

FALMOUTH HOUSING AUTHORITY - COMMISSIONERS GENERAL SESSION
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 an Executive and General Session Commissioners Board Meeting(s) on Monday, November 20, 2023. The general session began and went immediately into the Executive Session. The Executive Session adjourned and returned to the General Session. The Board did its best to adhere to posted time frames, but times may have varied. The meeting 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; extended to 2025. The public were invited to join in the general session meeting by going to: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81083281687>, Meeting ID: 810 8328 1687; Audio Access: 1-646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 810 8328 1687

MEMBERS PRESENT: Stephen Patton
Patricia Favulli
Michael Galasso
Kathleen Haynes

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Laura Bancroft
Maureen McIver, Recording Secretary
Elizabeth Saito, Falmouth Enterprise

OPEN SESSION

At 4:32 p.m. Steve Patton called the meeting to order.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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. Re: Employee matter(s)

Resolution 2024-054

At 4:34 p.m. Michael Galasso moved to go to executive session 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. Re: Employee matter(s). Kathleen Haynes seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye
Patricia Favulli-aye
Michael Galasso-aye
Kathleen Haynes-aye

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

MOTION CARRIED

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

At 4:39 p.m. the commissioners returned from executive session.

Recognition, Announcements and Public Comments – Board of Commissioners vacancy
Bobbi Richards reported that there has been one application for the vacancy so far. The town will send applications to the FHA as they are submitted.

Bobbi Richards recognized Leslie Pearce for her very diligent work making 3 units that had been vacant for some time available for lease up. Bobbi Richards was very grateful for Leslie Pearce's assistance.

Items requiring discussion and vote:

-Minutes of Executive Session 11/13/23 (hold) – vote

Resolution 2024-057

Patricia Favulli moved to approve but hold the minutes of the Executive Session 11/13/23.
Michael Galasso seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye

Patricia Favulli-aye

Michael Galasso-aye

Kathleen Haynes-aye

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

MOTION CARRIED

Minutes of Special Session 10/25/23 – vote

Resolution 2024-058

Patricia Favulli moved to approve the minutes of the of Special Session 10/25/23. Michael Galasso seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye

Patricia Favulli-aye

Michael Galasso-aye

Kathleen Haynes-aye

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

MOTION CARRIED

-Minutes of Executive Session 10/16/23 (hold) – vote

Resolution 2024-059

Patricia Favulli moved to approve but hold the minutes of the Executive Session 10/16/23.
Michael Galasso seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye

Patricia Favulli-aye

Michael Galasso-aye

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

-Minutes of General Session 10/16/23 – vote

Resolution 2024-060

Patricia Favulli moved to approve the minutes of the General Session 10/16/23. Michael Galasso seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye

Patricia Favulli-aye

Michael Galasso-aye

Kathleen Haynes-aye

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

-Legal opinion regarding financials and public housing aging reports – vote

In response to Michael Galasso's inquiry about financials and public housing aging reports

Bobbi Richards reported that the legal opinion is that Michael Galasso should not view the financials and public housing aging reports. Michael Galasso said that he would like to review the determination and maybe have his attorney's review.

-Policy regarding conflicts of interest for employees & Commissioners – vote

Patricia Favulli noted that commissioners get a certificate when online training is completed; is this (policy copy) redundant? Bobbi Richards noted that Marcum recommends that signatures are obtained and they provided an ideal format, which was distributed to commissioners for consideration for use.

Resolution 2024-061

Kathleen Haynes moved to approve the new policy regarding conflicts of interest for employees and Commissioners. Patricia Favulli seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye

Patricia Favulli-aye

Michael Galasso-aye

Kathleen Haynes-aye

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

-RSC NOFA Application – additional \$10k (\$60k total) – vote

Bobbi Richards said that the deadline for the state Resident Services Coordinators additional funding application is in early December; this is before the next board meeting and board authorization is needed.

Resolution 2024-062

Patricia Favulli moved to authorize the Executive Director to apply for the Resident Services Coordinator grant. Kathleen Haynes seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye

Patricia Favulli-aye

Michael Galasso-aye
Kathleen Haynes-aye
4 Ayes (Patton, Favulli, Galasso, Haynes) 0-Nays

MOTION CARRIED

-Increase in daily ACH – vote

Bobbi Richards noted that there were many deposits into landlords' accounts because there were so many lease-ups this month. Chuck Starr reported that this month there were \$543,000 in payments and \$500,000 is the present limit. He asked that the limit be increased to \$600,000.

