participation and voucher utilization rates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

K. Reardon reported that additional admin funds were received from the CARES ACT. With this money landlords will receive a bonus of \$500 when they lease up a tenant who has Section 8. The lease needs to be effective for 1 year. This program aims to increase the leasing rate, as well as work with the Mainstream Program. The period of this program will run from July 15, 2020 to October 31, 2020.

17-4130 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

MOU between Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and Three County Continuum of Care (CoC) Community Action Pioneer Valley: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Cottrell seconded a motion to authorize, Executive Director, Gina Govoni, as contracting officer, to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding by and between HRA and CoC in which the parties agree the goals of partnership are to:

A. To ensure that all qualified individuals experiencing homelessness gain access to the rental assistance payments from Mainstream Voucher Program (811).

B. To create opportunities for chronically homeless individuals and families participating in the Continuum of Care (CoC) coordinated entry process, access to the mainstream voucher program, whenever possible.

C. To provide those eligible individuals and families with a voucher to help stabilize and sustain safe, decent, affordable housing and to create opportunities for supportive services.

No discussion.

17-4131 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

MOU between Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and

LifePath: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to authorize, Executive Director, Gina Govoni, as contracting officer, to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding by and between HRA and LifePath in which the parties agree the goals of partnership are to:

A. To ensure that all qualified individuals experiencing homelessness gain access to the rental assistance payments from Mainstream Voucher Program (811).

B. To provide those eligible individuals and families with a voucher to help stabilize and sustain safe, decent, affordable housing and to create opportunities for supportive services.

No discussion.

17-4132 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

FY21 RAFT Contract- Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to authorize Amanda Watson, HCEC Manager, as contracting officer, to execute a contract with DHCD for the operation of the RAFT program in Franklin County with the contract dates of service being July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, and to authorize the Director of Finance to execute the Signatory Agreement to Advanced Funding.

G. Govoni reported that this is the traditional RAFT contract that is implemented annually.

No discussion.

17-4133 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

FY21 HomeBASE Contract: Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to authorize Amanda Watson, HCEC Manager, as contracting officer, to execute a contract with DHCD for the operation of the HomeBASE program in Franklin County with the contract dates of service being July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, and to authorize the Director of Finance to execute the Signatory Agreement to Advanced Funding.

G. Govoni reported that this contract will allow for the HCEC department to hire a part-time employee based on the funding amount received.

17-4134 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

FY21HCEC Contract: Tabled for August meeting as the contract was not available in time for this meeting.

Way Finders Subcontract Agreement for Division of Banks Services: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to authorize Executive Director, Gina Govoni, as contracting officer, to enter into a contract between Way Finders, Inc. ("Way Finders"), a non-profit Massachusetts corporation and the Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA) effective January 1, 2019, to implement foreclosure prevention services as a regional foreclosure education center for the 2020 calendar year ("Contract"), ending on December 31, 2020, unless earlier terminated.

G. Govoni reported that this is a \$10,000 grant to offer homeownership and foreclosure prevention services.

Commissioner Williams recuses herself as she is an employee of Way Finders.

17-4135 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstaining

Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance Program (ERMA) for MTW & CDBG: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to authorize Executive Director, Gina Govoni, as contracting officer, to enter into a contract between Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in which the ERMA/MTW funds will be initially targeted at households with incomes between 50% and 80% Area Median Income (AMI), who would be ineligible for RAFT assistance.

G. Govoni reported that only the MTW contract was received for tonight's vote. These funds need to be carefully and separately monitored in addition to the RAFT funds.

The (ERMA) CDBG funding contract vote will be tabled and placed on the August agenda as it was not received in time for this evening's meeting.

17-4136 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Town of Ashfield Housing Rehab Revolving Loan Program: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to authorize Executive Director, Gina Govoni, as contracting officer, to enter into the Agreement By and Between Town of Ashfield (TOWN) and Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA/ Consultant) as amended to the original agreement dated January 9, 2013 (the "Agreement"), allowing HRA to consider requests for loan forgiveness in cases of extreme hardship.

17-4137 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

FCRHRA Internal Control Policy: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to approve the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Internal Control Policy as it relates to Procurement and Rent Collection, as amended.

G. Govoni reported that the most recent change is the additional wording regarding acceptance of cash and the handling of cash rent collection.

17-4138 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Regional Legal Services Program for State-Aided Housing Programs Participation Agreement:

Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to authorize Executive Director, Gina Govoni, as contracting officer to enter into an agreement between the Regional Legal Services Program (the "Program") and Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority to engage with pre-qualified legal service practitioners (the "Attorney(s)") for legal assistance with regard to the day-to-day operations of the HA, as well as to obtain specialized legal counsel and training on legal topics, acknowledging the terms and conditions of the Program and adherence to such terms as a condition for receipt of state funding which shall be used exclusively for Program purposes.

G. Govoni reported that this agreement allows us to continue to work directly with Atty. J. Liebel, no longer needing to go through DHCD for contracting with him. This agreement also allows for legal allocation to work with a different lawyer should we want. We've been using Atty. Liebel for many years and want to continue with his professional services.

