

FALMOUTH HOUSING AUTHORITY
COMMISSIONERS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, December 29, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.
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The Falmouth Housing Authority conducted a General Session Commissioners Board Meeting on Tuesday, December 29, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. via a virtual meeting pursuant to Massachusetts Governor Charles D. Baker's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law dated March 12, 2020. The public was invited to join in the meeting by going to: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89189544409> ; Meeting ID: 891 8954 4409 or dial 1-646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 891 8954 4409; and follow the instructions to join virtual meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Patricia Favulli
Robert Mascali
Stephen Patton

MEMBERS ABSENT: Linda Howard

STAFF PRESENT: Bobbi Richards, Executive Director
Leslie Pearce, Assistant Director
Kimberly Conn, Fiscal Officer

OTHERS PRESENT: Laura Bancroft, Chris Kicza & John Winslow, Winslow Architects

Ms. Favulli called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

Winslow Architects was present and the Commissioners offered to address their item first.

Resolution 2020-128

Mr. Patton moved to take item out of order. Mr. Mascali seconded.

3-Ayes (Favulli, Mascali, Patton) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

Report of the Maintenance Department

-Harborview piping project update by Winslow Architects

Chris Kicza and John Winslow offered the following update:

The clock is now officially running on the Harborview project. The next 3 weeks will be spent buying and sorting materials. It is expected that in mid-January work will begin in the first floor hallways and after that the first group of vertical pipe risers will be undertaken. This is a challenging stack with the vertical pipes serving 8 units. It is expected that tenants will be out of their units for about 10 days as work is done. Issues encountered and worked through with this stack can be used when work is done on the other stacks. It is written into the contract documents that there be compliance with state Covid-19 regulations.

Ms. Richards explained that the housing authority has been working closely with tenants to secure accommodations for them based on their needs and levels of comfort. The Admiralty, Holiday Inn and Shorewood Acres are under consideration and some tenants may opt to stay with family. Tenants appear receptive to the project despite the difficulties associated with being out of their homes. Only one or two have yet to make plans. It appears likely that the amount needed for housing and food vouchers will be greater than anticipated due to the greater than anticipated length of time tenants will need to be out of their units. The Capital Plan will need to be reopened since Ms. Richards was advised that any grant funding, if received, would not include food and housing. Since this constitutes an emergency, 45 days notice would not be needed.

Chris Kicza and John Winslow noted that they were sensitive to the fact that this is occupied housing.

-Change Order to standardize toilets

Ms. Richards said that pricing is not complete and this issue will be put on the next agenda.

-Update on public housing portfolio

Ms. Richards reported that the generator at the administrative offices is expected to be completely installed by the end of January.

A notice was issued by HUD informing that the FHA lease up rate of 95% was 1% short. The FHA is working hard to meet the 96% rate. Hurdles include the pandemic, renters having no money to afford a move, cost of repairing long term tenants' units after they leave.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of 11/17/20 – Regular Session – VOTE

Resolution 2020-129

Mr. Patton moved to approve. Mr. Mascali seconded.

3-Ayes (Patton, Favulli, Mascali) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

New Business

Public and Tenant Representative comments

None

Report of the Fiscal Officer

-Payment of bills and approval of HAP payments – VOTE

Mr. Patton requested to see the payments grouped by payee. Ms. Conn will organize by payee.

Resolution 2020-130

Mr. Patton moved approval of the HAP payments. Mr. Mascali seconded.

3-Ayes (Patton, Favulli, Mascali) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

-September and October 2020 financial statements

Ms. Conn explained that the figures are based on last years numbers since this fiscal year budget has not yet been approved.

Report of the Assistant Director

Monthly leased housing summary report

Reviewed.

It was noted that the Section 8 waiting list contained 1,007 names and consideration should be given to closing the list.

The commissioners inquired about the list of units offline. Ms. Richards said that it was permissible to discuss under the public housing category. Many of the scattered site houses suffer from modernization issues. The opportunity to undertake significant repairs such as to septic systems are seized when tenants move out. DHCD has issued many vacancy waivers.

Explanations of units offline included:

- A tenant moving to a different level of care and being unable to remove belongings.
- Rehabilitation work being undertaken after a tenant moves out.
- Probate issues.
- Insufficient staff to execute a prompt turnover.
- Major issues in the basement at Tatakot which are more than the maintenance staff can do.
- One vacancy is due to a fire.
- Delay acquiring countertops due to pandemic.

Regarding the fire issue: The FHA has been waiting for the fire department to send 5 photos which would document smoking by a tenant. The tenant has been housed elsewhere at the expense of FHA and there have been other incidents. Counsel has been consulted and the FHA is now ready to move forward.

Report of the Executive Director

-COVID updates

A staff member tested positive. December 23 was the last day they were in the office. Testing was offered to all staff and counsel advised that it was up to the staff to decide on testing.

Following the governor's directives, there will be a new emphasis on teleworking at least until January 4th.

-Housing Choice Voucher Programs Model Admin plan - VOTE

Ms. Richards explained that a switch was being made to a company that was easier to work with. She requested a vote on the entire plan.

The commissioners inquired about what precipitated the proposed changes.

Ms. Richards said that the reasons included additional time for staff and tenants to review, requirements that staff use multiple means to contact those on the waiting list including emails, calls and letters while still explicating that it is the responsibility of those on the waiting list to keep contact information updated, options for private and group meetings, extensions for 30 day repairs for circumstances such as when the landlord may be out of state and unable to travel.

Resolution 2020-131

Mr. Patton moved adopt the plan. Mr. Mascali seconded.

3-Ayes (Patton, Favulli, Mascali) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

-Public Housing

See above for additional discussion.

-Flat rent increase from \$1000 to \$1100 per month

Ms. Richards requested approval of an increase of \$100.00. She noted that the tenant may choose flat rate or income based options. The average market rate in Falmouth for a one bedroom is well over \$1,100.00.

A discussion included the following:

- This is a 10% increase. Is there any way to do this incrementally?
- Another consideration is that there is a pandemic.
- The rate has been at \$1,000.00 for over two years.
- This proposal is a substantial increase.
- The rate should actually be close to \$1,250.00 at this point.
- Can the tenants even afford this extra \$100.00?
- Considering the budget, it is important that the units are priced at market rate.
- Can this be done incrementally? For example, 5% this year and 5% next year until the market rate is locked in?
- Kim Conn did some calculations and concluded that these 3 tenants, based on their reported incomes, could afford the \$100.00 increase. It was the opinion of the Fiscal Officer that the \$1,100.00 rate was affordable and prolonging increases would make the process more difficult.

It was agreed that the commissioners would vote at the next meeting.

The commissioners requested an update at the next meeting on evictions regulations.

-Update on voucher programs portfolio

Updated during the report of the Assistant Director above.

Resolution 2020-132

At 5:57 Mr. Mascali moved to adjourn. Mr. Patton seconded.

3-Ayes (Patton, Favulli, Mascali) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED