

FALMOUTH HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
GENERAL SESSION BOARD MEETING DRAFT MINUTES

Monday, July 31, 2023

115 Scranton Avenue, Falmouth, MA 02540

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The Falmouth Housing Authority conducted a General Commissioners Board Meeting on Monday, July 31, 2023. The general session began at 4:30 p.m. The Board did its best to adhere to posted time frames, but times varied. The meetings was held 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 general session meeting by going to:

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87287345112>

Meeting ID: 872 8734 5112

Audio Access: 1-646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 872 8734 5112

MEMBERS PRESENT: Patricia Favulli
Michael Galasso
Kathleen Haynes
Stephen Patton

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Mascali

STAFF PRESENT: Bobbi Richards, Executive Director
Leslie Pearce, Assistant Director
Charles Starr, Fiscal Officer
Bobbi Richards, Executive Director
Chuck Starr, Fiscal Officer
Michael Coffey, Maintenance Superintendent

OTHERS PRESENT: Laura Bancroft, Noel Annonem – Falmouth Enterprise, Sharon Burgess, Lawrence O'Brien, Patrick Gamelin – Flynn Law & Associates, unknown (iPhone)

OPEN SESSION

At 4:32 p.m. Patricia Favulli called the meeting to order and read regulations for remote meetings.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the Chair so declares.

2. To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition, or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.

Resolution 2024-001

Steve Patton moved to go to executive session. Kathleen Haynes seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Patricia Favulli-aye

Kathleen Haynes-ayes

Michael Galasso-aye

Steve Patton -aye

4 Ayes (Favulli, Galasso, Haynes, Patton)

0-Nays

MOTION CARRIED

At 4:54 p.m. the GENERAL SESSION resumed.

Recognition, Announcements and Public Comments

Bobbi Richards recognized Laura Bancroft for volunteering and representing the FHA at the Rotary of Falmouth's Day of Play event for families. Bobbi Richards was grateful for Laura Bancroft's assistance.

Bobbi Richards recognized the Bourne Housing Authority for allowing a tenant from the FHA to be housed in Bourne for 30 days while their flooded apartment was repaired.

Steve Patton recognized Leslie Pearce for stepping up during Bobbi Richards' recovery.

Items requiring discussion and votes:

-General Session of 6/22/23

Resolution 2024-004

Steve Patton moved to approve the minutes. Kathleen Haynes seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Patricia Favulli-aye

Kathleen Haynes-ayes

Michael Galasso-aye

Steve Patton -aye
4 Ayes (Favulli, Galasso, Haynes, Patton) 0-Nays MOTION CARRIED

- Executive Session of 6/22/23

Resolution 2024-005

Steve Patton moved to approve the minutes. Kathleen Haynes seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Patricia Favulli-aye

Kathleen Haynes-ayes

Michael Galasso-aye

Steve Patton -aye

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

-241 Scranton Ave – Lawrence O’Brien – vote

Pat Gamelin said that Flynn Law Group had reviewed Lawrence O’Brien’s request. A title search was performed and the plot plan was reviewed. Flynn Law Group did not see things as portrayed by Lawrence O’Brien and the grass covered strip, an extension of the lawn of Lawrence O’Brien, encroaches on the Salt Sea Lane property. Flynn Law Group saw no need or reason to grant an easement or license as requested by Lawrence O’Brien. Pat Gamelin reviewed that the legal opinion of DHCD, issued some time ago, was that FHA not only should not but could not grant an easement or license to Lawrence O’Brien; additionally public procurement would be required. It was recommended that FHA not adopt the proposal of Lawrence O’Brien.

Lawrence O’Brien asked Pat Gamelin if he received comments that Lawrence O’Brien sent to him yesterday. Pat Gamelin said that he had but this did not change the opinion.

Resolution 2024-007

Michael Galasso moved to reject the request of Lawrence O’Brien for a license or easement through Salt Sea Lane to the property at 241 Scranton Avenue. Steve Patton seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Patricia Favulli-aye

Kathleen Haynes-ayes

Michael Galasso-aye

Steve Patton -aye

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

- Annual insurance for federal properties, Rogers and Gray – vote

Sharon Burgess appeared to discuss FHA’s property insurance that was effective July 2023. The discussion included the following:

- The 30%increase is largely due to increases in property values.
- This is a hard market with increased costs for materials and catastrophic claims causing large loses for insurers. Reinsurance entities are not as profitable.

- For FHA, the overall rate has been improved and deductibles are better.
- Philadelphia Insurance previously insured the FHA and now HAI insures both the state and federal properties.
- Bayberry House is included in the policy.
- There was a limited number of insurers willing to bid. The quote of choice after HAI was much less favorable. Insuring through Mass Fair Plan was examined as well. Layer programs were considered where insurance for part of the value would be purchased.
- It was noted by Michael Galasso that it would be better to present the numbers to the Board in advance of the policy being approved. Sharon Burgess explained that this was not possible in the present market based on market fluctuation but she would try to provide close estimates for the next annual renewal in advance.

Resolution 2024-008

Steve Patton moved to approve the current insurance program as presented. Kathleen Haynes seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Patricia Favulli-aye

Kathleen Haynes-ayes

Michael Galasso-aye

Steve Patton -aye

4 Ayes (Favulli, Galasso, Haynes, Patton)

0-Nays

MOTION CARRIED

-Reorganization of the Board (positions) – Tabled until full board is present.

-Physical Needs Assessment, Abacus– vote

Bobbi Richards noted that there was a 4-month search for an agency that was both willing to do the task and had the expertise to do so.

Michael Galasso asked to see a sample of Abacus’s reports. He inquired about funding specifications. There should be a stipulation that anything done is acceptable to our members. Also, Abacus needs to meet with the maintenance people.

