

**Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2024**

A meeting of the Salem Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board was held on Wednesday, February 6, 2024, at a Remote Zoom meeting at **6:33 pm**

Members present: Chair Filipe Zamborlini, Jason Leese, Jason Sydoriak, Liza Ruano-Lucey, Jack Butterworth, Mayor Dominick Pangallo, Lynda-Fairbanks Atkins, Megan Boyle, Vice Chair Christopher Malstrom

Members absent: Liza Ruano-Lucey

Members arriving late: Vice Chair Christopher Malstrom, Mayor Dominick Pangallo

Members leaving early: None

Staff present: Senior Planner Elena Eimert, Deputy Director of Planning Amanda Chiancola

Chair Zamborlini called the meeting to order with a roll call at 6:33 p.m.

I. NEW BUSINESS

A. Future Items

Chair Zamborlini has been looking at other board agendas and wants to discuss have a conversation about the structure of the Trust's agenda. He encourages the board to look at their powers and evaluate if the board is doing all it can be doing with the new board member configuration. Mr. Leese wonders how they govern the different sources of funding as they come in and would like create a tracker to review all the potential sources and what next steps are for them. Chair Zamborlini thinks inviting someone from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) may be a good idea.

B. ARPA Grant Program – Application Review

Ms. Eimert says that this is the second grant program offered by the Trust, using its ARPA allocation. This is the first application received under the second, broader, grant program and this application is available in the public SharePoint file. Ms. Eimert says that staff believes the application before the Trust this evening is eligible for its review.

Mayor Pangallo joins at 7:08 pm.

Mr. Sydoriak asks if there are a lot of applications. He would like to see competitive application but they seem like they trickle in. Could we encourage a deadline or does ARPA dictate how that functions? Ms. Eimert says that under this grant program, there is not a submittal deadline and that there isn't a regular flow of applications. The rolling deadline was in the interest of getting as many applications as possible, not a requirement of the ARPA funds. Mayor Pangallo says that eventually ARPA funds won't be available and the board might think about a calendar for a fiscal year and deadlines for future Trust funds.

Ms. Eimert shares the application of the Salem Mission Inc., dba Lifebridge to supply additional outreach staff. \$50,000 for additional staff hours for current staff to support 40 hours of additional outreach work to homeless encampment residents in the City. The Trust is asked to make clear the link with economic recovery from Covid-19 in their evaluation. Ms. Eimert shares the rubric and the application. The board discusses and revises the scoring rubric.

The board walks through the application. Mr. Sydoriak asks how the hours will be staffed; will it be part-time staff going full-time? Ms. Chiancola recommends that the Trust discuss questions and then staff can get the questions to the applicant. Chair Zamborlini would rather score this to see if they want to fund the application and then pose the questions and have funding contingent on that. Ms. Fairbanks-Atkins proposes language regarding this.

Ms. Boyle wants to know background of people doing the work and more info on Lifebridge street outreach teams. Mr. Sydoriak want more information on past performance, etc., prior to awarding funding. Chair Zamborlini says that he sees past performance as more holistic than specific. Does wonder if questions need to be modified in the future. Ms. Eimert says that as this is a published grant program, she cautions against change now, but additional information can be requested.

Mr. Leese struggles with what the money is being used for and doesn't know where in the rubric this will fit. Mr. Sydoriak thinks there really isn't enough information in this application. Mayor Pangallo suggests a special meeting of the Trust to approve or not approve the application after Lifebridge is given time to answer the questions from the board.

Ms. Eimert asks if Lifebridge should answer by writing and would the Trust be expecting future applicants to attend. Chair Zamborlini as we didn't have a chance to be robust, it would be advisable for every applicant to come before us for this review going forward – staff agree to implement this process for future applications.

