

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SOMERVILLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

Mary Cassesso, Managing Trustee

Trustees
Lisa Davidson
Ben Ewen-Campen
Michael Feloney
Donna Haynes
Daniel LeBlanc
Beth Monroe-Howe
Martin Polignone
Andrea Shapiro

Minutes
January 11, 2018 Meeting – 6:15pm
City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room
93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143

Trustees present: Mary Cassesso, Lisa Davidson, Ben Ewen-Campen, Mike Feloney, Donna Haynes, Danny LeBlanc, Martin Polignone, Andrea Shapiro

Trustees not present: Beth Monroe-Howe

Staff attending: Heidi Burbidge, City of Somerville Housing Division

Others attending: Gerry Zipser, Director of Housing, Just-a-Start Corporation and Elizabeth Winston, Program Manager of Housing and Mediation Services, Just-a-Start Corporation

Meeting started at 6:20pm with Andrea Shapiro serving as chair.

1. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Trustees reviewed Meeting Minutes of the December 14, 2017 Trust meeting drafted by Heidi Burbidge. A **motion** was introduced to approve the December 14, 2017 meeting minutes which was seconded and PASSED, 7-0.

2. Communications

Welcome to new Trustee, Ben Ewen-Campen

- Introductions were shared with new Trustee, Ward 3 Alderman Ben Ewen-Campen. Staff had provided background materials to Ben earlier in the week.

Greentown Labs linkage

- Heidi Burbidge shared that on December 15th Greentown Labs made a payment of \$26,374.18 to the Trust as the first of five annual payments for their total linkage contribution of \$131,870.90.

Conflict of Interest Law

- Heidi Burbidge distributed copies of a summary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law for municipal employees and asked Trustees to provide acknowledgement of receipt of the summary, in writing or by email.

3. New Business

Closing Cost Assistance request

- Heidi Burbidge noted that a request that was received and placed on the agenda will qualify as a request for HOME funds instead of Trust funds, so no discussion or deliberation by the Trust is needed.

Ben Ewen-Campen left the meeting.

Trust Tenancy Stabilization Program RFP – Interview with Respondent

- Heidi Burbidge distributed copies of the Trust RFP for administration of the Tenancy Stabilization Program and copies of a proposal that was received from Just-a-Start Corporation (JAS).

Lisa Davidson recused herself from the discussion and left the room.

Heidi introduced Gerry Zipser, Director of Housing and Elizabeth Winston, Program Manager of Housing and Mediation Services at JAS. Elizabeth and Gerry described JAS as a CDC based in Cambridge that has been involved in Somerville for many years. JAS currently administers Housing Stabilization services using Rapid Re-Housing funding through the Cambridge Continuum of Care and using Emergency Solutions Grant funding through the Balance of State Continuum of Care. These services are now limited to those two CoC's geographic areas. JAS receives inquiries about these services from Somerville residents and would like to expand to provide them using Trust funding.

Trustees asked questions about JAS's current work and the proposal submitted. Questions and responses included:

1. What kinds of similar programs do you currently administer in areas outside of Somerville?

JAS receives HUD CoC Rapid Rehousing funding as part of the Cambridge CoC. This funding is used in Cambridge. JAS also administers a Homelessness Prevention program that is similar to the TSP and is funded by the Balance of State Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). JAS previously worked with the state Homebase funding that could provide two years of rent assistance but Homebase is no longer available.

2. Are your mediators paid, or volunteer?

All of JAS current program staff are paid personnel.

3. How would Somerville residents access services?

JAS would meet with Somerville residents in their offices in Cambridge on the Somerville/Cambridge line, or alternately in a public place, for intake and paperwork.

4. What is the nature of JAS's work with Somerville based organizations?

The relationships JAS has with Somerville agencies are not contractual but more informal collaborations. JAS receives referrals from Elder Services, Cambridge Health Alliance and Housing Court.

5. Can you provide a rough sense of numbers of Somerville residents who have applied to JAS programs, but JAS was unable to serve due to funding limitations?

JAS does not track percentage of initial inquiries they receive from Somerville residents. JAS refers Somerville residents to other programs. JAS has not been referring residents to the Trust's Tenancy Stabilization Program.

6. Are you intending to use these funds for case management services?

JAS would be leveraging other funding sources to provide case management services.

In response to an inquiry from Gerry and Elizabeth about other eligible uses for TSP funds, Heidi noted that any uses would have to fit within the DOR's definition of eligible uses for Municipal Trust Funds.

Gerry and Elizabeth left the meeting. Mary Cassesso entered the meeting.

Trustees noted that Just-a-Start has relevant experience and partnerships with agencies in Somerville. There was discussion about whether the Trust should open the RFP for additional proposals since only one was received. Trustees concluded that Just-a-Start demonstrated that they would be able to provide the services to Somerville residents pursuant to the RFP.

Danny LeBlanc made a **motion** to award Just-a-Start a one-year contract with an option for the Trust to award a second year contract contingent on program performance. The motion was seconded by Mary Cassesso and PASSED, 6-0, with one member having recused herself.

Lisa Davidson returned to the meeting.

4. Unfinished Business

FY18 CPA Request for Information/Funding opportunity

- Heidi described the FY17 timeline for issuing RFPs for CPA funding for Housing Project and Housing Program proposals. Trustees requested that Heidi send draft RFPs to Trustees by email for review as soon as possible, and that subsequent to review and feedback that the RFPs should be issued and advertised.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm with a motion to adjourn adopted unanimously.

Next meeting date – The next meeting date will be February 8th at 6:15pm.

Documents distributed:

- December 14, 2017 meeting minutes
- Tenancy Stabilization Program RFP
- Response from Just-a-Start Corporation to the Tenancy Stabilization RFP