



**FRANKLIN COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING &
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

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MINUTES

Regular Meeting – September 25, 2023

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners conducted the Regular Meeting of the Authority on September 25, 2023, via Zoom. at 4:31 p.m.

1. Call to Order

F. Williams called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

F. Williams noted that she and G. Govoni recently attended the MassNAHRO conference on behalf of HRA. G. Govoni added that they presented a panel together that was well received. Additionally, they participated in a panel on redevelopment, which allowed them to speak on HRA's development capacity.

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

Absent: None

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

Guests: None

2. Actions

HRA August Minutes: Commissioner Worgaftik moved, and Commissioner McClintock seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2023, regular meeting of the Board as submitted.

17-4403 Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstaining

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

17-4404 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

06/30 Financials: L. Cornish provided an overview of the financial statements for the education of the newer Board Members.

There is a significant difference to the budget, partially coming from CDBG, HCEC, and Section 8; the majority is from Section 8 due to increases in volume and the administrative price to work the vouchers. It will become clear if this will remain once the accrual calculation is complete. The total operating surplus for HRA is \$46,404; most of this is savings due to the decrease in fringe benefits

since last year's budget. The new solar company has produced better returns, which has resulted in a \$7,000 positive.

CDBG and HCEC are expected to end up higher this year. The Property Management department has been tasked with producing modernization project ideas for HRA to ensure funding is allocated appropriately. This quarter should help with the net unrestricted assets that can be used for HRA. The net unrestricted calculation is based on what was expected for 2023 and the anticipated income based on the budget. The FY24 budget is currently being worked on.

FY24 Updated Payment Standards: G. Govoni explained that HUD recently released the new payment standards for FY24, which range from efficiency to five-bedroom units. The waiver received this year will differ from last year, though HUD will allow HRA to go to 110 percent.

F. Williams noted that while the payment standard is not at 120 percent, FMRs increasing is helpful. G. Govoni responded affirmatively.

M. McClintock questioned what would happen if a participant with an HCV wanted to rent a unit more costly than the payment standards. G. Govoni responded, stating that there are three options. HRA could attempt to negotiate with the landlord. Or, if the tenant could afford it, they could pay the overage. Or, if there is a basis for a reasonable accommodation, a request could be made to increase the payment standard on a case-by-case basis.

S. Worgaftik vocally appreciated that the payment standards more closely reflect the actual rental prices on the open market.

Commissioner Worgaftik moved, and Commissioner Cucchiara seconded a motion to approve the updated payment standards for HCV FY24, effective 10/1/23, as presented.

17-4405 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

FY24 HMLP Provider Contract for Services: G. Govoni stated that HRA approved the HMLP construction monitor contract in September. The fifth HMLP loan closing is scheduled for October 2.

Commissioner Worgaftik moved, and Commissioner McClintock seconded a motion to approve the FY24 HMLP Provider Contract for Services with Community Economic Development Assistance Council (CEDAC) as presented.

17-4406 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

CDBG Professional Services Contracts: F. Williams explained that there are four contracts for five communities in Franklin County; Charlemont and Wendell are combined into one contract.

M. McClintock requested clarification that there are CDBG programs in these towns, but they do not have staff members to administer the contracts, and thus, HRA administers the work. G. Govoni explained that the grant application and management process is complex and unique. Due to the majority of Franklin County being non-entitlement communities, HRA must demonstrate the need for funds at every funding round.

Commissioner Brown moved, and Commissioner McClintock seconded a motion to authorize Gina Govoni, Executive Director, to sign professional services contracts, including any subsequent amendments, between HRA and the towns of Montague, Orange, Bernardston, and Wendell to administer their FY22.23 Community Development Block Grants.

17-4407 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Town of Shelburne- HRA Subgrantee Agreement: G. Govoni explained that this is an extension of the kitchen and bath project completed in 2019 that was broken into two phases. Phase two is estimated to cost \$1,600,000, similar to phase one. On-site relocation would be required in this phase. Ideally, the project will begin in Spring 2024 and will last no more than 20 months. An application was submitted to EOHLC for an additional \$~400,000 in leverage and relocation funding.

Commissioner Bezio moved, and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve the subgrantee agreement with the town of Shelburne for \$1,240,000 for the direct construction, design services, and relocation costs associated with the Highland Village kitchen modernization project.

17-4408 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

FY24 HCEC Contract: G. Govoni stated that although the contract is not currently ready, it is at the same level as in previous years. A cost-of-living increase was vetoed by the Governor, which has caused a delay in the availability of the contract, though it is expected this week.

Commissioner Worgaftik moved, and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to allow HRA to amend its FY23 contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the provision of Housing Consumer Education Center services in FY24.

17-4409 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Updated Job Descriptions: N. Garrett explained that the addition of a Leased Housing Administrator and a Senior Raft Administrator position is being proposed. The Leased Housing Administrator would be a step between the Leased Housing Representative and the Director of Leased Housing. The Senior RAFT Administrator would be a step above the Raft Administrator position; this would allow for additional oversight to the RAFT Administrators and act as a liaison between them and the HCEC Director. Both positions may assist with retention by allowing for employee growth.

The Leased Housing Administrator job description has a typographical error that will be corrected. The "Supervision Received" line should read, "The Leased Housing Administrator works directly under the supervision of the Director of Leased Housing."

L. Brown questioned if there are individuals at the Agency who are projected to fill these roles. N. Garrett responded affirmatively.

S. Worgaftik asked where the need for this stems from. N. Garrett responded, explaining that there has been difficulty retaining the entry-level positions within these departments. Additionally, the respective department Directors have expressed interest in creating said positions to allow for distribution of their workloads.

G. Govoni noted that there is precedent for both roles in sibling agencies across the state. The Senior RAFT Administrator position has been made possible with the expansion of the HCEC department. A version of the Leased Housing Administrator position existed at HRA in the past and will take on some of the detail-oriented oversight of the Director to allow her to focus programmatically.

Commissioner Brown moved, and Commissioner Worgaftik seconded a motion to approve the job descriptions for the Leased Housing Administrator and the Senior RAFT Administrator, as presented.

17-4410 Vote 6 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Annual Meeting Discussion: G. Govoni noted that the HRA Annual and Regular Meetings will be moved to October 30. At the Annual Meeting, there is consideration to change the presentation style from previous years. In the past, each department Director has prepared a two to three-minute presentation. Instead of this, each Director could make separate 15-minute presentations every month. The print report will be provided regardless of this decision.

M. McClintock and F. Williams expressed preference for longer presentations every month. S. Worgaftik agreed, requesting a glossary of acronyms with each session.

L. Brown questioned if the staff members had a preference. G. Govoni reported that while preferences vary, this feels more beneficial. A schedule will be created, with presentations hopefully beginning next month.

3. Staff Report

No discussion.

4. Other Business

L. Brown questioned if HRA was consulted before the neighboring lot was cleared. G. Govoni responded, stating that the clearing began before HRA was contacted. None of the trees in question were on HRA property. Any Board Members interested in what has been proposed and planned can access the documentation via the Montague town website.

M. McClintock questioned if a permit was received from the planning board, noting the precedent that this sends. G. Govoni responded, stating that the town is working diligently to ensure the site owners are respectful of natural resources.

5. Public Participation

No discussion.

6. Adjourn

L. Brown 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 5:42 p.m.