17-4139 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Executive Director Contract: Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Slowinski seconded a motion to approve changes to the calculation methodology in the existing Executive Director Contract between the HRA Board of Commissioners and Gina Govoni, as presented.

G. Govoni reported that there was an error in the calculation methodology regarding the Executive Director Salary fee. This amendment does not increase or change the Executive Director salary. It reflects the corrected portion from the SHA management fee.

17-4140 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

The HRA FY2020 Annual Plan Review began at 5:04 p.m.

Executive Director, G. Govoni, provided an overview of the process for reviewing the Annual Plan. This is an opportunity for the public to have input and inquire about capital projects as well as operations.

H. Mackay provided a thorough overview of the current and future capital improvement projects, explaining that projects with a FISH number are those which received funding for completion. There is some monetary flexibility with the funded projects provided we maintain budgeted allowances for each fiscal year.

Projects marked as H&S (Health & Safety) are projects funded in addition to the Annual Formula Funding Award. These projects are funded for work that needs to be done for the health and safety of the residents that reside in our buildings. For example, there is funding to purchase and install a chair lift to assist residents with getting to the 2nd floor of the building as there is no elevator.

As an example of other funding sources, G. Govoni reported that considerable work has been done at Highland Village in Shelburne Falls. Additional funds are being sought through CDBG to begin Phase II of the project.

A concern was expressed about the removal of trees. H. Mackay explained that DHCD sets guidelines for trees regarding height, size, and proximity to buildings. The trees being removed are being done so as they are a health and safety issue.

G. Govoni reported that continued progress is being made regarding the vacancy rate. The operating budget is the full reserve amount of 71.1%.

The FY2020 budget is registering zero because of an administrative error in the DHCD system.

G. Govoni reviewed the mandated policies. The Personnel Handbook Committee will be meeting soon. It is scheduled to be on the August agenda for vote and review. In the future we should anticipate that all of these policies are updated and approved and not older than 3 years old. Additional policies will be presented in the future.

There weren't any pre-submitted questions.

The Board thanked H. Mackay and P. Parmakian for all of their hard work with the annual plan.

HRA FY2021 Annual Plan: Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to approve the HRA FY2021 Annual Plan as presented.

17-4141 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

3. STAFF REPORTS

Racial Equity Training:

G. Govoni reported that several staff attended a three week training on racial equity and homelessness. It brought to light that we need to think more proactively as how we look and act as an organization.

Regionalization work:

Work continues with Judy Weber and DHCD to regionalize FCRHRA and SHA. DHCD has been informed that we are concerned about taking on Hampshire County due to the time it would take to travel to their locations. We are also working with DHCD to get them to understand the travel time that exists within our current portfolio. DHCD is interested in looking at agency structure as the catalyst for regionalization; they are not just seeking financial savings. GHA is moving towards interviewing for the open Executive Director position. At this time they are not interested in exploring regionalization.

Broadband at Ashfield:

We continue to explore several resources to get monetary assistance for broadband installation at Ashfield House.

CDBG Cares Act:

We should receive an update this week.

4. OTHER BUSINESS**Leslie Brown RDI Update:**

RDI met on June 9. The RDI conflict of Interest was signed. We had a discussion regarding regionalization, and the importance of a regional approach for housing in Franklin County. Sunderland Senior Housing Project was approved! A public announcement will be made at a later date. An idea to assist the Ashfield House with getting broadband was to seek bank assistance. July 14, RDI will be holding their RDI Path Forward meeting.

Board Member contact information:

No changes.

5. DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES SENT VIA EMAIL:

- a. PHN 2020-22- Quarterly operating statement for the Local Housing Authorities
- b. DHCD Notice- ease ups in c.667 during COVID-19
- c. DHCD Go To Meeting Participant Guide
- d. PHN 2020-23- Phase 1 & II Reopening Guidance
- e. PHN 2020-24- Design and Funding Guidelines for Adapting LHA Office Spaces for Social Distancing and Indoor Air Quality
- f. Testing in Senior Housing FAQs
- g. May/June 2020 MassNAHRO Newsletter

6. OTHER BUSINESS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE**7. DOCUMENTS USED**

- June 1, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

- June 2020 AP Warrant
- Staff Report
- Section 8 HRA Admin Plan Chapter 4
- Section 8 Landlord Incentive Program
- MOU Three County Continuum of Care Community Action Pioneer Valley
- MOU LifePath Mainstream Voucher Program (811)
- FY21 RAFT Contract
- FY21 HomeBASE Contract
- DOB Way Finders Subcontract Agreement
- MTW Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) Programs
- Town of Ashfield Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program
- HRA Internal Control Policy
- Regional Legal Services Program for State-Aided Housing Programs Participation Agreement
- Executive Director Contract Calculation Worksheet
- HRA Fy2021 Annual Plan

8. RESIDENT & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 PM. The next *regular* meeting of the HRA Board of Commissioners will be held on **Monday, August 3, 2020** via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,



Gina Govoni, Secretary Ex officio