

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SOMERVILLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND  
KATJANA BALLANTYNE  
MAYOR

*Andrea Shapiro, Managing Trustee*

*Trustees*  
Brielle Calderan, Mary Cassesso,  
Diane Cohen, Lisa Davidson,  
Councilor Wilfred N. Mbah, Alba Solis,  
Cassie Walston

**Minutes**  
**June 12, 2025 Meeting – 5:15 pm**

Trustees attending: Andrea Shapiro, Cassie Walston, Mary Cassesso, Wilfred Mbah, Brielle Calderan

Staff attending: Becca Brooker, Alexis Turgeon (OSPCD Housing Division)

The meeting started at 5:30pm, with Andrea Shapiro serving in role of chairperson.

*1. Meeting minutes review and approval*

- Draft May 8, 2025 meeting minutes

Brielle Calderan made a **motion** to approve the May 8, 2025 meeting minutes. Mary Cassesso seconded the motion, and the motion **passed** unanimously by roll call vote.

*2. Finance Reports*

- Review of CPA and non-CPA accounts

Becca shared that as of May 31<sup>st</sup>, the Trust's non-CPA account has roughly \$8.2MM available for new commitments. The Early Action Acquisition Fund currently has a balance of roughly \$50,000. The Trust received a \$1.5MM linkage payment from 808 Windsor, and \$50,000 in Fractional payments.

Andrea noted that outstanding commitment amount seemed high and asked for Staff thoughts. Becca noted that the amount listed for Remaining Flex Rental Assistance may not be the updated remaining amount, and will follow up with the Office of Housing Stability to confirm. It was also noted that many Non-CPA outstanding commitments are still in commitment stage, with possibility of projects not going through, and that the 31-33 Cross Street commitment is likely to close by the end of June 2025.

Becca shared that as of May 31<sup>st</sup>, the Trust's CPA account has roughly \$2.3MM available for new commitments. This number includes the Trust's FY25 allocation for CPA funds, totaling \$1,468,693.

Mary Cassesso asked to confirm the percentage of FY25 CPA funds that were appropriated to the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust, and whether the Trust is anticipating an allotment of extra CPA funds this year. Becca will follow up to confirm answers to these questions, but confirmed the FY25 amount is in line with previous years' dollar allocation.

Mary Cassesso made a **motion** to approve the June financial reports, Brielle Calderan seconded the motion, which **passed** unanimously by roll call vote.

*3. New Business*

**Request from Somerville Homeless Coalition: Emergency Permanent Supportive Housing Funding.**

Somerville Homeless Coalition (SHC) submitted an application and budget for Emergency Resident Displacement Prevention funds totaling \$129,895.00. Brielle Calderan, speaking on behalf of SHC, noted that SHC operates probably the largest permanent supportive housing program in Somerville, and is split between Somerville and Arlington. The program operates with Continuum of Care (CoC) funds, which is HUD funding

through the balance of State CoC, and serves people who are formerly homeless and their head of household has a disabling condition. In order to access the program, one has to be chronically homeless, meaning homeless consecutively for at least 12 months, or have had four episodes over the past three years totaling 12 months. This program is considered a last resort for the most vulnerable and the most at-risk residents. Given challenges with many changes happening at a Federal level for funding availability, and new grant restrictions that will be placed on SHC starting July 1, 2025, there are certain existing households that will be disqualified from receiving assistance. Returning to homelessness would be extremely detrimental to the residents and their children. Therefore, SHC is requesting \$129,895.00 of emergency funding to cover the ongoing assistance costs for four existing households. Brielle noted that there is a chance that open litigation would determine that SHC's Federal funding would be able to continue covering these households, but it is unclear when SHC would have that guidance. If SHC does not need these funds, SHC would communicate with the Trust and return the emergency funding. Brielle noted that SHC is also working with the Town of Arlington to have a similar conversation about emergency resources.

Trustees voiced support for this funding purpose, stating it is in line with the Trust's objectives to support permanent supportive housing, and recognized the challenges that Somerville Homeless Coalition is likely facing with its tenants.

Andrea Shapiro asked a clarifying question regarding if this was an eligible CPA funds use. Alexis Turgeon noted that it would be an eligible use of CPA funds, as it is a rental assistance program similar to other tenant stabilization programs that the Trust operates.

Mary Cassesso made a **motion** to **approve** funding \$129,895.00 of CPA funds to Somerville Homeless Coalition in order to support the tenancies and supportive housing services for four vulnerable households in SHC's Permanent Supportive Housing program. Wil Mbah seconded the motion, which **passed** unanimously by roll call vote, with exception of Brielle Calderan who was recused.

### **Request from Somerville Homeless Coalition:**

1. **Tenant Stabilization Program (TSP) amendment and extension.** A request to extend this two-year contract by one more year, so that SHC can continue using its remaining funds.

Mary asked if the contract should be extended for more than one year. Brielle Calderan, on behalf of SHC, noted that the contract doesn't expire until November 30, 2025, and SHC is proactively asking for extension while it continues to spend these funds. Brielle thinks there is a good chance it can be spent by November 30, 2026. SHC has been spending Flex Trust dollars, which has been tightening restrictions, and going forward, SHC will likely share more of cost burden between TSP funds and Flex funds.

