

ACTON HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MINUTES

November 19, 2024, at 3:00p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING

Present: Bernice Baran, Peter Berry, Nancy Kolb, Sahana Purohit
Also Present: Kelley Cronin, Melissa Bible, James Griffin
Absent: Melissa Wingfield

Ms. Kolb called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. via a virtual meeting platform with no Board members in physical attendance and broadcast via Zoom virtual meeting platform.

- I. Ms. Kolb read the rules of the remote meeting and conducted a roll call for attendance. At the start of the meeting Mr. Berry was not yet in attendance.
- II. Approval of October 29, 2024, minutes

Ms. Kolb requested a motion to approve the minutes of the October 29, 2024, Board meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Purohit and seconded by Mr. Berry to:

Approve the minutes of the September 24, 2024, Board Meeting with the correction of spelling from “Bergert” to “Bergart” and grammar correction of page 2.

And upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nayes” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

III. 2025 Budget Presentation

Ms. Bible introduced James Griffin, the longtime accountant for the Acton Housing Authority. Mr. Griffin reviewed the budget being presented to the Board for 2025. This budget was based on a number of factors including Leasing and rent collection averages for the last three months.

While EOHLC had approved administrative salary increase of up to 9%, the Housing Authority was requesting increases of 3-5% based on longevity (some staff started middle of 2024) and projections for maintenance increases. Based on contract, there is no increase for the Executive Director. There is a slight budget increase for Sundry office costs.

The largest increases seen are in Employee benefit costs and contract maintenance expenses, which are related to market cost increases.

While EOHLC has provided significant increases, it does not yet balance out to the increases in cost.

When asked about any concerns with the budget, it was shared that the state requires a 35% Budget reserve. This budget would allow for a 35% reserve, however if there are unexpected expenditures it could bring the Housing Authority under the minimum necessary, Ms. Bible also shared that EOHLC anticipated providing assistance for budget reserves in January.

Maintenance salary increases this year can be determined by the Board and budget however the minimum is the DLI rates that are approved in April.

There were no additional questions from the Board.

At that time votes were requested for the 2025 Acton Housing Authority budget. Ms. Bible made a request to:

Approve the Program Number 400-1 for fiscal year ending December 31, 2025, showing revenue of \$707,500 and total Expenses of \$1,279,698 thereby requesting a subsidy of \$647,313. The motion was moved by Mr. Berry and seconded by Ms. Baran.

And upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nayes” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

Approve the Program Number 689-1 for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2025, showing the total revenue of \$44,977 and Total Expenses of \$36,109 thereby requesting a subsidy of \$0. The motion was made by Ms. Baran and seconded by Ms. Purohit.

And upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nayes” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

Approve the Program Number MRVP/AHVP for fiscal year ending December 31, 2025, showing the total revenue of \$10,560 and total expenditures of \$210,374 thereby requesting a subsidy of \$200,000. The motion was made by Ms. Purohit and seconded by Mr. Berry.

And upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nayes” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

IV. Board and Executive Director Update.

Ms. Bible informed the Board that the office has been working on Thanksgiving box donations for the families that we assist. Additionally, work has begun to match family holiday gift requests with donors and for warm meals donations that are provided for our elderly units. Harry, our RSS coordinator, has also been working with our tenants at Windsor Green and students from Acton/Boxborough High School. They have been meeting and gathering for games, crafts, and music.

Ms. Kolb mentioned her thoughts of doing an Executive Director evaluation for Ms. Bible since we are approaching her six- month hire. Ms. Kolb informed the staff she planned to send out

questions to the other board members to seek their thoughts and input as part of the evaluation. There was discussion that this would be beneficial to both the Board and Ms. Bible moving forward into the new calendar year.

V.

A. Smoking Policy

Ms. Bible provided to the Board the proposed “Smoke Free Living Policy”. The policy presented was for the most part, similar to the previous existing policy, however expanded to our scattered condos. Additionally, there was not previously a formal documented violation process. While we had discussed implementing financial penalties for violations, there has been mixed legal guidance. Therefore, this policy was drafted to be more cautious.

