



State Representative: Chaz Sexton-Diranian (2022)

Chairman: Laura E. Shifrin (2021)

Clerk: Natalie Call (2024)

Vice Chairman: Courtney Borelli (2023)

Tenant Seat: Vacancy (2024)

MINUTES

Thursday December 10, 2020

Via ZOOM 7:00PM

THIS IS AN OPEN MEETING AND ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND
JOINT MEETING OF THE
TOWNSEND HOUSING AUTHORITY AND
THE TOWNSEND AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

Join Zoom Meeting

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Preliminaries:

1.1 Meeting called to order at 7PM

1.2 Roll Call showed THA Chairman Laura Shifrin, (LS), State Rep Chaz Sexton-Diranian (CSD), Vice Chairman Courtney Borelli, (CB), and Clerk Natalie Call (NC). Roll call for the Housing Trust Fund showed Chairman Joan Savoy, Joe Shank, and Gary Shepherd. Town Administrator Jim Kreidler (JK), Board of Selectman Chair Wayne Miller (WM), Housing Admin, Jodie Deschenes (JD) and Townsend resident Stephen Sheldon were also present.

1.3 The meeting is being recorded.



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1.4 Pledge of Allegiance observed

1.5 Chairman's Additions/Deletions to Agenda unforeseen prior to 48 hours of this meeting-None

1.6 State Representative Report – CSD announced that CSD met with State Rep Sheila Harrington, who is unable to attend this evening, but will continue to work with CSD and DHCD on any issues that may arise. CSD continues to work on the Town Meeting warrant article for the Housing Production Plan, and will submit it to the Board for review.

2.Appointments

2.1 None

3.Work session: 7PM Joint meeting with the Townsend Affordable Housing Trust Fund

3.1 Report TAHTF document has been filed as of 11/17/2020-Joan S. reported that the Trust document has been recorded and the Trust has recruited Central Massachusetts Housing Authority (CMHA) as the management partner for the COVID CARES fund.

3.2 Report on recruitment of Central Massachusetts Housing Authority (CMHA) as a managements partner for COVID CARES Round 2 funds (CvRF), MOU sent 12/7/2020 and applications they have received thus far-Joan reported that one application has been received at this point.

3.3 Discuss and explain approved Townsend/CMHA MOU verbiage. Ex. Monies forwarded to the property owner or mortgage-holder, not eligible renters/homeowners. Monies are applied for by income eligible town residents. The monies do not go to the residents, it goes to the landlord/mortgage holder.

3.4 Update on CvRF-MP Round 2 funds the Town is to receive (\$40,000or \$100,000?) and they are expected. Joan S reported that \$40,000 is approved but waiting to hear on approval of the additional \$60,000. JK said he spoke with the State Office and the request for additional funds has been received, and the Town should expect to receive the funds within the next week. CSD asked if the additional money was in the same timeline as the original \$40,000, and the answer is yes; the timeline ends December 30, 2020 but working to extend the deadline in Congress.

3.5 Discuss and vote on setting CvRF Round 2 Area Median Income (AMI) level at 50 or 80%? Joan S. requested that the Board vote to accept a higher percent to include



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more eligible residents. Joe S. moved to keep the AMI at 80%. GS seconded. Roll vote unanimous.

3.6 Discuss billing template CMHA will receive and utilize (protecting names of renters/homeowners) and suggested template. Joan S reached out to Town Accountant Laurie Plourde and CMHA for a billing template, to accurately recorded invoices/billing. The template will be sent to the Town showing how the money is being spent as well as CMHA's 10% fee.

3.7 Formulate plan for getting the CvRF word out to townsfolk. Needs to be on the front of town webpage, etc. Discussed getting info out to the community, LS sent application to Country Estates as well as some tenants she thought it would help. CSD suggested putting the flyers out at local banks, Joe S put some out in his waiting room and suggested putting the flyers out at more local businesses. Briefly discussed the importance of confidentiality for all applicants; the applications are NOT public record. Joe S suggested putting flyers in all the public buildings.

3.8 Discuss background and status of 2018 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to Townsend, \$800,000+ for fuel assistance and rehabilitation of 15 housing units. This grant is administered by the Community Opportunities Group (COG). MRPC got Townsend this grant but have been unable to oversee it, so the Town went to COG.

3.9 Contacts and outreach for information made by THAT, response received. Read 12/4/2020 "accounting" report from Diane Hansen of Community Opportunities Group and response/request for more information made on 12/7/2020. Joan S reached out to the president of COG for some clarification regarding oversight, accountability, and protocol- see 3.10

3.10 Discuss CDBG oversight, accountability, disbursement protocol and how we proceed. Discuss Management Contract/MOU between Townsend and COG as per the CDBG. Joan S. reported that COG is being paid a flat fee of \$160,000 to administer the grant (out of the \$800,000 original amount of the grant). Reviewed the agreement between the Town and COG-15 rehab projects were to be done, 10 have been completed.

3.11 Discuss Laurie, Chaz and Joan setting up a joint meeting with the BOS to discuss FY18 CDBG. Joan S believes there is an urgent need to get the notice of this grant out to the town residents, and would like a vote for CSD, LS and Joan S to be put on the next Board of Selectmen agenda to discuss this matter further. GS moved to authorize



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the Chair of the Housing Trust Fund along with one other representative to investigate the status of the Townsend Development Block Grant at the next earliest convenience. Joan S said an urgent meeting is required because the grant is set to expire at the end of December 2020. Joan S also requested a vote to be on another BOS agenda for the 22nd of December to discuss the grant itself. WM asked for clarification on why there was a need to meet with the BOS and deferred questions to the Town Administrator. JK went on to explain the Community Block Grant and how they are typically run, including that these grants typically get extended especially given the current climate (COVID). JK also said that COG is on of the best grant management firms in the Commonwealth. JK clarified that applicant list that COG is currently working with was generated during the grant application process, in which the Town, along with MRPC, held public hearings, announcing the programs and did neighborhood surveys as well. Due to the pandemic, the grant process has slowed given that people are hesitant to allow contractors to come into their homes and vice versa, however COG is still administering to the best of their ability. JK suggested inviting COG to a meeting to clarify any outstanding questions the board may have. CSD suggested getting together with Joan S and LS and doing more research to determine if this is something to spend more time on or move on.

3.12 Approve THA meeting minutes for October 27, 2020 and September 17, 2020
NC moved to approve the meeting minutes from 10-27-2020. BC seconded. Roll call vote unanimous. NC moved to accept the meeting minutes for 9-17-2020. CB seconded. Roll call vote unanimous.

For the Townsend Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Joe S. moved to accept the meeting minutes on 11-5-2020. GS seconded. Roll call vote unanimous.

CSD moved to adjourn the THA meeting at 8:21. NC seconded. Roll call vote unanimous.

For the Townsend Housing Trust Fund Joe S moved to adjourn at 8:22PM GS seconded. Roll call vote unanimous.

Next Meeting Date: TBD



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Mission: “To promote, maintain and provide housing opportunities for income groups who could not otherwise afford to live here.”