Wil Mbah made a **motion** to **approve** the extension of Somerville Homeless Coalition's Tenant Stabilization Program for one more year through November 30, 2026. Mary Cassesso seconded the motion, which **passed** unanimously by roll call vote, with exception of Brielle Calderan who was recused.

2. **Rollover request of remaining HOME PASS Admin dollars into new contract.** A request to rollover remaining HOME PASS Admin funds into a new contract.

Wil Mbah made a **motion** to **approve** the creation of a new contract with the Somerville Homeless Coalition rolling over the remaining roughly \$17,000 of CPA HOME PASS dollars. The new contract will begin July 1, 2025 and be for one year, expiring June 30, 2026. Mary Cassesso seconded the motion, which **passed** unanimously by roll call vote, with exception of Brielle Calderan who was recused.

**Staff Update: Somerville Community Corporation Memo releasing 31-35 Richardson \$171,000.00 CPA commitment.** Becca shared that in an effort to update the Trust's outstanding commitments, the Somerville Community Corporation submitted a memo releasing the Trust's \$171,000 commitment of CPA funds to purchase 31-35 Richardson Street. SCC no longer owns this property and will not be extending the Trust's commitment letter. \$171,000 will be released back to the available CPA funds.

Mary asked who bought the land from SCC. Alexis Turgeon noted that it was sold to CBC, LLC, which is currently going before the Condo Review Board, likely looking to build ~4 condos on the site. This was two separate lots: the vacant portion was sold and the other lot with existing house was sold to a family.

**Request from Just-A-Start: Tenant Stabilization Program (TSP) amendment and extension.** Becca shared that Just-A-Start (JAS) administers a rental assistance program with the help of Trust funds. There is roughly \$28,000 of CPA Trust funds remaining in their contract, which expires June 30, 2025. Since this was a 3-year contract, JAS is requesting a new, two-year contract rolling over the remaining funds. JAS is also requesting approval to use up to 10% of the remaining funds towards Admin costs relating to the contract, and would like to clarify contract wording that JAS can screen tenants up to 100% of Area Median Income.

Mary asked if the Trust has a 10% admin costs allowance for other rental assistance programs. Brielle mentioned that typically there's a 15% admin cost allowance from the beginning of the contract. Brielle noted that this is something Somerville Homeless Coalition also struggles with, as it may take three years to spend the funds, but the agency is still screening tenants on an ongoing basis, which requires staff and administrative time.

Trustees asked if there are any issues relating to screening tenants up to 100% of AMI, and if this request is consistent with what was included in the original Request for Proposal (RFP). Alexis Turgeon referred to the RFP and confirmed JAS was allowed to income certify up to 100% AMI, noting there was likely a clerical error that JAS is hoping to clarify.

Cassie Walston made a **motion** to **approve** the creation of a new contract with Just-A-Start rolling over the remaining roughly \$28,000 of CPA tenant rental assistance dollars. The new contract will begin July 1, 2025 and be for two years, expiring June 30, 2027. This contract will allow JAS to screen tenants up to 100% of Area Median Income, and will allow up to 10% of the funds to be used towards Admin of the contract. Mary Cassesso seconded the motion, which **passed** unanimously by roll call vote, with exception of Wil Mbah's vote due to momentary absence from call.

#### *4. Open Trustee position update*

Becca shared that by the end of June 2025, there will be two open positions on the Trust board: Representative of a Somerville Non-Profit and Representative in Banking & Finance.

There is one qualified candidate available for interviews for the Banking & Finance seat. City Staff working to advertise and collect applications for the two open positions, hoping to make progress on these in the next couple weeks. If anyone on the board has any contacts that may be interested in applying to either the Banking & Finance seat or as a Representative of a Somerville Non-Profit, please have them submit a resume to the Trust at [HousingTrust@somervillema.gov](mailto:HousingTrust@somervillema.gov).

Trustees asked Staff to circulate position descriptions so that they could circulate to their networks.

Applications are being reviewed on a rolling basis, with deadline to apply of July 25, 2025; more information can be found here: <https://www.somervillema.gov/news/join-somerville-affordable-housing-trust-0>

Becca also shared that the City is interviewing for a new Housing Programs Coordinator, who will act as the permanent Staff Liaison to the Trust once hired.

#### *5. Adjournment*

Trustees acknowledged Brielle Calderan's last meeting as a Somerville Affordable Housing Trust board member, and shared appreciation and gratitude for her time spent with the Trust.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 PM.

Documents distributed:

- Draft May 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Financial Reports for May 2025 (CPA and non-CPA)
- Somerville Homeless Coalition Emergency Resident Displacement Funding Request
- Somerville Homeless Coalition TSP Contract Extension Memo
- Somerville Homeless Coalition CPA HOME PASS Admin Memo
- Somerville Community Corporation 31-35 Richardson Commitment Release Memo
- Just-A-Start TSP Amendment Request Memo