



**FRANKLIN COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING &  
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

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**MINUTES  
Regular Meeting – February 27, 2023**

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners conducted the regular meeting of the Authority on **February 27, 2023**, via Zoom. at 4:30 p.m.

**1. Call to Order**

Executive Director Gina Govoni called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.

**Commissioners Present (via roll call):** F. Williams, L. Brown, M. Cucchiara, R. Bowen Weld, S. Worgaftik

**Absent:** None

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

**Guests:** Mary McClintock, Penny Clark, Anne Marie Derr, Barb Hoffman

**2. Actions**

**HRA January Minutes:** Commissioner Worgaftik moved, and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2023, regular meeting of the Board as submitted.

Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

**SHA December Minutes:** Commissioner Bowen Weld moved, and Commissioner Brown seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2022, regular meeting of the Shelburne Housing Authority Board as submitted.

Guest M. McClintock requested clarification on the date of the meeting. G. Govoni confirmed that it took place on December 14, 2022.

M. Cucchiara joined at 4:39 p.m.

Vote 4 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstaining

**SHA February Minutes:** F. Williams questioned if board members can vote on the minutes of meetings that they did not attend, citing that no HRA board members attended the SHA meeting minutes in question. G. Govoni responded, stating that Roberts Rules allow board members to vote on the minutes of meetings that they did not attend.

Commissioner Bowen Weld moved, and Commissioner Cucchiara seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2022, regular meeting of the Shelburne Housing Authority Board as submitted.

Vote 4 in favor; 0 opposed; 1 abstaining

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

Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

**12/31 Quarterly Financials:** L. Cornish began by providing an overview of the layout of the documents under review. All of the administrative income and expenses are examined. Program income and expenses, such as the Section 8 vouchers and related expenses are not taken into the financial picture on these documents. Instead, the administrative income related to the programs is examined. The items shown in full in the document are the HRA, SHA, Smikes costs, and the income of HCEC. This look is intended to control the budget to actual for administrative expenses. The auditors include all of the program income at year-end as the quarterly financial documents are only the internal view of the control of the budget to the actual. The depreciation is not shown until the end of the year; many once-a-year expenses are only shown annually.

The HRA and SHA budgets are still shown separately here as, at the time of compiling the documents, it was unclear whether DHCD would allow the budgets to be combined. Since presenting the documents to the board, DHCD has indicated that the budgets should be combined as of October 1, 2022; the HRA fiscal year is from October 1 to September 30. The two budgets presented will be combined and entered as a revised budget under HRA; the totals will not change.

G. Govoni interjected, stating that the private RDI entities are reflected within the budget documents through the management fee income in the Central Cost Center and management fee expense everywhere else. Though, there is a separate budget. L. Cornish continued, stating that allocating all of the costs throughout the portfolio is complex, citing that no items are eliminated. The internal and external incomes are separately stated. In the past, there were five different databases that have since been combined under HRA, utilizing a standardized chart of accounts.

L. Cornish continued, explaining that both properties are running over budget for rental income, which affects the subsidy allotted from entities such as DHCD. This is mitigated in SHA as it had a large variance in electricity, which is often caused by the timing of the year. The numbers were compared to last year, which showed large increases in November and December. More research is needed to ascertain if the increase in cost is due to usage or pricing. The utilities are 100 percent subsidized by DHCD, which causes an overage in the subsidies when there are overages in said utilities.

Section 8 is running above, and it is currently being run on a cash basis.

CDBG is running behind, which is typical at the beginning of the fiscal year.

S. Worgaftik questioned why there is more rental income than anticipated. L. Cornish responded, stating that rental income to budget for HRA and SHA is difficult as it is not a gross income but instead what the tenants can pay. Historically, this has been budgeted based on the previous year.

L. Cornish continued, stating that HCEC has a high level of variability. At this time, staffing is at full capacity, which it has not been historically.

