

**MINUTES OF MEETING
OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND**

A meeting of the Trustees of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (the “Fund”) of Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing” or “Corporation”) was held on Friday, April 17, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was held via telephone conference pursuant to Executive Orders 20-05, 20-25 and 20-35, as amended.

Carol Ventura, Executive Director, introduced Carl Rotella, Director of Information Technology, who summarized the rules of the meeting.

Mr. Rotella stated that (i) the meeting will be recorded and available for review on the RIHousing website within 3-5 business days after the meeting, (ii) except for the RIHousing Board of Commissioners and specific RIHousing staff, all callers would be muted during the meeting and (iii) if during the meeting, anyone was having technical difficulties with audio or accessing the call, they should contact RIHousing.

Ms. Ventura, as presiding Trustee, introduced herself and called the meeting to order. She stated that this was a meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and pursuant to Executive Order 20-05, the meeting would be held via teleconference. Continuing, Ms. Ventura stated that members of the public could visit the RIHousing website to view the agenda and information on the actions being taken. Finally, she said that in the event the teleconference was interrupted, staff would pause the meeting until audio was restored.

Next, Ms. Ventura conducted a roll call attendance of the Trustees, RIHousing Board of Commissioners and RIHousing staff. Trustees present were: Nicolas P. Retsinas, Kara Lachapelle and Carol Ventura.

RIHousing Board of Commissioners and staff also participating via teleconference were: Commissioner Kevin Orth; LeeAnn Byrne, Designee for Seth Magaziner, General Treasurer; Lisa Primiano, Chief Operating Officer; Nicole R. Clement, General Counsel; James Comer, Deputy Executive Director; Claribel Shavers, Director of Leased Housing and Rental Services; Jessica Mowry, Assistant Director of Leased Housing and Rental Services; Christine Hunsinger, Assistant Deputy Director External Affairs, Policy & Research; Carl Rotella, Director of Information Technology and Marilena DiCristofano, Assistant to the Executive Director.

Following the roll call attendance, Ms. Ventura requested that any Commissioner or staff to state their name prior to speaking

Ms. Ventura convened the meeting at approximately 10:03 a.m.

Approval of Minutes of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Meeting of March 25, 2020

Ms. Ventura entertained a motion and a second for the approval of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund minutes held on March 25, 2020.

A motion was duly made by Ms. Lachapelle and seconded by Mr. Retsinas. There being no discussion, Nicole Clement, General Counsel, conducted a roll call vote of the Trustees. The Trustees voted as follows:

Trustee Retsinas	Aye
Trustee Ventura	Aye
Trustee Lachapelle	Aye

Ms. Clement then stated that the following was unanimously approved:

VOTED: That the minutes of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Meeting held on March 25, 2020, and hereby are, approved.

Ms. Ventura next reminded participants that for the AHT action items, only the Trustees of the AHT can vote. The RIHousing Board of Commissioners are participating for discussion purposes only.

Approval of HomeSafe Program Funding Awards

Ms. Ventura presented the action.

Ms. Ventura stated that this request is for approval of grant awards under the HomeSafe Program (“HSP”). On March 25, 2020, the Trustees (“Trustees”) of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (“AHT”) approved a transfer of up to \$400,000 to the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) for HSP funding.

The HSP is a cash assistance program through which participating agencies provide one-time financial support to assist low-income households facing a short-term housing crisis.

In March 2020, RIHousing issued a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) seeking qualified agencies to administer HSP funding. The RFP was posted on the RIHousing website, social media, and sent to approximately 800 organizations, municipalities, property managers, developers and interested parties via an email announcement. RIHousing received 21 proposals from service organizations and community development corporations. Funding requested totaled \$1,842,714.

A committee consisting of the Deputy Executive Director, Director of Leased Housing and Rental Services, and staff from the Leased Housing and Rental Services Division of RIHousing conducted a review of each proposal in accordance with the criteria set forth in the RFP. Based on these rankings, the committee recommends funding be awarded to the programs described at Attachment A as set forth in the package presented to the Trustees.

Staff recommends the approval of the resolution set forth at Attachment B as set forth in the package presented to the Trustees, which authorizes HSP funding in the amount of \$400,000 for the programs set forth at Attachment A.

After the presentation Ms. Ventura asked for a motion and second for approval of the HomeSafe Program Funding Awards.

A motion was made by Mr. Retsinas and seconded by Ms. Lachapelle. Following the motion and second, Ms. Ventura opened the meeting for questions or discussion. She respectfully requested that the members of the RIHousing Board of Commissioners state their name prior to speaking.

Chairman Retsinas asked when the program was scheduled to be released. Ms. Ventura responded that the program was ready, all documents have been prepared and outreach efforts have been established. All reporting documents and parameters have been created and staff will be communicating with the recipients to educate them on how to properly process compliance reports. Ms. Ventura estimated that late next week or early the following week is when the funds will be distributed. Ms. Ventura also identified that this program will be housed in the Leased Housing and Rental Services Division with Assistant Director Jessica Mowry as the primary contact for the program.

