

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SOMERVILLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND**

*KATJANA BALLANTYNE*

*MAYOR*

*Andrea Shapiro, Managing Trustee*

***Trustees***

Alba Solis

Cassie Walston

Diane Cohen

Lisa Davidson

Mary Cassesso

Councilor Wilfred N. Mbah

**Minutes**

**Thursday, August 14, 2025 Meeting – 5:15 pm**

Trustees attending: Mary Cassesso, Diane Cohen, Wilfred Mbah, Andrea Shapiro, Lisa Davidson, Alba Solis

Staff attending: Becca Brooker, Sheniqua Roper, Alexis Turgeon (Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development – Housing Division)

The meeting started at 5:15 pm, with Andrea Shapiro serving in the role of chairperson.

Andrea welcomed Sheniqua Roper introduced to the Affordable Housing Trust Board as the City of Somerville Housing Programs Coordinator and permanent Staff Liaison to Trust. The Trustees and City Staff in attendance introduced themselves.

*1. Meeting Minutes review and approval*

- Draft July 10, 2025 meeting minutes

Diane Cohen made a **motion** to accept the July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Mary Cassesso seconded the motion, and the motion **passed** unanimously by roll call vote.

*2. Financial Reports*

- Review of CPA and non-CPA accounts

Becca shared that as of July 31<sup>st</sup>, the Trust's Community Preservation Act (CPA) account had roughly \$2.3MM available for new commitments. This number includes the Trust's FY25 allocation for CPA funds, totaling \$1.46M.

As of July 31<sup>st</sup>, the Trust's non-CPA account has roughly \$11.8MM available for new commitments. The Early Action Acquisition Fund currently has a balance of roughly \$50,000. The 31-33 Cross Street East development loan and the 297 Medford Street Acquisition loan are expected to close by the end of August 2025.

Financing meetings have commenced for 299 Broadway, with new address of 15 Temple Street, and 24 Webster Avenue. Both projects are targeting late fall 2025 financing closings.

Mary Cassesso made a **motion** to approve the July financial reports, Lisa Davidson seconded the motion, which **passed** unanimously by roll call vote.

### 3. *Ongoing Business*

- Staff Update: CPC approval to return CPA interest earned FY19-FY25

Becca shared that the CPC has approved the Housing Division's request to return \$264,327.71 to the Trust CPA account; this amount is equal to the interest earned on CPA funds between fiscal years 2019 and 2025. The CPC approved this interest return in August, and the funds are expected to show in September's financial reports.

- Continuing discussion of FY26 funds allocation, timing, and criteria for RFP issuance for Grant awards, including Staff recommendations

Based on Staff's review of the available funding sources and anticipated developments that will likely come to the Trust for development assistance in the near future, Staff recommends the Trust allocate up to \$400,000 of CPA funds for Housing Assistance programs. This amount is the same as last year's allocation, and will be available through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process, with the goal of having the RFP ready to be issued by the end of September or early October. Staff will develop a set of criteria which Trustees can use to evaluate each proposal. The criteria would weigh various factors, such as past program success, organizational and financial capacity.

Trustees reviewed the proposed \$400,000 allocation for Housing Assistance programs in the upcoming RFP. Diane asked if this was the amount that's usually provided. Becca clarified that this figure is based on the Strategic Plan's percentage allocations and projected revenue and is consistent with the amount approved in the prior year. Mary noted the amount could be reconsidered in the future but agreed to proceed with \$400,000 for this cycle.

Andrea raised the idea of prioritizing applicants who are ineligible for federal funding, such as undocumented households, and suggested incorporating this into the RFP criteria. Trustees discussed whether to set this as a formal requirement or instead provide additional points or bonus funding in the scoring process. Alba asked how such criteria would be defined alongside the Area Median Income (AMI) requirements. Lisa clarified that CPA funds are restricted to households at or below AMI (up to 110%), while non-CPA funds allow more flexibility.

Lisa also noted that rollover requests from prior contracts had already been addressed and that no unspent funds remain from last year. Mary suggested holding a broader discussion in the fall to revisit funding levels and long-term strategy. Will emphasized the importance of aligning allocations with the Strategic Plan.

Staff confirmed that a draft RFP will be circulated for edits, with the expectation that Trustees will vote at the September meeting to finalize the document for release in October or November.

Diane Cohen made a **motion** that the Trust allocates up to \$400,000 of CPA Trust funds for Housing Assistance programs, which will be made available through a competitive RFP process. Mary Cassesso seconded the motion, and the motion **passed** unanimously by roll-call vote.

### 4. *Open Trustee position update*

Becca shared an update on the open Trust positions. Three applications were received for the open seat in Banking & Finance; interviews are scheduled for that position on evening of August 20th.

For the open seat for a Somerville Non-Profit, one application was received. This seat will need to be re-advertised with the Somerville Non-Profits, as the interviewing body needs more than one application to proceed. This position will be re-marketed for mid-to-end of September interviews.

5. *Home Rule Petition*

Lisa provided an update on the Home Rule Petition, noting that it is back in circulation for review. Andrea suggested inviting Joe to the October meeting to discuss further. It was explained that additional investigation is needed to determine whether the Trust should return to the original ordinance, particularly with regard to the use of CPA funds. Inter-Governmental Affairs (IGA) would assist in identifying the best path forward if the decision is made to revisit the petition. The goal is to return to the original bylaws for non-CPA funds, with more updates expected in October.

6. *Adjournment*

The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 pm.