

TOWN OF BOSTON RECORDS
23 JUN 2025 11:05 AM

**Merrimac Affordable Housing Board of Trustees
Minutes
June 26, 2025**

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chair Sandra Venner.

- I. **Present:** Board members Sandra Venner, Colleen Ranshaw-Fiorello, Dawne Young, and Phil Parry.
- II. **Approval of Minutes for April 17, 2025:** With a motion by Phil Parry and a second by Dawne Young, board members approved the minutes for the board's April 17, 2025 meeting.
- III. **Review Response from Legal Counsel regarding Clarification and Changes to Trust Documents:** Response from Town Counsel Lisa Mead regarding clarification of the signature process and corrections to the draft Trust document were not available for the board to review. Chair Venner will follow up with both board member Brienne Walsh, who had referred the questions to Town Counsel, and with Town Counsel.
- IV. **Next Steps for Development of Rental Assistance Program:** Following the receipt of clarifications and changes to the draft Trust document, board members will plan a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking an agency that could administer a rental assistance program. Potential RFP recipients could include the Newburyport YWCA, Community Action of Haverhill, Bread and Roses and the Pettingil House.
- V. **Implications of Town Termination of Agreement with North Shore Community Development Corporation:** The Chair reported that the Select Board has terminated the Town's agreement with North Shore Community Development Corp. to develop the former Coastal Metal building and the former Senior Center on School Street as 36 units of affordable housing. In conjunction with this action, the Select Board requested NSCDC return the \$20,000 that AHBT granted to NSCDC. Board members decided to ask the Select Board's to take no further action until the AHBT has had an opportunity to review all materials regarding the issue. AHBT is asking to review all the Select Board correspondence with NSCDC including a demand letter to NSCDC seeking the return of the \$20,000 grant along with five percent interest. According to correspondence from their attorney, NSCDC contends the Coastal Metal property does not meet the remediation standard necessary to develop housing on the site, but it is willing to transfer the benefits of the grant including reports, permitting, surveys etc. to another developer such as the YWCA of Newburyport, who reportedly is interested in acquiring and developing the property. The Select Board said that NSCDC has not upheld the agreement and sent the demand letter seeking the return of the \$20,000 grant plus five percent interest. AHBT Board members believe that NSCDC may not have defaulted on the Promissory Note signed by the AHBT. Board members said NSCDC probably acted in good faith and used the grant for design work and surveys along with other items listed in the Promissory Note. Board members said the Select Board acted without standing as the agreement is between the AHBT and NSCDC.
- VI. **Motion to seek report of expenditures from NSCDC:** In a motion by Phil Parry with a second by Dawne Young, board members said they will ask NSCDC to provide an accounting of all expenditures spent as part of the \$20,000 grant received from the AHBT. Board members unanimously approved the motion.

- VII. Motion for the Chair to give notice to the Select Board:** In a motion by Phil Parry with a second by Dawne Young, board members said a letter will be sent to the Select Board noting that they acted on behalf of the AHBT without authorization and the Select Board has no standing in the issue. In the letter, AHBT will request copies of all correspondence to NSCDC including the demand letter and will ask the Select Board to take no further action on the issue until the AHBT has had an opportunity to review the materials. Board members unanimously approved the motion.
- VIII. Scheduling Next Meeting and Adjournment.** The board will meet again on Thursday July 24, 7 p.m. No meeting will be scheduled in August. A meeting in September will be held Thursday Sept. 25, 7 p.m. With a motion by Phil Parry and a second by Dawne Young, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Colleen Ranshaw-Fiorello, Secretary, June 27, 2025 and Sandra Venner, Chair, July 21, 2025.