There was discussion from Board members that felt that the 15-foot policy that was documented was too narrow. Ms. Wingfield had shared in a discussion with Ms. Kolb that she felt the radius should be extended to 25 feet at a minimum.

Ms. Purohit made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Baran to:

Approve the “Smoke Free Living Policy” with an extension to 25 feet beyond the buildings effective January 1, 2025.

And upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nays” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

B. Fines and Fees

Ms. Bible provided the Board with a Proposed Fines and Fees Structure for Damages. The structure was developed in consultation with Maintenance, Office Staff, and review of other Housing Authority plans. This plan was developed to take into consideration that Accidents happen and Payment Plans can be coordinated, and there are some waivers that can be provided for mitigating circumstances (Ex. Domestic Violence). The plan was developed to provide visibility to the cost of repairs to tenants, and the cost that is incurred by the Housing Authority for things that may not be obvious on a day to day basis. This will not impact the normal wear and tear that happens to apartments, however, it is meant for specific damages that occur.

Ms. Purohit made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Baran to:

Approve the Fines and Fees Structure as proposed effective January 1, 2025.

and upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nays” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

C. McManus MHP Loan Disbursement Letter and Board Resolutions

Ms. Cronin updated the Board about Developments with McManus Manor. The previous night she and Ms. Kolb attended the Select Board meeting. They were requesting that the Board waive some of or all of the permitting fees and the Board did discuss their want to be able to. Of the \$112,000 requested, the Select Board agreed to waive \$50,000 which would leave a balance of \$62,000 owed.

Separately a copy of the MHP (Massachusetts Housing Partnership) loan document in the amount of \$4.9 million dollars was provided. Ms. Cronin provided a review of the unit structure, and services, which would be provided in the Development. Ms. Cronin was requesting Board approval for the authorization of the MHP Loan. Ms. Baran made the motion that was seconded by Ms. Purohit to:

Approve the \$4.9 million-dollar permanent financing loan to cover the project after construction.

and upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nays” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

And agree to a Board Resolution allowing Nancy Kolb as Chairperson, and Melissa Bible as Executive Director to sign documents related to the closing at McManus Manor.

and upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nays” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

D. CPC Playground Application

Ms. Bible reviewed the CPC application that was submitted for the playground project at Sachem Way. This grant would be conditional based on receipt of the Kaboom Playground Grant. The CPC grant would cover the \$8,500 not covered by the Kaboom grant, the cost of clearing and preparing the space for construction, the cost of materials to move the Vegetable Garden, and fencing.

E. Staff Holiday Bonuses.

Ms. Bible discussed that in the past years that she has been with the Housing Authority, the Board has been able to provide bonuses inline with program expansions. In discussion with Ms. Cronin, it was felt that when the closing of McManus Manor occurs, may be another opportunity. Ms. Bible was seeking permission to offer holiday/end of year bonuses equal to one additional paycheck to staff. Ms. Bible offered that this could or could not include her, however given the needs and work hours that staff are putting in, through staffing transitions as well this year, it was felt to be appropriate and helpful to staff. This would only be offered if approved and after the closing of McManus Manor.

There was discussion about the total amount that this would cost and a review of previous times that this had been offered.

Ms. Purohit made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Baran to:

Offer a staff end of year bonus, the equivalent of one paycheck, contingent on the closing of McManus Manor.

and upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nays” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

VI.

Old Business

Mr. Berry discussed that the CPC Board was meeting that night. That there was just over Three million in applications. They would know what the state match would be.

VI. Vouchers

Ms. Baran made a motion that was seconded by Ms. Purohit to:

Approve the September voucher in the amount of \$679,744.24 and October in the amount of \$815,706.61.

and upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nays” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

VII. Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

At 5:09 Pm Ms. Purohit made a motion that was seconded by Baran to adjourn.

and upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nays” were as follows:

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Peter Berry: Aye

Bernice Baran: Aye

Sahana Purohit: Aye

The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Bible
Executive Director

Documents and Exhibits Used During the **November 19th meeting** include Acton Housing Authority 2025 Budget, ARPA McManus Manor application, 2025 Sachem Way CPC grant, MHP Commitment letter, Smoke Free Living Policy, 2025 Fines and Fees Structure, Smoking Warning Letter, Staff Person Relation Disclosure