



**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING – June 1, 2020**

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners conducted the regular meeting of the Authority on **June 1, 2020** via GoToMeeting.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to call the meeting to order at 4:38 PM.

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

Absent:                                    S. Hamden

Staff Present:                        G. Govoni    J. Carey        L. Cornish       K. Reardon

Guest:                                    None

**2. ACTIONS:**

**Minutes:** Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2020 regular Board Meeting as prepared.

No discussion.

17-4120 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

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

No discussion.

17-4121 Vote 6 in Favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstained

**Modified Streamlined 50075-HCV Annual PHA Plan FY2029:** Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to approve the modified Streamlined Annual PHA Plan for Fiscal Year 2020 in which HRA is removing the intention to project base the Mainstream 811 vouchers and instead project basing 5-10 Section 8 HCV Vouchers in Southern Franklin County.

K. Reardon provided background information regarding the use of project base and mainstream Section 8 vouchers. In 2019 HRA was awarded a number of mainstream vouchers for non-elderly and disabled individuals. Due to the lack of available units, the proposal is to remove the intention to project base the mainstream voucher and instead project base 5-10 regular Housing Choice Vouchers in Southern Franklin County. Due to the COVID pandemic, waivers allow this modification to be an easier process.

17-4122 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

**Section 8 COVID-19 Administrative Plan Addendum:** Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Atwood seconded a motion to approve the Administrative Plan Addendum of waivers for Section 8 adopted due to COVID-19.

K. Reardon reported that HUD has been extremely supportive and flexible with their regulations during the pandemic. HUD issued 60 waivers in which all housing authorities can choose which to adopt. HRA has adopted 18 out of the 60 waivers. An example of a waiver that we recommend adopting is allowing participants to self-certify their income due to the closure of businesses. If it is discovered that a resident has provided false information regarding their income, then a repayment agreement will be required.

17-4123 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

**FCRHRA Rent Policy:** Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Atwood seconded a motion to approve the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Rent Collection Policy as prepared.

G. Govoni reported that there are 5 required policies for the annual plan. The plan is lengthy, and includes current operations, capital plans, PMR, and budget, in addition to these 5 core policies. It is required that policies be reviewed every 3 years. Since these have not been reviewed, the drafts are now being presented to the Board.

Attorney J. Liebel reviewed our current rent collection policy and advised that we cannot refuse cash payments for rent. The acceptance of cash payments, while not preferred, is now noted in this current version of the policy.

17-4124 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

**FCRHRA Grievance Policy:** Commissioner Atwood moved and Commissioner Prest seconded a motion to approve the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Grievance Policy.

G. Govoni reported that the most recent version of this policy is from 2014. Attorney J. Liebel reviewed this policy and didn't note of anything in need of updating.

17-4125 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

**FCRHRA Procurement Policy:** Commissioner Slowinski moved and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Procurement Policy as amended.

G. Govoni reported that this policy is also incorporated into the Internal Control Policy. The noted amendment is to change the procurement officer from the Director of Property Management to the Director of Finance, L. Cornish; as well as the delegation of authority to DHCD's Regional Capital Assistance Team (RCAT) per terms in the RCAT Service Agreement.

17-4126 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

**Discussion of Hampshire Regional Housing Authority regionalization opportunity:**

G. Govoni reported that she's been in contact with DHCD and they've ensured her that the regionalization program is available for interested housing authorities.

Hampshire County Regional Housing Authority (HCRHA) Chair, Denice LeDuc contacted G. Govoni inquiring if HRA would be interested in entering into a management or regionalization agreement. The current E.D. is part-time and retiring. Given the size of the authority, (there are a two 667 elderly complexes and four 705 units, 40 units total) and the part time nature of the position, the Board is concerned with finding a qualified candidate with public housing experience and knowledge of the area to replace the outgoing ED.

The properties are located in both Cummington and Huntington, MA. Currently, there are three part time staff. HCRHA is a high performing housing authority, and their board is interested in streamlining their operations with FCRHRA as they feel the rural character of their properties is similar to that of HRA's properties. They do also have two family units in South Hadley, which are in process of being acquired by the South Hadley Housing Authority.

