



## Fitchburg Housing Authority

### Minutes of FHA Regular Board Meeting, May 20, 2020

**22 Valley Street, Canton Valley Community Room, Fitchburg, MA**

Pursuant to Massachusetts Governor Baker's Executive Order issued on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in response to the declared Covid-19 State of Emergency epidemic and per the guidelines set by DHCD's Public Housing Notice 2020-11, and 2020-16, a Regular Meeting of the Fitchburg Housing Authority was called to order by Chairperson, Linda Byrne at 8:30 AM on Wednesday, May 20 2020 by teleconference for the public in the C. J. Durkin Community Room in the City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

**Present:**

FHA Board Members:

Linda Byrne, Chair

Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair

David Rousseau, Treasurer

David Basilio, Assistant Treasurer

Adam Goodwin, Member

**Absent: None**

FHA Staff:

Douglas Bushman, Executive Director

Andrew Skoog, Deputy Director

Kim Hergert, Finance Director

Yoko Ishii, Executive Assistant / Bookkeeper

Christy Mylott, Resident Coordinator/COVID-19 Coordinator

Susan-President, Canton Valley Tenant Association

**Quorum: Yes (Quorum Requirement: Three FHA Board Members)**

**1. Motion to Open Meeting**

Chairperson, Linda Byrne opened the meeting at 8:30am.

**Move: Mary Giannetti**

**Second: Adam Goodwin All in favor**

**2. Motion to Open Public Comments**

**Move: Adam Goodwin**

**Second: Mary Giannetti All in favor**

Susan, President of the Canton Valley Tenant Association, commented that Yaya has done a wonderful job. Douglas Bushman, the Executive Director noted that requests like the TV etc. have been put on hold due to the COVID crisis.

**3. Motion to Close Public Comments**

**Move: Mary Giannetti**

**Second: David Basilio All in Favor**

**4. Motion to Approve Minutes of Meeting held on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020**

Mary Giannetti, Vice Chair pointed out there are some typos in the minutes. The minutes will be corrected and emailed to the Board Members.

**Move: Adam Goodwin**

**Second: David Rousseau All in favor**

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5. **Motion to Approve FHA Payables for April-May FY 2020**

**Move: Adam Goodwin**

**Second: David Basilio**

**All in favor**

6. **Motion to Approve March FY2020 Financials**

Douglas Bushman discussed the March financials, maintenance labor total budget \$713,853 (\$170,000 per month) in the public state housing 4410. Outside contractor's fee diminished significantly. Our goal is to reduce the vacancies and to reduce the outside contractors. Mary Giannetti asked about legal expenses. The Executive Director answered the detailed legal cost. Also explained how the CPA's report was calculated. But he will get an answer from the CPA. David Rousseau, Treasure asked about the COVID19 funds. The Executive Director stated the COVID funds didn't exist in the March report because the FHA received the funds (about \$48000) last week. The financial report comes a month behind because the CPA worked remotely. David Basilio thanked for using local lawyer. The Executive Director noted the FHA will use more local contractor in order to stimulate local economy.

**Move: Adam Goodwin**

**Second: Mary Giannetti**

**All in favor**

7. **Review and Modifications of FHA Personnel Policy**

The Executive Director updated about the FHA Personnel Policy, which has been put on hold previously due to legal opinions such as how an exempt employee defined. Mary Giannetti asked if the list or comparison of the changes between old and reviewed one would be possible to present to the Board. The Executive Director answered he will come up with a system for the tracking of the sections, and will present a first draft to the Board in three months.

8. **Executive Director Report**

Douglas Bushman, Executive Director updated followings;

- 1) Mass NAIIRO-rescheduled in September (But later they changed to virtual meeting in September and in-person conference is rescheduled in November 15-18).
- 2) Audits-Agreed Upon Procedure (By MARCUM), Performance Management Review by the DHCD, HUD Audit (By MARCUM), Authority Wide Finances Audit (By MARCUM)  
All of the audits, the AUP and the PMR will be conducted remotely due to COVID-19, and the deadline has been extended. FHA sent out the letter to DHCD about the changes of the system and will update the progress to the Board.
- 3) FY2020 Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB) Review
- 4) FHA's Response to the Coronavirus

Christy Mylott spoke about her experience and explained the FHA's Response to the Coronavirus including COVID-19 Hotline (7 days a week). The tenants are very happy. She also stated about the United Way \$500 funds. The overriding goals of the response plan are as follows:

- a) **Prevent**-Educate tenants, disperse from gathering. Working on security and awareness. Avert COVID-19 infections and the spreading of the virus in FHA
- b) **Coordinate**-Work with other service providers, non-profits and public agencies to deliver services and supplies for the FHA's customers, tenants and staff. COVID-19 Hotline gives tenants a sense of security.
- c) **Contain**-Work towards decreasing the risk of spreading COVID-19 and contacting those area that have been exposed to the virus.
- d) **Recovery**-Ensure that services are in place for those tenants that are in COVID-19 recovery.

