

## **MINUTES**

The Board of Commissioners of the Dracut housing Authority met at a regularly scheduled meeting on April 24, 2020. This meeting was held at 10:00 a.m. and it was a virtual meeting. Chairman Russ Taylor opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. and upon roll call vote those present were as follows:

**PRESENT:** F. Russell Taylor  
Matthew Sheehan  
Charles Kanavos  
Debra DeWitt Ahern

**ABSENT:** George Nangle

**IN  
ATTENDANCE:** Kelley Szymanski  
Mary T. Karabatsos

### **MINUTES:**

Commissioner DeWitt Ahern made a motion to approve the February 24, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Charlie Kanavos and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

March Board meeting was cancelled due to Coronavirus.

### **BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

Commissioner Kanavos made a motion to approve the March 2020 Warrant. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Sheehan and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sheehan made a motion to approve the April 2020 Warrant. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Kanavos and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

Commissioner Kanavos made a motion to put the February 2020 financials on file for audit. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner DeWitt Ahern and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

Commissioner Kanavos made a motion to put the March 2020 financials on file for audit. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner DeWitt Ahern and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

### A vote to accept the Department of Labor's Maintenance Wage Rates.

Commissioner DeWitt Ahern made a motion to accept the Department of Labor's Maintenance Wage Rates. Maintenance Laborer will receive \$27.25 an hour and Maintenance Supervisor will receive \$31.17 an hour. This was effective April 1, 2020. Commissioner Kanavos asked what percentage increase the Maintenance Department received. The Director stated that it was approximately 3.5 % increase.

### Dracut Housing Authority's Health & Safety Award in the amount of \$11,125.

The Director explained that this was a program that housing authorities could apply for. Initially, the funds from this program was mandated to be used by June 1, 2020. That deadline has been extended due to the Coronavirus. The work that we will be doing with these funds will take place inside apartments. We will be replacing all the heat and smoke detectors at 971 Mammoth Road and we will be replacing flooring at 901 Mammoth Road. Since these projects will be taking place inside Resident's apartments, we will need to wait for official notification from the Baker Administration as well as DHCD.

Commissioner Kanavos asked if all housing authorities received this funding. The Director stated that this was a program that all housing authorities could apply for and DHCD was hoping that they would. Many housing authorities did receive the funds but not all housing authorities applied.

### A vote to accept HUD's 2020 Capital Fund Program in the amount of \$65,052.

Commissioner DeWitt Ahern made a motion to accept the 2020 Capital Fund Program in the amount of \$64,052. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Sheehan and upon roll call vote passed unanimously. The Director stated that for the past few years this amount has increased. These funds are just for Phineas Street. The Director said that over the past 7 years or so we have been utilizing these funds to install walk in showers. Over the past two years we installed a generator for the community room. We will also be replacing interior lights but starting 2020 we will be finishing up the walk-in showers. The Director informed the Board that there are 44 units at Phineas Street and we only need to install 13 more walks in showers and all the units we be done.

### Boston Globe Public Records Request sent to all Massachusetts Housing Authorities.

The Boston Globe send a request via email to all housing authorities. They were looking for financial information, budgets, salaries, benefits, and more. We scanned all the information to the Globe, which was quite a bit. The reason that the Boston Globe wanted this information is because MassNahro which is our lobbying organization sued DHCD. This was because DHCD was limiting the amount of salary increases that an Executive Director could get. MassNahro's argument was that many housing authorities have federal developments and they did not believe that DHCD should have any control over the federal portion of the budget. This case will probably go to court sometime later in the year and obviously the Boston Globe is doing some sort of an investigation on it.

Commissioner Kanavos asked if we charge the Globe for the paperwork and time put into gathering the information. The Director stated that housing authorities were advised by MassNahro not to charge a fee.

#### HAP Contract Renewal – 971 Mammoth Road.

971 Mammoth Road is a state-run program that is also backed by federal monies. A contract must be renewed every twenty years. The housing authority has hired an appraiser, Dennis Connors to do a rent comparability study. This is very good for housing authorities that have a program like this. There are not many in the state. Currently, the rent for each unit is \$793.00 a month, residents pay 30% of their income, and HUD reimburses us for the difference between the 30% and the \$793.00. I've spoken to other housing authorities and some of their overall rents have increased to \$1100 and \$1200 dollars a month. That means we will receive a substantial increase from HUD funds and will allow us to do a lot of capital projects that need to get done.

#### Vacancy Report:

Currently, we have one family vacancy. The unit will be completed next week, and the family will be moving in.

#### Work Order Report:

There are only a few work orders, a few deferred work orders, and a few routines that Maintenance works on monthly. As you know, Maintenance is only doing emergency work orders. We do not want Maintenance Staff entering units.

#### NAHRO Spring Conference:

The Spring Conference has been rescheduled to September 13 – 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### REAC Inspection – 3/16/2020:

The REAC inspection scheduled for 3/16 has been cancelled and will take place at a future date.

#### Update on Residents/Covid 19:

Chairman Russ Taylor inquired about the Residents. The Director stated that the Residents have been wonderful and supportive. They know we are doing the best we can, under the circumstances. They know that staff is staggered to limit exposure with Residents and each other. They call the office they do not come to the office. They also understand that we are only doing emergency work orders. Commissioner Kanavos inquired about the common areas and if Residents are congregating there. The Director informed the Board that the Community Rooms are closed but the laundry and mail rooms are open.

#### A vote to accept the FY 2020 Income Limits:

Commissioner DeWitt Ahern made a motion to accept the FY2020 Income Limits. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Sheehan and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairman Taylor congratulated the staff on the great job they are doing.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner Kanavos made a motion to adjourn. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Sheehan and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.