

**LOWELL HOUSING AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2020 AT 5:00 P.M. (VIRTUAL)  
MERCIER CENTER, 21 SALEM STREET, LOWELL, MA**

The meeting was called to order at **5:00 p.m.** by Chairman Shea. Upon direction of the Chairperson, the Secretary called the roll of membership which resulted as follows:

Present: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Chairperson Shea provided the following direction following the roll of membership:

This Lowell Housing Authority meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 10, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law G.L. c.30A, Section 18 and Section 20

There will be no public participation in the meeting; however, the public may view and listen to the meeting via our website at [www.lhma.org](http://www.lhma.org) under "Board Meeting Minutes and Agendas"

A transcript of this meeting will be made available at [www.lhma.org](http://www.lhma.org) when available.

**MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON JULY 8, 2020**

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernes and seconded by Commissioner Marr

A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

**RESIDENT CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**RESIDENT ORGANIZATION**

None

**SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Finance Subcommittee met on September 3, 2020.

**FINANCE REPORT**

Chairperson Shea asked Sherry Giblin, Chief Financial Officer to provide comments on the operating budget. Ms. Giblin explained that the finance subcommittee met last week. There are three budget votes tonight for the Board, which include the 4 operating budgets for the agency's AMPs, the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) and the Central Office Cost Center Budget. Ms. Giblin reported that the COVID-19 pandemic is going to have a lasting impact to fiscal year 2021. State budgets will also be presented to

the Board, but the agency is waiting for the State to release budget guidelines for fiscal year 2021. We anticipate having the state budgets for the October meeting. All programs are expected to be revenue producing. Federal AMP budgets are projected at \$155k, Central Office budget at \$168K, and Housing Choice Voucher program at \$67K. Ms. Giblin explained that additional CARES act funding will help cut proration levels for next year. The agency is putting a strong emphasis on resident services this year. The agency is in the process of redesigning community room renovations at City View Towers, South Common, and Centralville Gardens. Francis Gatehouse and Belvidere Heights will be done in fiscal year 2021. There is also funding budgeted for renovations at the LHA's Learning Zone after-school program.

Additional security has also been budgeted for fiscal year 2021. The agency is exploring the option of having a night police officer, and/or a private security company for AMP3. We have also hired a second Resident Service Coordinator for that property.

Equipment has also been budgeted for fiscal year 2021. Equipment includes a trash compactor truck, a new dump truck, and two F150 trucks. Two new trash compactors have also been budgeted for AMP3.

For extraordinary maintenance, the agency is focusing on AC repairs, brickwork at AMP1 and foundation and painting at AMP3.

Vice Chairperson Shea asked about \$1.2 million for energy credits and asked if HUD will forgo taking a percentage of the energy credits this year. Ms. Giblin explained that the agency is working with HUD now for a rate reduction in the solar net metering contract. The agency is seeking 100% of the funds from solar net metering.

Chairperson Shea asked Ms. Giblin to provide a report on the agency's expectation for rental payment receipts for the year. Ms. Giblin reported that the accounts receivables have climbed to \$90k. Ms. Giblin explained that the housing authority has a rent roll of \$8 million so \$90k is not a major concern. There is an eviction moratorium at this time, so the agency has not been taking residents to court. The agency expects to have a backlog of cases in the court system for nonpayment of rent when the moratorium is lifted. The impact this will have on rent collection has yet to be determined. Rent revenue was budgeted conservatively with consideration to impact COVID-19 will have on fiscal year 2021.

## **REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### **7.1.1 MOTION TO ACCEPT PROJECT CLOSEOUT DOCUMENTATION, IFB 2019-2A, FOR NORTH COMMON VILLAGE SEATING AND APPROVE FINAL PAYMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$14,894.56 TO, MJS CONSTRUCTION, INC., 25 POPES LANE, DANVERS, MA 01923**

A motion to accept was made by Commissioner Bernes and seconded by Commissioner Marr

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

**7.1.2 MOTION TO APPROVE THE LOWELL HOUSING AUTHORITY'S SECTION 8 UTILITY SCHEDULES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2020-2021, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2020**

A motion to accept was made by Commissioner Bernes seconded by Commissioner Marr

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

**7.1.3 MOTION TO ADOPT AN URBAN REVITALIZATION FUND (URF) POLICY GOVERNING USAGE AND REPORTING OF DISPOSITION PROCEEDS**

A motion to accept was made by Commissioner Marr seconded by Commissioner Bernes

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

**7.1.4 MOTION TO APPROVE THE LOWELL HOUSING AUTHORITY'S SICK LEAVE DONATION POLICY, TO EXPIRE AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE NATIONALLY DECLARED COVID-19 EMERGENCY, OR ON SEPTEMBER 30TH, WHICHEVER OCCURS SOONER**

Chairperson Shea recognized the Executive Director to explain why the Board is voting on this motion tonight when there are only a few weeks left before the sick leave policy expires. Mr. Wallace explained that the vote today is ratify a polling of the Board several weeks ago. The Board approved the execution of the policy verbally because the agency did not have an upcoming Board meeting and the policy needed to be expedient. The agency promised to bring it to the Board for ratification.

