

**Housing Trust Meeting
Minutes
April 28, 2020
1:00 PM
Remote Meeting**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: July 6, 2020
TIME: 2:10 PM

AGENDA

Discuss and vote on proposal to amend our warrant allowing Trust to using CPA grant for a temporary emergency rental assistance program

Attendees: Judie Feins, Judy Singler, Gloria Leipzig, Rachel Heller, Betsy Lipson, Paul Rickter

Overview provided on our proposal, below:

The Belmont Housing Trust is proposing to shift the use of the \$250,000 in CPA funds (awarded in 2018) to establish a short-term emergency rental assistance program. The Trust will request that June Town Meeting approve an amendment to the 2018 award to allow the funds to be used for such a program. Rental Assistance programs are an allowed use of Community Preservation funds and a number of cities and towns across the Commonwealth are taking steps to implement such a program.

The Housing Trust is proposing an emergency rental assistance program that would be for Belmont households who have suffered a reduction in income due to the pandemic. Participation guidelines would restrict eligibility to Belmont households at or below 80% of Area Median Income. Applicants would be required to provide documentation on current income and income loss due to the coronavirus pandemic. Both eligible applicants and their landlords would be required to sign a participation agreement. Households living in public housing or having a Section 8, MRVP or other housing subsidy would not be eligible for participation since these households are already entitled to rent reductions if income is reduced.

This emergency program would be administered by a local non-profit which would be responsible for accepting applications, determining eligibility, conducting a lottery, establishing a wait list, entering into agreements with the renter households and landlords, obtaining W-9s, disbursing monthly checks to the landlords, issuing 1099s to the landlords, and reporting to the funding source.

ELIGIBILITY:

- Belmont renter;
- Current household income is at 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) or lower; preference for those households at or below 60% AMI;
- Proven reduction in income due to covid-19 related circumstances.

DURATION:

- Three months

- Payments made directly to Landlord

MONTHLY PAYMENT:

- 1 bedroom--\$950
- 2 bedroom--\$1155
- 3 bedroom--\$1440

These amounts are based on 50% of the Belmont Fair Market Rent for Section 8 by bedroom size.

MARKETING

An intense marketing campaign would last for two weeks. Marketing will be the responsibility of the Town and the Belmont Housing Trust. At a minimum, the following committees, agencies and organizations will be asked to conduct outreach, notifying potential applicants about the program and telling them how to obtain an application: Select Board, School Committee, PTOs, Food Pantry, Town Social Worker, Veteran's officer, Council on Aging, Belmont Religious Council, Belmont Helps, Belmont Citizen Herald, the Media Center, large local landlords. The Town will also provide program information on its website as will the Belmont Public Library.

FUNDING: The Emergency Rental Assistance Program will be funded by the \$250,000 CPA grant previously awarded to the Belmont Housing Trust in 2018 if approved in the June 2020 Town Meeting. Private fund-raising efforts will also be undertaken.

LOTTERY

The lottery will be held two weeks after the start of the marketing campaign.

Discussion

- We will review number of renter households and generate an estimate of households that might apply and develop a budget for the program
- We will encourage Metro West Collaborative to flesh out the language for their administrative selection, lottery eligibility process, and put answers into an FAQ that we can disseminate.
- We will begin sharing information about this proposal so that TMM are aware it could come up in June TM
- We will continue to gather supporting data for TMM, including: how other towns are responding, requests being made to town officials and Belmont Helps.org, clearer data on potential number of affected households
- We will update above proposal description with additional information for our presentation to TM.

Judy Singler makes a motion to approve this proposal and advance it to the CPC. All voted in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Next steps

We will notify Town Administrator that of our vote and share the proposed amendment with the CPC.

Other Business

Gloria recapped last night's BOS meeting. In the McLean discussion, Northland developer was asked to address the traffic projections and his plan for a shuttle. There was not much of a plan for a shuttle, instead the developer presented a proposal for restricting more units to 65+ as a way to reduce morning traffic. Discussion that we need to put more pressure on McLean and developer to work together on committing to a shuttle, particularly since the size of McLean staff and services has exploded since 1997, causing substantial traffic problems on Mill Street. We agreed to attend next week's planning board meeting to bring this up and to reach out to encourage Sustainable Belmont to attend for these reasons.

Meeting adjourned 2:10pm

Minutes submitted by Betsy Lipson