Resolution 2024-063

Kathleen Haynes moved to increase the ACH limit to \$600,000. Patricia Favulli seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye
Patricia Favulli-aye
Michael Galasso-abstained
Kathleen Haynes-aye

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

-Annual staff holiday party, \$700 – vote

Last year's holiday luncheon party exceeded the historic \$600 allotment by \$300. Bobbi Richards shared that she covered the difference as a gift to employees. The request was to increase the allotment for the holiday party to \$700.

Resolution 2024-064

Kathleen Haynes moved to increase the allotment for the holiday luncheon party to \$700.

Patricia Favulli seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye
Patricia Favulli-aye
Michael Galasso-aye
Kathleen Haynes-aye

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

Michael Galasso asked if the commissioners could attend. Bobbi Richards said commissioners are welcomed to attend. Patricia Favulli noted that previously, committees have made notice of a holiday party to comply with open meeting law in case a quorum shows up at a holiday party.

-Website updates, including approved minutes – vote

Bobbi Richards said that there was no state policy about posting minutes. The Falmouth Housing Authority does a good job of posting minutes; other housing authorities on the Cape generally do not keep their websites current and many do not post, despite the requirement, their minutes. Pat Grace, former legal consultant, advised that there is not a deadline but the state requires posting of minutes. State open meeting law requires draft minutes be available within 10 days upon request. Bobbi Richards noted that the minutes take considerable time to process and asked for approval to post minutes quarterly.

Michael Galasso said he wanted to redo the website to make it more user friendly. There are many good IT people around.

Steve Patton said he has found the site informative. Other housing authorities appear to be seeking tenants and seem to do more marketing to attract tenants; FHA does not have to seek tenants as waiting lists are long. Quarterly posting seems reasonable.

Bobbi Richards said she would be happy to take recommendations about good IT people. There are some funds available to update the website.

Resolution 2024-065

Kathleen Haynes moved that the minutes will be updated quarterly. Patricia Favulli seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye

Patricia Favulli-aye

Michael Galasso-aye

Kathleen Haynes-aye

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

MOTION CARRIED

-Solar Committee – rename and expand purpose – vote

Bobbi Richards said that within the past 30 days there have been strong conversations with entities regarding programs the FHA could be eligible for to improve energy efficiency. With discussions expanding from solar to energy efficiency it may be time to consider renaming this committee and working with the committee on various energy-efficiency related projects to benefit the housing authority. Michael Galasso suggested the name Energy and Sustainability Committee.

Resolution 2024-066

Patricia Favulli moved that the name of the Solar Committee be changed to the Energy and Sustainability Committee. Kathleen Haynes seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye

Patricia Favulli-aye

Michael Galasso-aye

Kathleen Haynes-aye

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

MOTION CARRIED

-HAP payments and bills – vote

Chuck Starr reported that \$630,000 was made in payments this month. \$12,000 was recovered. Michael Galasso asked if the HAP payments and bills could be separated. This way he could speak up if he had questions about a bill. Bobbi Richards noted that, under the present system, 2 commissioners come in to physically sign checks twice a month, providing oversight. The vote is essentially just affirming the work of the two commissioners that have signed the checks. Michael Galasso said that he was asking if the two votes could be separated in case he had a question about a bill.

Resolution 2024-067

Kathleen Haynes moved to approve HAP payments and bills. Patricia Favulli seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye

Patricia Favulli-aye

Michael Galasso-abstained
Kathleen Haynes-aye

3 Ayes (Patton, Favulli, Haynes) 0-Nays 1-abstention (Galasso) MOTION CARRIED

-Commissioners Training – required training (EOHLC) compliance & other trainings
Bobbi Richards said that this item will appear on the agenda until there is full compliance from all commissioners.

-Media policy

Bobbi Richards said the item was on the agenda for the purpose of discussion. Bobbi Richards has informed Enterprise that she is available to participate in discussion of fair and balanced coverage of housing issues.

-Financials and public aging reports

Chuck Starr noted that the numbers are very similar to last month's

-Leased housing report for November 2023

Leslie Pearce said that this was a good month with many public housing units turned and ready. The situation was similar with the voucher programs with 3 units leased up under DIAL. In October and November landlords called with listings; this has not happened for several years. Referrals were then possible for those with vouchers.

Michael Galasso asked how many units are owned. Bobbi Richards noted that this information was on the website. Michael Galasso noted that the housing authority currently has an approximate 5% vacancy rate, which is very good.

