

Amesbury Housing Trust

September 25, 2024

Amesbury City Hall

Minutes – Draft

Call to Order @ 4:39 PM

Present: Mayor Kassandra Gove, Chair – Steven Stanganelli, Trustees Ann Mary Connor, Nancy Frick, Andrew LeFleur, Kerry Hamel-Pope

Also present: OCED Director Nick Cracknell, CDBG Coordinator Shauna Becotte

Public: Joseph and Carol Finn

Public Comment – None

Communications:

- Housing Trust Account Update by Nick Cracknell: \$261,692.26
 - Balance includes four payments in lieu received from sale of units on the Market Street project
 - Remaining six units likely to be sold before the end of the year resulting in potential additional funds of \$180,000 (six units at \$30,000 each)
- Minutes – 9/13/2023, 1/17/2024, 7/10/2024:
 - All approved with typographical changes (date of January 17 meeting), 6-0
 - Note: Refer to tape recording for specific motions and votes as the Chair did not make notes at the time

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Updates: Nick Cracknell

- Close out for FY20: OCED in process of clearing all audit issues raised by state
- Program start-up for FY21: Delayed but in process pending completion of audit issues and spending of at least one-half of funds by mid-March 2025
- FY2025 OCED Goals:

- 1.) Building OCED Team to include additional housing and project managers
 - 2.) Focus on development and housing
 - 3.) Support Housing & Energy Committees
 - 4.) Active and effective grant writing
 - 5.) Effective grant management
- FY2020 CDBG Recipients:
 - Elderly (3)
 - single parents (2)
 - low-moderate families (2)
- FY2021 CDBG Recipients - Waitlisted recipients (stalled because of audit)
 - Elderly (7)
 - Single parents (2)
 - Low-moderate families (6)
- FY2020 CDBG Audit Results
 - 11 Findings and 3 issues of concern
 - overall program mismanagement
 - lack of supervision
 - lack of training
 - high/excessive admin costs
 - low performance/excessive delays
 - poor documentation and file management
 - failure to comply w/ CDBG checklist
 - funding of ineligible activities
 - ineligible payments across fiscal years
 - poor reporting on Intelligrants software
- Upcoming FY25 Grant Application: Deadline is mid-April 2025; City eligible only if at least one-half (\$294,250) of most recent year (FY21) funds (\$588,500) have been spent before application deadline.
- Funding CDBG Deficit Discussion: Nick Cracknell
 - Program operational deficit of \$97,030.16 identified after audit resulting from items disallowed by state that were not submitted for reimbursement in a timely manner by predecessor; some portion also resulting from misallocation of certain staff salary and administration costs
 - See slide deck presented by Nick Cracknell for reference
- Q&A followed with Trustees asking questions with responses provided by both Nick Cracknell and Shauna Becotte

- As clarification, the Chair noted that the Declaration of Trust (recorded 7/19/2021 at the Southern Essex Registry of Deeds) specifies that:
 - Article II: Purpose of Trust “shall be to provide for the preservation and creation of affordable housing in the City of Amesbury for the benefit of low and moderate income households ...”
 - Article VI: Powers of Trustees:
 - Item 5: “To construct, manage or improve real property ...” and
 - Item 10: “To compensate City employees for services provided as authorized by the Mayor, including but not limited to dedicated staff to the Board, engineering support for project specific activities, and other City services ...”
- **Move to authorize appropriation of \$97,106.30 from Trust funds to be applied to FY2020-FY2021 CDBG program deficits identified and presented by OCED Director**
 - Motion by Lefleur with second by Frick
 - Motion passed 5-0-1 (Connor)

Disposition Committee Project Update: Nick Cracknell

- Ordway School Project
- Orlando-Bagley Property
 - OCED Director noted that these parcels are in deteriorating condition
 - Recommendation by OCED with concurrence of the Mayor is that these properties need to be sold to get them back on the tax rolls using an expedited disposition process
 - No vote of support required at this time; OCED will likely be submitting something for review at a future meeting

Other Business:

- First-Time Homebuyer Program Discussion: Ann Mary Connor
 - Materials compiled by Trustee Connor were distributed and discussed
 - These included a summary of area programs in Newburyport, Andover and North Andover that allow first-time buyer down payment support as either a

fixed amount or a percentage of purchase price up to a dollar cap based on federal AMI (example: \$148,900/year for family of four)

- **Move to support additional research and preparation of a down payment assistance proposal to be presented at a future meeting of the Trust**
 - Motion by
 - Second by
 - Motion passed 6-0

- Chair reported that the Trust has additional opportunity to provide rental assistance under 2021-107 adopted 10/19/2021 by the City Council and signed by the Mayor on 10/25/2021 to offer a means-tested senior citizen rental assistance program
 - Reference:
<https://www.amesburyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/859/2021-107-An-Ordinance-to-Establish-a-Means-Tested-Senior-Citizen-Rental-Assistance-Program---Certification-of-Vote-PDF>

Motion to adjourn, Lefleur/Frick, 6-0

Adjournment @ 7:39 PM

Attachments:

- Slide deck by OCED Director
- Down payment and closing cost assistance – samples