L. Cornish stated that the fee accountant assists with the regulatory and reporting to DHCD quarterly. The documentation provided is in FCRHRA's internal format and the format requested by DHCD, though the numbers are the same. There is a balance sheet for HRA, SHA & MRVP though it only reflects the public assets. There is no regularly shown balance sheet for the whole FCRHRA. The MOD reports have been provided as well for informational purposes.

**Executive Director Performance Review:** F. Williams began, recognizing that the annual performance evaluation is a new, regular practice put in place to monitor the performance of the executive director and the organization as a whole. In conjunction with L. Brown and N. Sauber, the questions asked last year were assessed, organized, and reported back. The majority of the responses were either "strongly agree" or "agree." Some neutral responses were noted in areas that participants did not feel they could answer. The comments were mainly positive regarding G. Govoni's ability to complete her job, maintain her relationships, and move the organization forward. Year-to-year, there is good performance noted. More responses would be preferred in the future- approximately 20 responses were received for this process.

The professionalism G. Govoni has brought to the organization and RDI is appreciated. The organization has been taken forward in a very professional manner, and hard work has been put in to manage the goals, specifically changes made to the HRA Personnel Policy, merging the HRA and SHA Boards, and managing the day-to-day operations of a complicated organization.

L. Brown echoed F. Williams' comments regarding wanting more responses. From an RDI standpoint, G. Govoni has done remarkable work, specifically in creating the RDI pipeline. The ability to recognize what the organization needs and assess how to bring on more team members are the skills needed for this position, which G. Govoni has. The additions of N. Sauber and Alyssa Larose are prime examples of this. There is success all around.

S. Worgaftik added that it is exciting to see G. Govoni engage the legislative and regional issues through her knowledge and ability to work with others within the field. The organization is complicated, and it is impressive the way it has been handled.

F. Williams thanked N. Sauber for her work on the performance evaluation and echoed L. Brown's stamen on capacity building within the organization.

G. Govoni thanked the board members and transitioned to the next topic of discussion.

**Executive Director Goals:** G. Govoni stated that these goals are informal and not reported to the funders. There were five goals set in 2022, some of which were met, and others are still being worked through.

The first priority was accomplishing the merger of HRA and SHA, which has now become a working project with DHCD. This accomplishment dramatically affects both her and L. Cornish's availability to focus on the goals of the organization. Due to L. Cornish's work, HRA has the stability to continue and become stronger on the HRA and RDI side. Work must be done to make standard operating procedures and provide the staff members with the ability to communicate more effectively; this is not something that has been in place in the past. Progress has been made through the merger and Sanderson Place. Pam Parmakian has worked diligently on Sanderson Place, which had thirty tenants leased in the last three weeks and will be fully leased by March 15.

The RDI Real Estate Committee has met and discussed the need for financials and the pipeline. A lot of information is taken from the community meetings, which is then woven together with the work being done through HRA and RDI. This past year, N. Sauber has worked to make HRA an employer of choice within the community. Greater financial reporting is needed going forward, which will be worked on in conjunction with N. Sauber and L. Cornish. As work is done on the future fiscal year's budget, time must be invested in the ability to report internally. It has been a pleasure to do this job.

**Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Fund Contracts:** G. Govoni stated that HRA has worked with 15 communities throughout Franklin County to administer revolving rehabilitation loan funding through CDBG. These funds are used to assist new homeowners through funds from loans that have been repaid. The funds belong to the communities; HRA acts as an administrator.

Commissioner Brown moved, and Commissioner Worgaftik seconded a motion to authorize Gina Govoni, Executive Director, to execute Contract Addendum #1 extending the time of performance for all Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Contracts for one year.

Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

**HRA Personnel Handbook:** N. Sauber stated that Section 1.4 of the HRA Personnel Handbook has been updated to reflect the history of the organization relating to the structural change of the HRA Board of Commissioners due to the recent HRA and SHA merger.