Vice Chairperson McMahon expressed his approval of the motion to assist staff during this challenging time.

A motion to accept was made by Commissioner Marr seconded by Vice Chairperson McMahon

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

**7.1.5 MOTION TO ACCEPT A BID RECOMMENDATION, RFP 2020-1B, FOR TELEPHONE ANSWERING SERVICES, AND AWARD A CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$154,698.00 FOR A THREE YEAR CONTRACT PERIOD, TO AAMCOM, LLC, 800 N. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, REDONDO BEACH, CA 90277**

Chairperson Shea recognized Rita Brousseau, Chief Procurement Officer, to provide details on the contract recommendation. Ms. Brousseau reported that the bid went out as an RFP, so the agency requested technical specifications for the contract. Bids were received by Ms. Brousseau and a committee was established to review. There were a couple of bidders that had to be disqualified. The bidder met the qualifications and then it was compared with the cost proposal. The evaluation committee consisted of Brian Moriarty, Dennis Mercier and Andrew Rocha, and Chairperson Shea recognized the work of the committee.

A motion to accept was made by Commissioner Marr seconded by Commissioner Bernes

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

Chairperson Shea asked the item 7.1.6 be taken out of order. A roll call vote was held and the motion was taken out of order.

**7.1.6 MOTION TO APPROVE THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HOUSING (AMP) OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2021**

A motion to accept was made by Commissioner Bernes and seconded by Vice Chairperson McMahon

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

Chairperson Shea requested 7.17 be taken out of order. A roll call vote was held and the motion was taken out of order.

**7.1.7 MOTION TO APPROVE THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

**HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM (HCVP) OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2021**

Chairperson Shea recognized Tha Chhan, Director of Leased Housing Programs to provide comments on the Housing Choice Voucher program budget. Mr. Chhan reported that HUD has provided the agency with additional vouchers. There will be 139 vouchers for the Mainstream Voucher Program, tenant protection vouchers, and tenant and project-based vouchers. The vouchers exceed 1500 total units. The agency is also applying for the Foster Youth to Independence program, and additional VASH vouchers to serve veterans. Chairperson Shea thanked Mr. Chhan for his report.

A motion to accept was made by Vice Chairperson McMahon and seconded by Commissioner Bernes

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

**7.1.8 MOTION TO APPROVE THE CENTRAL OFFICE OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2020**

Ms. Giblin reported that the Central Office Cost Center budget is projected at \$168k for fiscal year 2021. The Central Office is responsible for the oversight of administrative functions of the Executive Department. The main source of revenue comes from management fees from the AMPs and the major expenditures are for skilled labor, personnel, trainings, and information technology.

A motion to accept was made by Vice Chairperson McMahon and seconded by Commissioner Bernes

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

**7.1.9 MOTION TO APPROVE THE WRITE-OFF OF UNCOLLECTIBLE TENANT ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE BALANCES FOR THE FEDERAL AND STATE RESIDENTS WHO VACATED PRIOR TO OCTOBER 1, 2019**

Ms. Giblin reported that at year-end the agency writes off accounts receivables that are on the books for those residents that have vacated the unit in the past year. Write-off percentages are generally at 1%, which is extremely low. The dollar amount was \$57,000, which was an increase of 3% from last year. All of the AMPs are under 1%, which is not a concern for the Authority.

Vice Chairman McMahon commended the property managers for their diligence in collecting rents.

A motion to accept was made by Vice Chairperson McMahon and seconded by Commissioner Bernes

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

#### **7.1.10 MOTION TO APPROVE THE LOWELL HOUSING AUTHORITY'S ANNUAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021**

Ms. Maciejewski provided a report on the Lowell Housing Authority's Annual plan. She indicated that the annual plan had been out for a 45-day period for public comment. The plan was advertised in the Lowell Sun. The hearing was held today at 3:30, and the participants of the meeting were Laura Watts, Jonathan Goldfield, Andrew Rocha, and Chairperson Shea. There was also one resident participant who did not want to identify themselves. An overview of the plan was provided at the hearing, as well as capital planning updates. There were no public comments or changes to report. The plan will be submitted as is to HUD. Ms. Maciejewski explained that the plan is before the Board for a vote to authorize the Lowell Housing Authority to submit the plan to HUD.

Chairperson Shea asked Ms. Maciejewski to estimate the number of units that are turned over each year. Ms. Maciejewski explained that turnover is between 12-15 units per month, mostly in elderly units. The agency has fewer unit turnovers in the family developments. The waiting time could be up to 6-8 years for housing. Applications are accepted based on date and time. The agency is also in the process of updating the waiting list to determine who is still interested in an apartment. With this update, the LHA will be able to remove some of the applicants from the list who are no longer interested. This will reduce the time that many applicants will have to wait on the waiting list. COVID-19 has limited the number of vacancies we have had at our developments.