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The Executive Director added that Wachusett Medical Reserve Corp, the FHA maintenance staff and Admin staff have done a great job. In addition, he entered into a contract to provide security officers at C.J. Durkin and Wallace Towers for 10 hours a day/7 days a week, which will be paid from the COVID-19 funds. The tenants are happy to have a sense of security. The FHA staff signed on the protecting Tenants' Medical and other confidential information. Linda Byrne asked if there is any abuse, the DV or Child Abuse case. Christy Mylott, COVID-19 Coordinator, explained that security helped and tenants feel safer. David Rousseau complimented that all of information was well taken and well done, however, claimed there has been no tenant input on this, and also about the security should be given authority to deny access to those without mask also to deny visitors. The Executive Director answered this plan is weekly plan and next COVID Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, and welcomed tenants' input at the meeting. For the visitor issue, the FHA will approach the Local Board health to obtain the order that we are comfortable with. And for the mask issue, you cannot enforce the security according to the Governor's order. There were further discussions about masks and visitors issues. Also, the Executive Director express thanks for the donation (masks, hand sanitizers and \$1500 check) from the FHA vendor, Power Option. Kim Hergert contacted them for this request. David Rousseau, Treasurer added Sam Squailia, City Councilor at Large, donated 150 masks to Durkin tenants.

5) Ice Cream Social Distance Social & Candy Count Contest

COVID-19 Team have done some social events at Elderly Housing & Canton Valley, Scattered Site: Ice Cream Social Distance, it worked. For Green Acres, we are planning another fun family event. Notified the tenants by Facebook, website & Robocall.

6) Protective Supplies for Tenants & Staff

The DHCD supplied masks and some cleaning product to both housing authority staff and tenants.

7) Record Destruction Round 2.- to have done by June/July at Durkin and Round 3 at Daniels Heights

8) Waiting for Response Grant Submittal to UMass Health Alliance-Clinton

9) Request for special funding for Milk & Normandy, Resident Empowerment Program

10) Vacancy & HAFIS Report

Andrew Skoog, Deputy Director updated Vacancy report. The vacancy rate for May 1<sup>st</sup> decreased from 41 units to 38 units. The breakdown on 38 units, 3 of them were RTO (Ready to Occupy units and 13 units are asbestos off-line units leaving only 22 needing rehab. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, leasing of units has decreased. Although the FHA is not yet at the 3% standard yet, the trend is very positive. Genesis has been doing a phenomenal job on lease-up. In comparison with last year's vacancy rate, it made significant progress.

11) FHA Being a Good Neighbor

The Executive Director stated that local residents praised for the maintenance crews cleaning the area-behind Normandy Road running parallel to Water Street (Rt12). Now the area is free of garbage and debris and also provide a place for families and children to safely relax.

12) Creative Place Making Grant Submitted

The Executive Director updated that he submitted the Creative Place making Grant. Based on the parameters of the grant, Durkin apartment was selected thanks to Tricia Pistone, Senior Vice-President of MOC, Liz Murphy, Director of Housing and Development Fitchburg Department of Community Development and Tom Skwierawski, Executive Director of the

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Fitchburg Department of Planning & Community Development and David Rousseau, Durkin Tenant Association. Furthermore, the Executive Director updated about the work capacity issues on the construction. Jose Lopez, MOD Clerk has been training,

- 13) New Public Housing File System for All Public Housing Programs.  
Andy Skoog, Deputy Director has just implemented new filing system. All the tenant correspondents were thrown into a folder chronologically. It should be completed sometime in June-July. Mary Giannetti suggested that scanning the documents help for filing issue. The Deputy Director will confirm if the State allows us to keep the scanned document instead of paper version after tenants vacate.
- 14) Single-family Scattered Site Updates-all occupied  
Forest, Taft St-HUD conversion, Overland has a massive sidewalk/driveway, Exeter St- Outstanding job. The two units will be profitable \$1000 a month. The tour of Scattered Sites delayed due to COVID-19.
- 15) Proposed Sale & Disposition Status:  
The FHA has submitted the Draft RFP to DHCD for review and approval. We want to solve issues ASAP. We are going to put out to bid. The Executive Director will show the assessment of the house.
- 16) Resident Service Report-First Report.
- 17) Memorial Day event at CJ Durkin-Durkin TA are working with our RSC with safe and social distancing. Also D-Day Event will be planned with small group gathering on June 6.
- 18) Construction Updates:
  - a) Construction Work -Difficulty closing old projects .Hopefully close by Labor Day.
  - b) Capital Improvement Plan—Revision –waiting for a final response.
  - c) MOD Phase Updates-almost finalize the scope of work.
  - c) Low Flow Sustainability Grant Request-Green Acres Waiting for Response.
  - e) FISH097136 Conversion from DHCD to HUD housing-Work will start from May 18
  - f) FISH097137 Boilers at Green Acres
  - g) FISH097127 AUI Grant-working with DHCD to finalize a scope of work and select an architect.
  - h) FISH097076 Green Acres Basement Project-100% Construction document submitted
  - I) Green Acres Gateway Grant Updates- on Monday Question session with DHCD was held.

**9. Motion to Allow the FHA Board to Enter into Executive Session at 10:27am**

**Move: David Basilio**

**Second: Mary Giannetti**

**All in favor**

**10. Motion to Allow the FHA Board to End Executive Session at 11:10am**

**Move: David Basilio**

**Second: Mary Giannetti**

**All in favor**

**11. Motion to Adjourn Meeting adjourned at 11:11am**

**Move: Mary Giannetti**

**Second: Adam Goodwin**

**All in favor**

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