Our intention would be to keep staff (HCRHA and HRA) geographically aligned, and be able to provide backup in the case of staff absences or emergencies. Administration and bookkeeping responsibilities would be absorbed by HRA. In addition to staff on the payroll, HCRHA is currently working with a fee accountant, and they are part of the RCAT program.

M. Slowinski advised that there be a thorough inspection done on the physical condition of their buildings. While this would be the responsibility of the consultant to ensure this gets done. G. Govoni proposed a 3<sup>rd</sup> party be involved to do a Capital Needs Assessment.

A question was posed regarding affiliation with Greenfield Housing Authority. G. Govoni reported that she is keeping in contact to support GHA in their current time of transition.

The board unanimously supports G. Govoni to continue further conversations and exploration in regionalization with HCRHRA. She will continue to report updates to the Board regarding this, efforts with SHA, and conversations with GHA.

### **3. STAFF REPORTS**

#### **Small Business Loan Fund:**

Greenfield is working closely with Franklin County C.D.C. on an emergency loan program to assist small business. Unused funds from the Montague Skinner Park renovation are being reprogrammed for this use. G. Govoni reported that Greenfield is planning to submit a regional application, and we are in strong support of this plan.

#### **CDBG CARES ACT:**

DHCD has split the \$23 million Cares Act funds between small businesses, social services, and the RAFT program. Households up to 80% AMI will be able to access RAFT assistance.

FY2020 CDBG grants are delayed due to COVID. Funding is unknown at this time.

#### **Financials:**

L. Cornish began by noting that the only change to the formatting was the removal of the Formula funding/FISH accounts in order to focus on administrative income and expense.

The operating costs are in good shape. COCC showing a profit due to the unexpected refund from unemployment (61k). P. Parmakian and H. Mackay have been working diligently to obtain the admin fees from FISH projects.

Vacancies are improving. Waivers for vacant units are in place, resulting in no penalties.

CDBG's budget in the financials is prorated by month. In comparison to an activity based budget, we are slightly ahead of budget for the year. Rehab projects had slowed down due to COVID, but we are starting to see more movement.

HCEC was budgeted to have consulting that it did not end of utilizing. We are working with DHCD on a plan to re-allocate these and a portion of the advertising budget.

#### **Annual plan:**

G. Govoni informed the board that the annual plan can be found on the HRA website as a link and PDF. The plan may change before the July meeting as system issues are resolved.

Commissioner Brown thanked G. Govoni and staff for all that they're doing and appreciate their hard work.

#### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **Leslie Brown RDI Update:**

Commissioner Brown reported that RDI did not meet in May. The Board is still moving forward with the RDI Path Forward meeting in July.

##### **Orange Teen & Orange Recovery House:**

G. Govoni reported that Orange Teen and Orange Recovery houses have officially merged their boards as one identity now called North Quabbin Opportunity Housing, Inc. They will continue to be separate entities with their separate functions.

##### **Board Member contact information:**

No changes.

#### **5. DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES:**

- a. PHN 2020-05 Addendum #3- via email
- b. PHN 2020-21-Q&A and clarification of annual rent determination waiver-via email
- c. PHN 2020-21A Revised Rent Policy-via email

#### **6. OTHER BUSINESS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE**

#### **7. DOCUMENTS USED**

- May 4, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes
- May 2020 AP Warrant
- Staff Report
- Operating Statement 03.2020
- FCRHRA Rent Collection Policy
- Guidelines for Virtual Board Meetings
- HRA Grievance Procedures
- HRA Procurement Policy
- HCV Annual Plan-Modified
- COVID-19 Admin Plan Addendum

#### **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 5:55 PM. The next *regular* meeting of the HRA Board of Commissioners will be held on **Monday, July 6, 2020** via GoToMeeting.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gina Govoni". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gina Govoni, Secretary Ex officio