

FALMOUTH HOUSING AUTHORITY - COMMISSIONERS BOARD MEETING MINUTES
115 Scranton Avenue, Falmouth, MA 02540
Tel: (508) 548-1977 Fax: (508) 457-7573 www.falmouthhousing.org

The Falmouth Housing Authority conducted a General Session Commissioners Board Meeting on Tuesday, October 19, 2021 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 were invited to join in the meeting by going to:

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84445804099> Meeting ID: 844 4580 4099

Audio Access: 1-646-558-8656 Meeting ID: 844 4580 4099

MEMBERS PRESENT: Patricia Favulli (*exited the meeting at 5:55 p.m.*)
Robert Mascali
Stephen Patton
Michael Galasso (*logged in at 4:35 pm*)
Kathleen Haynes

STAFF PRESENT: Bobbi Richards, Executive Director
Leslie Pearce, Assistant Director
Chuck Starr, Fiscal Officer

OPEN SESSION

At 4:33 p.m. Patricia Favulli called the meeting to order.

Approval of General Session Minutes – Minutes of 9/21/21 - VOTE
Tabled to the end of the meeting because of quorum.

Public Comments

None offered.

New Business

-Discussion regarding outreach strategies to reach diverse communities
The discussion included the following:

- Michael Galasso said requested this on the agenda to see if there was a way to do more outreach to more diverse populations.

- Kathleen Haynes said that the term ‘disabled’ should be added to the discussion of diverse communities.
- Robert Mascali asked what is known about the diversity of the applicants to housing authority programs. Bobbi Richards shared that the applications contain questions that ask about diversity.
- Patricia Favulli noted that early in the tenure of the present director, diversity and strategies to increase it were discussed.
- Kathleen Haynes shared that a recent review of state statistics show that there is a higher percentage of Asian population in Falmouth than any other minority group.
- Michael Galasso asked if the Executive Director has goals set for diversity ratio of staff. Bobbi Richards said that reviews of the waiting list and population housed indicate that this is not a diverse community. There is a place on applications that allows for applicants to voluntarily disclose disability, age and ethnicity and most people do. The majority of tenants identify as disabled, single and Caucasian. The housing authority would like to increase its diversity of staff and amongst the tenants and is seeking ideas on outreach strategies.
- Michael Galasso said that a plan is needed. The town has hired a diversity officer and it may be helpful to consult with her.
- Bobbi Richards encouraged the board to watch the recent YouTube program that the Director was asked to participate in – the topic was racism in affordable housing and the focus was on the Town of Falmouth. Bobbi Richards said that the level of diversity reflected in Falmouth housing may be affected by experiences of people of color and shared that thought be given to why people don’t want to live in Falmouth public housing. There are other issues besides money that may be barriers to interest in affordable housing in the Town of Falmouth. An example that happened just within the past 30 minutes was shared: A temporary worker was doing landscape cleanup at Harborview when a tenant approached them and addressed them using a term meant to insult based on skin color. Bobbi Richards shared that the same negative term had been directed at herself during her tenure at FHA as the ED. There are reasons that people do not feel welcomed to apply to be tenants at FHA besides money. Bobbi Richards noted that efforts are being made to cultivate an environment that is more welcoming to a diverse group of staff and tenants and cultural factors that impede this must be examined and acknowledged.
- Patricia Favulli noted that there is little to no diversity on committees that serve town government. A training Patricia attended at the Seacrest urged starting the process with coffee and social time.
- Michael Galasso and Kathleen Haynes shared that during their youth, the Town had more diversity. Tokenism is a concern; people of color may not be interested if they feel they will be a token at the organization or in the development. Topic will be added to a future agenda for continued discussion.

Report of Maintenance Department – work order and project review

-Change No. 1 – JW Dubis & Sons, Inc. DHCD 096075 (Jamie Ln) - \$5,203.00 - VOTE

It was explained that an additional tank was discovered when excavation of the septic system was done and existing soil could not be used to backfill. This project is under control of the state and the situation causing the change was unforeseeable.

Patricia Favulli noted that JW Dubis & Sons has submitted change orders after bid for awarded projects and that the change orders should be reviewed and the process of bidding should be discussed. Bobbi Richards agreed to review and discuss past projects with the state as it relates to the issuance of change orders after the job is awarded.

Resolution 2022-026

Michael Galasso moved to approve Change No. 1 – JW Dubis & Sons, Inc. DHCD 096075 (Jamie Ln) for \$5,203.00. Steve Patton seconded.

5-Ayes (Favulli, Galasso, Haynes, Mascali, Patton) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

-Active Bid – DHCD #096082 – 705-H Vacant Unit Clean Out - \$12,000.00

Bobbi Richards said that this was presented for the commissioners' information about the bidding process. Bobbi Richards shared that that DHCD had initially denied the proposal and then reconsidered. The clean out, which FHA emphasized to DHCD was hazardous for regular maintenance, is now out to bid. Rehabilitation of this unit will require another bidding process. There has been no determination from DHCD about selling units.