Ms. Fairbanks-Atkins is interested in how many of the questions refer to staffing and notes we don't ask this of developers coming in for funding. Mr. Sydoriak says that for him it relates to the core of use. Wants to know what the hours of labor will look like. Chair Zamborlini asks if the recommendation is that the award is contingent upon answering the boards question. Mayor Pangallo does not want to delay this and would like to invite Lifebridge to a Special Meeting in February. The board discusses a threshold for funding.

Motion to request additional information from Lifebridge with answers within the week and request attendance at a special meeting with the Trust is made by Mayor Pangallo, seconded by Christopher Malstrom, and passes unanimously in a roll call vote.

The board continues to discuss what the threshold for approval will be. Ms. Eimert says that 67% was minimum based on the previous funding approved for construction, and based on a point system out of 80, that would be 54 points. A minimum threshold for funding is established and noted in the scoring rubric.

II. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There is no unfinished business.

III. STAFF UPDATES

These items were heard first

A. Condominium Conversion and related Home Rule Petition

Ms. Eimert updates that the current home rule petition is currently with the joint committee on housing. The deadline is 2/7 for taking action. There is nothing to indicate that an extension will occur but acknowledges the opportunity exists. The Trust previously submitted an advocacy letter to the Speaker of the House and Senate Preside Spilka and there has been no further correspondence.

Chair Zamborlini asks what the impact is if the local ordinance were to be just to meet the state law of 4 units – how many units are we talking about since so much stock is 2-family. Ms. Chiancola shares that a few years ago, it was a small percentage – roughly 2/3rds were two – and three-family buildings. Chair asks if we are at the point for local action to shame the state not letting us enact this after two sessions – whether Trust should advocate for ordinance to move forward meeting state law and amend in the future, should approval come down. Ms. Eimert says that she understands that there is no statutory waiting period for an amendment if an ordinance is adopted. Ms. Fairbanks-Atkins asks what the holdup is. Mr. Sydoriak understands that home rule petitions are hard to get through and doesn't see it as personal, but as a huge failure. Ms. Chiancola shares a graph showing condominium conversion by previous land uses in Salem. 78% of converted buildings converted between 2016-2021 were two – and three-family buildings ([Imagine Salem](#)).

B. Construction Grant Program – ARPA Funds

Two applicants were awarded \$250,000 each. The awards are in process with the Finance Department. Chair Zamborlini ask when they anticipate beginning spending. Ms. Eimert says that they have asked applicants to begin spending by June 30, 2024. This is not hard and fast, the City has discretion. Chair Zamborlini thinks a special meeting and site visits would be educational for the board. Ms. Eimert will follow up later in the spring.

C. Update on Certificate of Fitness Inspections – ARPA Funds

This update is a follow-up on the money awarded to the City of Salem Health Department to support an additional inspector position to increase the volume of Certificate of Fitness inspections. Mr. Greenbaum, the Health Agent, indicated to Ms. Eimert that they are still in the hiring process. The Certificate of Fitness online permit application was revised to include an additional field asking about each unit's rent.

Mr. Butterworth asks about the delay in hiring. Ms. Chiancola says that it takes time for the funding to be processed, but it is also difficult to find staff, there is a lot of competition.

D. ADDITIONAL STAFF ITEMS

An additional application under broader grant agreement was received and will be reviewed in March if determined to be eligible for funding.

Trust members wanted to revisit trust goals and this will be added as an agenda item at a future meeting depending on the depth of the agenda. The Trust may update the rules and regulations document at that time as well.

Staff will schedule a discussion around advocacy regarding the city budget. Mr. Zamborlini asks if there is a draft budget. Ms. Eimert says that there is nothing available yet.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 13, 2023

Motion to approve the November 13, 2023, minutes is made by Mayor Pangallo, seconded by Jason Sydoriak and passes unanimously in a roll call vote.

B. January 10, 2024

These minute are not ready for review and will be on a future agenda.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public offered comments.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn is made by Jack Butterworth, seconded by Linda Fairbanks-Atkins, and passes unanimously in a roll call vote.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm

Approved by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board on X/XX/XXXX.

Respectively submitted,
Elena Eimert
Senior Planner