



**FRANKLIN COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING &
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

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MINUTES

Regular Meeting – August 21, 2023

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners conducted the regular meeting of the Authority on August 21, 2023, via Zoom. at 4:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order

F. Williams called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present (via roll call): F. Williams, M. Cucchiara, S. Worgaftik, L. Bezio, M. McClintock

Absent: L. Brown

Staff Present: G. Govoni, N. Garrett, K. Kelley

Guests: None

2. Actions

HRA July Minutes: Commissioner Worgaftik moved, and Commissioner Cucchiara seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2023, regular meeting of the Board as submitted.

17-4393 Vote 4 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstaining

July AP Warrant: Commissioner Cucchiara moved, and Commissioner McClintock seconded a motion to approve the accounts payable warrant for July 2023.

S. Worgaftik requested additional information regarding the return of the RAFT funds to EOHLIC. G. Govoni responded, stating that any unspent funds that were previously forwarded to HRA from EOHLIC are returned.

17-4394 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

06/30 Financials: F. Williams identified Lisa Cornish's absence from the meeting, requesting all questions be held until the next HRA Board Meeting in which she intends to be present; Lisa Cornish can also be reached via email for any pressing questions that cannot wait until the next HRA Board Meeting.

Vacancy Write-Offs: G. Govoni explained that both accounts in question are public housing vacancies that had remaining balances upon vacating; one tenant was evicted through court process, the other is deceased. Ideally, write-offs are completed biannually. The cases are referred

to a collection agency, as previously discussed; the collection agency has only been utilized once since its adoption last year.

M. Cucchiara questioned if HRA could implement a cash-for-keys type system for the non-PHA portfolio. G. Govoni responded, explaining that these write-offs are for public housing.

Commissioner Cucchiara moved, and Commissioner Bezio seconded a motion to write off the public housing tenant accounts receivable balances in the total amount of \$8,669.53 for vacated units as presented.

17-4395 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

FY24 HMLP Construction Monitoring Services: G. Govoni explained that HRA has provided the HMLP Construction Monitoring Services for CEDAC for many years. This year, the reimbursement rate has increased due to a rate renegotiation. Additionally, as HRA is now an HMLP provider, it may also act as the construction monitor for HRA projects. A FY24 Provider Services Contract will be forthcoming.

Commissioner Cucchiara moved, and Commissioner McClintock seconded a motion to execute the professional service contract with CEDAC for Construction Monitoring Services for the Home Modification Loan Program.

17-4396 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

HRA Section 8 Admin Plan Updates: G. Govoni stated that the changes made to this plan are primarily administrative and language-based. The Nan McKay model was used in the development of this plan.

M. McClintock questioned what changes would affect the participants. G. Govoni responded, explaining that the new HOTMA regulations will have the most significant impact on participants, specifically regarding itemizing medical expenses for rental payments. The new regulations will implement a standardized deduction to alleviate many administrative burdens. Additionally, a \$100,000 asset limit for new applicants and participants is being implemented.

M. McClintock continued, asking if participants would be allowed to request the option to itemize medical expenses instead of defaulting to the standardized deduction. G. Govoni responded, stating that she believes only the standardized deduction will be used going forward. G. Govoni also noted that additional clarification will be made regarding HOTMA and all Leased Housing staff are attending training in the coming weeks.

S. Worgaftik questioned if the standardized deduction would be similar to what Medicare pays. G. Govoni responded, stating that it will likely be an average deduction, though more information will be provided at the next HRA Board Meeting after consulting Katelyn Reardon.

Commissioner Worgaftik moved, and Commissioner Cucchiara seconded a motion to approve the Section 8 Administrative Plan updates as presented.

17-4397 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Updated Utility Charges for FY24: G. Govoni explained that there were several decreases in utility charges; this must be done programmatically to ensure the correct charges are in place by a certain time.

Commissioner Worgaftik moved, and Commissioner Cucchiara seconded a motion to approve the updated utility charts for FY24, effective 11/1/23, as presented.

17-4398 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Emergency Housing Vouchers Temporary Policy Supplement Update: G. Govoni stated that these vouchers were implemented during the pandemic. At this time, HRA has 15 vouchers, 11 of which are leased up with the balances issued. One voucher is nearing the point of being reused, which requires a lease up by September 30, 2023, to ensure it is not lost. Additionally, this update includes changes to the language surrounding the issuance of fees, which are no longer available. As with the previous plan, this was modeled after Nan McKay's documents.

F. Williams requested confirmation that vouchers can be lost if they are not turned over. G. Govoni responded affirmatively.

M. McClintock questioned how long the vouchers can be used for. G. Govoni responded, stating that, as with regular Section 8 vouchers, it remains in place as long as the voucher holder remains eligible.

Commissioner McClintock moved, and Commissioner Cucchiara seconded a motion to approve the updated Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) admin policy as presented.

17-4399 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Design Services Contract Fish #358151: G. Govoni explained that this contract is for the Highland Village kitchen renovations.

G. Govoni noted that this project received its CDBG award, and that HRA had been fully funded for all four CDBG projects in Bernardston, Montague, Heath, and Wendell.

EOHLC previously approved the drawings for this project when its estimated cost was already \$1,100,000. The engineer decided that the project should be brought to the Review Board for new designs anyway. Money from the Capital Improvement Plan was allocated towards the cost, which HRA did not approve. HRA professionally wishes to reject this project as the process was not approved nor requested.

M. Cucchiara requested clarification that this motion would reject the presented architect and instead use the original architect. G. Govoni responded affirmatively, citing unforeseen circumstances that arose due to the lack of appropriate authority by HRA's Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Cucchiara moved, and Commissioner Worgaftik seconded a motion to reject Studio Umbra, the design selection board's first ranked firm, for FISH# 358151 for a contract in the amount of \$95,000, based on unforeseen circumstances.

17-4400 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Stoughton Roof Replacement Fish #358137: G. Govoni explained that the roof at Stoughton Place is being replaced. The lowest bidder did not meet the bid requirements; thus, the second lowest bidder, J&I Construction, was selected. Construction on this project should be completed this fall.

Commissioner Worgaftik moved, and Commissioner Bezio seconded a motion to approve the accepted low-bidder, J & I Construction, and enter into a contract with them to perform the work on FISH# 358137 Stoughton Roof Replacement.

17-4401 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

FY24 HomeBase Contract: G. Govoni stated that HRA has a special rate due to the size of the Agency. EOHLIC has agreed to maintain the FY23 rate due to their lack of adequate communication about lowering the rate.

Commissioner McClintock moved, and Commissioner Cucchiara seconded a motion to enter into contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the provision of the HomeBase program in FY24, at a negotiated minimum annual rate of \$74,998.20.

17-4402 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

3. Staff Report

No discussion.

4. Other Business

G. Govoni stated that a letter was sent to the Department of Energy Resources recommending that the contract with Community Action be a conduit for the Multifamily LEAN program in HRA's service area. Both mini-split projects were significantly delayed due to workers based in Boston. A similar issue has recently developed with the heat pump replacement project at Stoughton Place.

Additionally, public housing operating subsidy was increased in the FY24 state budget, and staff members are waiting on a new HCEC Contract pending an override request to the budget.

5. Public Participation

No discussion.

6. Adjourn

M. Cucchiara moved, and S. Worgaftik seconded a motion to adjourn the regular meeting of the HRA Board of Directors as there was no further business to discuss.

The meeting convened at 5:18 p.m.