-State and federal portfolio review

Bobbi Richards explained that when a unit becomes vacant the FHA uses the opportunity to do comprehensive energy efficient evaluations and upgrades and repairs.

More units have been turned recently with tenants moving in with family or to higher levels of care. One 705 tenant moved and left belongings behind which now falls to the FHA to dispose of.

Report of the Accounting Department

-Payment of September bills and HAP payments – VOTE

Resolution 2022-027

Steve Patton moved to approve the payment of September bills and HAP payments. Kathleen Haynes seconded.

5-Ayes (Favulli, Galasso, Haynes, Mascali, Patton) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

-Review of public housing aging reports

Chuck Starr reported that tenant accounts decreased by 2% this month.

Report of Assistant Director

-Leased housing summary review – September & October 2021

Leslie Pearce noted that the numbers are looking a little better this month. Usually there is little change from month to month. Bobbi Richards added the Mainstream Program was halfway leased at this point and this was a considerable achievement since the population housed under this program was a challenge to lease up because they must be under 62, disabled and homeless or at risk of being homeless to qualify.

-Utility Allowances (Oct 2021-Sept 2022) - VOTE
Leslie Pearse asked that the vote be retroactive to October 1, 2021.

Resolution 2022-028

Steve Patton moved to approve the proposed utility allowances retroactive to October 1, 2021, but with concern expressed for rising fuel costs. Michael Galasso seconded.

5-Ayes (Favulli, Galasso, Haynes, Mascali, Patton) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

Bobbi Richards said that the vote will be used but the allowances can also be reviewed to see if there are changes that may be in favor of the FHA. The matter can be brought back to the board at a later date. A brief discussion about energy efficiency and the hope to move away from fossil fuels occurred.

Michael Galasso shared that a goal for the housing authority could be to move towards increased off-grid options, such as solar for all properties.

Report of the Executive Director

-Emergency Safety Grant funding update – Tatakot Piping

The FHA has reengaged with the grant writer regarding a new federal grant. The 2020 grant funding has been exhausted and a new grant is being sought for the Tatakot project where the anticipated additional project costs are \$700,000.00 to \$800,000.00. The extension of the obligation is also under discussion. The goal is to have one bid process.

-Mask mandates for housing authority properties

Bobbi Richards has been discussing this issue with other housing authorities. There is no policy in place at FHA. There is a mask station in the office and most people mask up when requested. Staff has an option to do remote business.

The commissioners agreed that no policy was needed.

-Occupancy limits for community rooms at Harborview & Tatakot – VOTE

Bobbi Richards reported that FHA did its own occupancy study and determined a limit of 49 for each of the community rooms and presented the following question:

Should room use be allowed for private parties hosted by tenants during the pandemic? A discussion included the following:

- There is presently no policy in place.
- Historically, tenants have sought permission to use the rooms for holiday parties and other functions.
- There is presently a request to use a community room for a holiday party.
- Rooms are presently being used for bingo.
- There are an increasing number of attendees at bingo, including those who are friends and relatives of tenants.
- There should be a policy but there isn't enough time to make one for the present request.
- If bingo is limited to 12 there will be frustration expressed from the tenants.
- The commissioners agreed that they would support Bobbi Richards in whatever decision is made regarding the request.

- The health clinic has not yet returned to the space.
- Any policy should be carefully made considering a return to meeting in person and prohibition on excluding anyone wishing to attend.
- Masks could change any occupancy calculations.

-Reasonable Accommodation Policy – State portfolio - VOTE

Bobbi Richards said a draft of the policy was provided to the Board previously. The generic draft was revised to be specific to the Falmouth Housing Authority, its properties and tenants.

Resolution 2022-029

Steve Patton moved to approve the Reasonable Accommodation Policy revision as drafted by DHCD. Michael Galasso seconded.

5-Ayes (Favulli, Galasso, Haynes, Mascali, Patton) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

Resolution 2022-030

Approval of General Session Minutes – Minutes of 9/21/21 - VOTE

Kathleen Haynes moved to approve the general session minutes of 9/21/21. Steve Patton seconded.

5-Ayes (Favulli, Galasso, Haynes, Mascali, Patton) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

Next meeting agenda items – due by Tuesday, November 16, 2021

Reorganization of the Board, subcommittee work, retreat plans

Note: Per Chair request, please submit all agenda items to the Chair (boc1@falmouthhousing.org) to allow for proper planning for future meetings.

J. Adjournment

Resolution 2022-031

Steve Patton moved to adjourn at 5:58 p.m.. Michael Galasso seconded.

4-Ayes (Galasso, Haynes, Mascali, Patton) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

Relevant Documents

Change No. 1 – JW Dubis & Sons, Inc. DHCD 096075,

General Session Minutes of 9/21/21,

705-H Vacant Unit Clean Out Bid

Utility Allowance Study conducted by Nelrod for October 2021 – September 2022

HAP Accounting Cash Register & Landlord Payment History for September 2021

Public Housing Aging Report for September 2021

Reasonable Accommodation Draft Policy provided by DHCD

Leased Housing Summaries September and October 2021

FHA Community Room Occupancy Report