L. Brown noted a discrepancy between the drafted HRA Personnel Handbook and the proposed HRA By-Laws, stating that the Handbook indicates that the governor appoints two Members, and the By-Laws indicate that DHCD appoints two Members. G. Govoni responded, stating that the governor appoints the two Members, but the process is completed by DHCD. For consistency, the By-Laws will be updated to state that the governor is the body responsible for appointing the two Members in question.

G. Govoni added that the HRA website has recently been updated to reflect the changes to the structure of the HRA Board.

Commissioner Williams moved, and Commissioner Cucchiara seconded a motion to approve the changes to the HRA Personnel Handbook as presented.

Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

**HRA By-Laws:** R. Bowen Weld expressed concerns that the language used in the By-Laws is vague and suggested performing more research before approving the proposed motion.

G. Govoni explained that the By-Laws were drafted by legal counsel and were written intentionally to allow staff the ability to perform their duties in a way that is not taxing or onerous.

R. Bowen Weld stated that compared to the former SHA By-Laws, the candor used is unappealing. Specifically, the Secretary's job is defined in a convoluted way that does not feel clear. G. Govoni responded, stating that the HRA Internal Control Manual explains the positions outlined in the By-Laws in more detail.

G. Govoni suggested accepting the By-Laws as written while noting the aforementioned change suggested by L. Brown regarding the governor appointing the two additional Members instead of DHCD.

L. Brown added that there are typographical errors in the By-Laws that should be amended. Specifically, the word "Board" is not capitalized on the first and third pages, and Section 8 refers to the Members as Directors. G. Govoni added that there is an unnecessary comma in Section 5 that would need to be eliminated.

M. Cucchiara proposed accepting the By-Laws as they are written, including L. Brown's aforementioned comments and the typographical alterations suggested by G. Govoni and L. Brown.

Commissioner Cucchiara moved, and Commissioner Williams seconded a motion to approve the newly drafted HRA By-Laws as presented with changes to the designation of the body that appoints the two additional Members and all typographical errors, incorporating the Mass General Laws Chapter 297 of the acts of 2002.

Vote 4 in favor; 1 opposed; 0 abstaining

G. Govoni stated that with this vote in place, officers will be elected at the next meeting. HRA's attorney Felicity Hardee reviewed the presented By-Laws, and the Internal Control Manual was reviewed by a separate audit firm.

S. Worgaftik questioned if R. Bowen Weld's concerns could be examined in the future. G. Govoni responded affirmatively.

R. Bowen Weld expressed additional concerns that while the By-Laws can be edited at any time, it is more challenging once they are in place. G. Govoni stated that this item can be put back on the agenda at any time. M. Cucchiara agreed with G. Govoni, highlighting that it is vital to enact By-Laws at this time.

G. Govoni noted that N. Sauber is actively reevaluating the Internal Control Manual and can share it with the Board.

**HRA Formal Posting Location:** G. Govoni stated that an internal operational review noted that the formal process of posting the HRA Board of Commissioner meeting agendas is not documented in a board vote. This vote is to formally adopt the HRA website as the formal posting location.

Commissioner Worgaftik moved, and Commissioner Cucchiara seconded a motion to formally adopt the HRA website as the formal posting location for the monthly HRA Board of Commissioners meeting agendas.

Vote 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

**3. Staff Report**

G. Govoni began, stating that the HCEC team is now fully staffed. The CD team is submitting four different applications this week, one of which is regional. The applications total over \$4,000,000 in grant funds; the team is hopeful that all four applications will be approved and funded. A meeting is scheduled at Highland Village with staff members and the LTO to discuss the MOU. For Sanderson Place, a formal ribbon cutting is being planned, with more information to come.

**4. Other Business**

**Highland Village Tenant Organization:** Guest P. Clark noted that there were no comments at this time.

**5. Documents for Informational Purposes**

No discussion.

**6. Other business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance**

No Discussion

**7. Adjourn**

L. Brown moved, and M. Cucchiara 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 5:44 p.m.