Chairperson Shea questioned why the agency inadvertently is providing false hope for applicants applying for housing, given the length of the waiting list. Chairperson Shea explained that he received a previous report with thousands of applicants. Ms. Maciejewski explained that the previous report Chairperson Shea received may have reported the applicants twice because applicants apply for multiple lists. The current number are approximated 800-900 per waiting list.

Tha Chhan, Director of Leased Housing explained that the agency is in week three of a waiting list update and has closed approximately 2,000 applications to date. There are roughly 3,000 applicants waiting for a 1-bedroom apartment. Mr. Chhan will provide a more current report to Chairperson Shea once the accuracy of the report can be confirmed. Ms. Maciejewski also indicated that the waiting time for a 1 bedroom is approximately 18 months to 3 years. Ms. Maciejewski explained that the waiting time is contingent upon which lists applicants are applying for and the vacancy rate for that property. Chairperson Shea thanked Ms. Maciejewski and Mr. Chhan for the clarification.

A motion to authorize was made by Vice Chairperson McMahon and seconded by Commissioner Bernes

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

**7.1.11 MOTION TO APPROVE THE LOWELL HOUSING AUTHORITY'S CAPITAL PLAN BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEARS 2020-2024**

Chairperson Shea recognized Jonathan Goldfield, Capital Asset Manager. Mr. Goldfield asked about the meeting date and the lack of participation. Mr. Goldfield explained that the date was selected to meet the 45-day public comment period. A Resident Advisory Board meeting was held on June 5<sup>th</sup> and July 7<sup>th</sup> a public hearing was held. Chairman Shea suggested that the date of July 7<sup>th</sup> following the holiday may have contributed to a lack of participation.

A motion to accept was made by Commissioner Bernes and seconded by Commissioner Marr

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

**7.1.12 MOTION TO ACCEPT A BID RECOMMENDATION, IFB 2020-14, FOR VEHICLE INSURANCE AND AWARD A CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$52,407.00 FOR ONE-YEAR CONTRACT PERIOD TO, CLARK INSURANCE, 327 GORHAM STREET, LOWELL, MA 01852**

Chairperson Shea thanked Rita for the information in clarifying the use of an internal cost estimate (ICE).

A motion to accept was made by Commissioner Marr and seconded by Commissioner Bernes

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

**7.1.13 MOTION TO ACCEPT A BID RECOMMENDATION, RFP 2020-2, FOR A HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS CONSULTANT AND AWARD A CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$43,450.00 FOR A ONE-YEAR CONTRACT PERIOD WITH LHA'S SOLE OPTION TO RENEW FOR TWO ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR CONTRACT PERIODS TO, MCCRIGHT & ASSOCIATES, 928 MCCALLIE AVENUE, CHATTANOOGA, TN 37403**

Chairperson Shea asked for an explanation of the award. Ms. Brousseau explained that the agency received two responses and it was evaluated by the Committee. The bidder met the qualifications and the bidder was within the appropriate costs for the Authority.

A motion to accept was made by Vice Chairperson McMahon and seconded by Commissioner Marr

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

Vice Chairman McMahon thanked Chairperson Shea for his kind words and is excited to be back on the Board, and he looks forward to continuing to work with the Board and the staff.

Mr. Wallace reported that the Housing Authority and the collective bargaining unit, Local 115 have reached an agreement. The current contract expires September 30<sup>th</sup>. This is a new three-year contract. Mr. Wallace acknowledged the efforts of Adam Garvey, COO and the two union stewards for their efforts. This is the first time the collective bargaining unit voted unanimously, 25-0, to accept the agreement. The contract is now being reviewed by General Counsel before bringing it to the Board. Mr. Wallace is asking the Board to consider holding a Special Meeting prior to the next Board meeting to vote to approve the contract before October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Wallace reported that the City Manager has started a Community Preservation Act committee and has asked Chairperson Shea to represent the Housing Authority on the Committee. The City is planning to start meetings in early October.

Chairperson Shea recognized Attorney Kevin Murphy to discuss voting on the contract. Attorney Murphy explained that the contract has not been reviewed and should be voted on in a subsequent meeting. Commissioner Marr asked when the contract must be approved. The agency is seeking to approve within the next week. The LHA will poll the members of the Board for a date in the next couple of weeks.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Marr and seconded by Commissioner Bernes

A roll call was taken with the following results:

Yeas: Commissioner Bernes, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Marr, Vice Chairperson McMahon, Chairperson Shea

Nays: None

The Chairperson declared the motion carried and the vote adopted.

**Meeting adjourned: 6:15**



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**Secretary**