-Maintenance department review of portfolio

Bobbi Richards reported that the FHA has been able to resolve several issues with the help of the state, contractors, and other professionals. Leslie Pearce has been key in this process. There is a new intercom system in Harborview. It is accessed through cell phones, but also works with landlines – and residents can see who is visiting and grant access with the cell phone. FHA is working with tenants to provide access to low cost cell phones and training on the new system.

The HVAC system at Bayberry, 5 years in process, is in the final stages.

Thanks were given to Michael Galasso for providing a contact at the CCRTA. A transparent solar-powered bus stop station will be installed in front of Tataketa. Michael Galasso advised checking setback requirements before replacement.

Bobbi Richards shared that enrolling maintenance staff into an asbestos training was a past request of the maintenance department, but it was not completed. Bobbi Richards enrolled all maintenance staff in a training and all are completed as of the date of this meeting. Additionally, trainings have been ramped for all staff.

-Executive Director review of portfolio

Bobbi Richards reported that the FHA computer system was infected by a virus. Under consideration is a monthly maintenance agreement with an IT entity. Costs for this outside vendor are estimated to be about \$3,000 per month. As the housing authority grows, its needs change and what the services should look like will change. The board agreed that this was reasonable endeavor; Bobbi Richards will work on the procurement process.

An eviction is in process. Tenants at a 705, a subject of complaints in the community, have disengaged. They did not request a grievance hearing nor did they attend their court hearing; the eviction was granted. Back payment is \$11,459 and counting.

A mediated court agreement is most often sought since an in-house agreements or promissory notes are often unsuccessful and are not enforceable in court. FHA's attorney, Flynn Law Group, highly recommends that housing authority not perform in-house payment agreements.

-Report of Solar Committee

Michael Galasso said that the committee is in the process of looking at net metering contracts to see what the benefit to FHA would be and examining whether the FHA would get the boost from solar installation.

-Development committee

Board of commissioners agreed to not form a development committee; the matters that would be presented to the committee can be presented during regular board meetings.

-Needs assessment

47 tenants to date responded to surveys about development- which is a large response. Abacus will begin the physical needs assessment on December 4th. The process has been underway – unit inspections are scheduled and FHA is working to download past state projects to share with Abacus' team.

Michael Galasso asked if the Housing Fund has been making payment on bills. Bobbi Richards said that the funds were provided upfront. Bobbi Richards will ask Peter Johnson-Staub how the town would like this expense tracked and reported to the Town. Bobbi Richards hoped the new town manager and Select Board, as well as the Enterprise, would come to tour vacant units. Bobbi Richards emphasized that the FHA is the largest provider in town of housing to people with extremely low incomes – which can be lost in discussion when talking about affordable housing in general. All the FHA housing is one bedroom except for the 705s. Most incomes are less than \$23,000. Michael Galasso added that parts of downtown from Shore Street to Main Street and to Jones Road are classified as Environmental Justice zones.

Resolution 2024-068

At 6:03 p.m. Patricia Favulli moved to adjourn. Kathleen Haynes seconded.

A roll call vote was taken:

Steve Patton -aye

Patricia Favulli-aye

Michael Galasso-aye

Kathleen Haynes-aye

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

MOTION CARRIED

Relevant Documents

EOHLC PHN 2017-05 Local Housing Authority Board Member Training PHN

EOHLC PHN 2017-05a Step by Step Guide for LHA Board Member Training

Scope of work for EOHLC Project No. 096101-44 Carolyn Lane

Annual Holiday Party Request

Draft conflict of interest form

Federal and State Occupancy Report November 2023

Executive Director's Report for November 2023

Development Committee Members – removal of one member to avoid conflict of interest request

Self Unit assessment form template for tenants

FHA Media Policy (approved 8.22.19)

Executive Session Minutes of October 16, 2023

Executive Session Minutes of November 13, 2023

General Session Minutes of October 16, 2023

Special Session Minutes of October 25, 2023

HAP payments for October 2023

HAP landlord payments for October 2023

Public housing aging report for October 2023

Increase in daily ACH limit request

Leased housing summary November 2023

Legal Memo regarding Commissioner Voting on Financials

Prevailing Wage Law Webinar schedule

Resident services coordinator NOFA for December 2023 deadline

Minutes of 10/25/23 Special, 11/13/23 Executive, 10/16/23 Executive. 10/16/23 General, Financials and public aging reports, Leased housing report for November 2023