Patricia Favulli noted that Abacus has worked with housing authorities in New Bedford, Concord, Cambridge, and others.

Michael Galasso said that he did not want to hold up work and wanted to empower Bobbi Richards to negotiate.

Resolution 2024-009

Steve Patton moved to go to approve the contract as discussed. Kathleen Haynes seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Patricia Favulli-aye

Kathleen Haynes-ayes

Michael Galasso-aye

Steve Patton -aye

4 Ayes (Favulli, Galasso, Haynes, Patton)

0-Nays

MOTION CARRIED

-Project-based contract award(s) – vote(s):

(See notes below)

The contracts have expired but FHC is still receiving vacancy payments. This was presented this year as an issue for HUD; they have requested repayment of the vacancy payments. FHA is challenging that decision based on its work with a different department at HUD years prior when the project-based contracts were in question. It was determined that all contracts are under extension and/or plan to be extended and therefore no vote was needed.

-Payment of bills and HAP payments – vote

Resolution 2024-006

Kathleen Haynes moved to approve the HAP payments and bills for June. Steve Patton seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Patricia Favulli-aye

Kathleen Haynes-ayes

Michael Galasso-abstained

Steve Patton -aye

3 Ayes (Favulli, Haynes, Patton) 0-Nays 1-Abstain (Galasso)

MOTION CARRIED

BUSINESS

-Report from Maintenance Depart (town inspections, vacancies, general property updates):

Michael Coffey reported that permits had not been pulled for various projects and the Town issued a stop work order. Presently, permits have been pulled on most of the projects and work has begun again. Contractors that may not have pulled permits have been contacted. There remains some question about when permits need to be pulled and because there is no electrician or plumber on staff, it is more difficult to pull permits. For many years, work has been done without permits. Now a permit is needed to replace a faucet or remove a toilet. Patricia Favulli noted that the tTown is now being especially careful to ensure safety when work is done but the Town is pleased with the response of FHA. Maybe a plumber needs to be hired. Stoves have all been brought into compliance. Michael Coffey tracks issues and their resolution.

A question arose about the best location for the mailbox at Rose Morin. Michael Coffey sought a central location that would not be open to the weather. He also posed concern to the Board that the tenants have enjoyed the ease of access by getting their mail delivered to their doors; disabled and elderly tenants will now have to walk to a central location to get their mail. The other locations similar in design (Rose Morin and Salt Sea) have not been required to install a central location and their mail is delivered to their doors. Why is the Lakeview location being treated differently? Patricia Favulli will follow up with the Postmaster General.

-Report from Fiscal Office (monthly financial reports):

The monthly HAP reports were reviewed by Charles Starr. There were no questions. The monthly reports were not received from the fee accountants; they will be reviewed next month.

-Report of Assistant Director (leased housing report, vms):

Leslie Pearce reported that the numbers have not changes significantly from last month. Voucher briefings are being done and this has resulted in more people being on programs. Most programs are close to being fully leased up.

Leslie Pearce noted that FHA had been under review by HUD. Guidance from HUD was discrepant during the period when questions arose about project based voucher program contracts with different divisions within HUD advising FHA take conflicting actions. The FHA decided, in good faith, to continue paying on the project based vouchers years prior and HUD was made aware. HUD did not disagree with the decision.

Bobbi Richards added that it had been about 4 years that the process to resolve the issues regarding the project based voucher programs had been underway. Legal issues with the contracts were found to exist. HUD initially told FHA to stop payments and then said that payments could continue while contract issues were addressed. Nearly all contracts have been reissued as extensions.

Michael Galasso asked if there was anything in writing from HUD. Bobbi Richards said that HUD was informed of the FHA plan to pay and they offered no objection. HUD sees the numbers every month.

Michael Galasso asked what the payment totals were to date. Bobbi Richards said she would research and provide that information to the Board.

Bobbi Richards reviewed that HUD's suggestion to issue Section 8 vouchers would result in the loss of project based vouchers. This recommendation resulted in the landlord and press informing the public that FHA was attempting to take away housing opportunities for the disabled. In truth, the landlord's financing would be affected by the change of the payments from project-based to Section 8. Bobbi Richards emphasized that the housing authority cannot guarantee funding streams in perpetuity to any landlord as there are many reasons why funding streams could be affected. The Board recalled that the FHA did what it could to support the landlords in this process and that it was unfortunate that the press and public misunderstood the complexities of the issue and vilified the FHA.

-Report of Executive Director on planned activities:

Bobbi Richards said that carpeting on floors 2-4 will be replaced at Harborview. A new door entry system using face recognition and cell phones is planned for installation.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Next meeting is scheduled for August 21st . Items should be sent to Bobbi Richards by August 14.

Resolution 2024-010

At 6:23 p.m. Kathleen Haynes moved to go to adjourn. Steve Patton seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Patricia Favulli-aye

Kathleen Haynes-ayes

Michael Galasso-aye

Steve Patton -aye

4 Ayes (Favulli, Galasso, Haynes, Patton)

0-Nays

MOTION CARRIED

Relevant Documents

Executive Session Draft Minutes of 6/22/23

General Session Draft Minutes of 6/22/23

Flynn Law Group Legal Opinion of 7/5/23 re; 241 Scranton Ave

BSS Survey for 211 Scranton Ave

Insurance Quote for HAI Insurance Group

FHA Capital Needs Assessment Proposal – Abacus

Project-based Proposals from Landlords in response to RFP (704 Main St, 20 Edgerton, Bridgeport programs)

Leased Housing Summary for July 2023

Letter from Town of Falmouth regarding inspections of properties

FHA response to Town of Falmouth regarding inspection of properties/corrections

Maintenance Department Monthly vacancy report

HAP Reports of payments for July 2023

Public Housing Aging report for July 2023