Commissioner Orth conveyed that this is a fantastic initiative and he is very proud of RIHousing for implementing such a highly essential program. He did ask if metrics are in place and what the maximum amount is per applicant. Ms. Ventura clarified that this funding is targeted to the 50% of area median income (AMI) bracket, households that have experienced loss of jobs, income or illness, and domestic violence situations that require housing. The maximum allowed per household is \$2,000. The criteria is very specific and descriptive and agencies must demonstrate that the need is there by inserting codes classifying the issues such as dementia, etc. Continuing, Ms. Ventura stated that the primary goal of the program is to provide housing stability and is not to be used for temporary housing.

Commissioner Orth referenced the approved agencies and said they are a great group of organizations that have connections to the community and know where the funds are needed. He noted that some of the organizations are also landlords and wondered if a conflict of interest exists. Ms. Ventura mentioned that essentially all the agencies are landlords, but the contract is very clear on the uses and distribution of funds.

Commissioner Orth then asked if staff anticipates that the funds from the CARES Act will be utilized for this or a similar purpose. James Comer, Deputy Assistant Director, stated that he has spoken to the Commerce Corporation and the Department of Administration (DOA) to find an expeditious way to process the CARES Act funds. Both the Commerce Corporate and DOA have requested RIHousing's advice regarding employing this program or a similar concept for the funds. The CARES Act funds are useful as they target up to 80% of AMI population. Staff has provided guidance, input, outlined internal controls and model mechanisms for their review.

Chairman Retsinas said that he has been consulting with the Rhode Island Foundation and United Way to ensure resources are available to Rhode Islanders. Ms. Ventura also remarked that she and staff have been communicating with the Attorney General's office regarding data collection and asked the Attorney General's office to weigh in on program documents.

Commissioner Orth announced that the Providence Journal featured an article on the housing situation and wanted to know if staff plans on press coverage to roll out for the program. Ms. Ventura announced that a call is scheduled for later in the day with the selected agencies to discuss that matter.

Commissioner Designee Byrne thanked Ms. Ventura and staff for providing the prerequisites for the selected agencies and inquired if similar requirements would be applied to the client applications. Christine Hunsinger, Assistant Deputy Director External Affairs, Policy & Research, confirmed that RIHousing established the criteria and income levels for the applicants. The strategy is that through the coordinated system, to focus on individuals who require the assistance and to eliminate any redundancies. The main item is to ensure that applicants are not duplicating requests with multiple agencies.

Following the discussion, Ms. Ventura asked Ms. Clement, General Counsel, to conduct a roll call vote of the Trustees, eligible to vote. The Trustees voted as follows:

Trustee Retsinas	Aye
Trustee Ventura	Aye
Trustee Lachapelle	Aye

Ms. Clement, General Counsel, then stated that following resolution was unanimously approved:

**Resolution of the Board of Trustees
of The Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

WHEREAS: the Affordable Housing Trust Fund was created by Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) for the sole purpose of making homeownership to low- and moderate-income residents of the State of Rhode Island more affordable; and

WHEREAS: in furtherance of this purpose, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund previously authorized funding to RIHousing to establish the HomeSafe Program (“HSP”) to support low-income households with one-time financial assistance during the occurrence of a temporary housing crisis; and

WHEREAS: RIHousing has issued a Request for Proposals under a competitive process to seek participating agencies to administer HomeSafe Program funding; and

WHEREAS: staff reviewed the proposals according to the ranking criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals and have determined that six (6) of the proposed programs best meet the objectives of the HomeSafe Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY:

RESOLVED: that the organizations set forth at Attachment A be and hereby are approved to receive awards of grant funding under the HomeSafe Program in the

amounts specified at Attachment A, subject to any administrative adjustments as the Executive Director determines to be necessary and reasonable, provided that the total amount awarded to all recipients shall not exceed \$400,000;

RESOLVED: that the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director of RIHousing, each acting singly, be and hereby are authorized and empowered to take any and all actions necessary or desirable to carry out the foregoing resolutions.

Attachment A

Proposed FY 2020 HomeSafe Program Funding Awards

Organization	Location	Award
Neighborworks Blackstone River Valley	Statewide	\$100,000
Housing Network of Rhode Island	Statewide	\$100,000
Comprehensive Community Action Program	Cranston	\$75,000
West Bay Community Action Program	Warwick	\$50,000
Church Community Housing Corporation	Newport	\$37,500
Crossroads RI	Statewide	\$37,500
	TOTAL	\$400,000

There being no further business, Ms. Ventura asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Lachapelle and seconded by Mr. Retsinas to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Ventura then asked General Counsel, Ms. Clement, to conduct the roll call vote. Ms. Clement conducted a roll call of the Trustees, eligible to vote.

The Trustees voted as follows:

Trustee Retsinas	Aye
Trustee Ventura	Aye
Trustee Lachapelle	Aye

Ms. Clement stated that the motion to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved. Ms. Ventura stated that the meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Ventura,
Secretary and Executive Director