

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
PITTSFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY (PHA)
Tuesday, August 18, 2026
Participation was done entirely in person
Columbia Arms, 65 Columbus Avenue, Pittsfield, MA 11:00 a.m.

I Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Pittsfield Housing Authority Board of Commissioners was called to order at approximately 11:06 a.m. on August 18, 2026. All Board members were present, constituting a full quorum: Justine Dodds, Joseph Wolters, David Pill, Chairman Mike McCarthy, and Jared LeBeau.

Chairman McCarthy made an announcement that any person can make a video or audio recording of an open meeting through any medium and that this public meeting was being recorded.

PHA staff in attendance: Interim Executive Director (ED) Susan Martino, Federal Public Housing Manager Chelsea Gancarz, Dawn-Marie Goodpastor Maintenance Operations Clerk/Safety Officer, Section 8 Program Manager Polly Racicot, Working Foreman Sean Eckert, Section 8 Program Specialist Amanda Knights, Security Jim Tobin.

II Approval of Previous Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from the July 22, 2026 meeting.

Motion: To approve the July 22, 2026 minutes by Board Member Pill, seconded by Wolters. Vote: Dodds aye; McCarthy aye; Wolters aye; Pill aye. LeBeau aye. Motion passes 5-0

III Administration Report

a) Financial Update

The Board reviewed the fiscal year-end financial results from Interim ED Susan Martino

- The Federal program ended the fiscal year with approximately \$33,471 remaining after non-routine expenses.
- The Section 8 program showed a \$58,600 decrease, primarily due to a reduction in HUD administrative fees from 97% to 86%.

- Section 8 reserves remain strong.
- The State 401 program ended the year in a strong financial position, with approximately \$507,890 and reserves at approximately 59%.
- Solar net-meter credits generated approximately \$384,000 in revenue.
- Employee benefit expenses exceeded budget due to increased retirement and health insurance costs.
- The Housing Authority is owed state subsidy funds for FY2026, which are expected to be received after year-end financial documents are finalized and approved.
- Vacancy penalties were approximately \$50,000, which was an improvement over the prior year.

b) Maintenance Report

The Board received an update regarding the elevator at Columbia Arms from Maintenance Operations Clerk/Safety Officer Dawn-Marie Goodpastor.

- The elevator motor was removed and returned to Lenoxdale for additional diagnostic testing after metal shavings were discovered.
- The Board expressed concern regarding the length of time the elevator has been out of service.
- Staff will continue following up with the elevator contractor and requested a detailed report.
- Security staff were recognized for assisting residents when elevator service was unavailable.
- The Board requested an update at the next meeting if the elevator has not been restored.

The Board also discussed flooring work at Rose Manor and requested clarification as to why flooring repairs remain pending while electrical/mini-split work is being addressed.

c) Waitlist and Vacancy Report

Federal Public Housing Manager Chelsea Gancarz provided updates on federal and state public housing vacancies and waiting lists.

- No federal public housing move-outs occurred at the end of July.
- Four families moved into federal public housing units.
- Federal waiting lists currently include one-, two-, three-, and four-bedroom units, with approximately 7–12 applicants on each list.
- There are currently two active offers and three tentative lease-ups.
- State public housing currently has nine active waiting lists.
- Four active offers are currently outstanding, with additional applicants ready to receive offers following the required waiting period.

- Staff continue to conduct weekly vacancy meetings and coordinate closely with maintenance to prepare units for occupancy.
- Several Worcester units are being prepared, with additional units expected to be ready by the end of September.
- Worcester Housing Authority will assist with tenant selection and CHAMP processing for units associated with the Worcester project.

d) HUD Section 8

The Board was advised by Section 8 Program Manager Polly Racicot that the annual SEMAP certification is ready for review and signature.

The certification reviews program files, regulations, calculations, and compliance requirements and is used by HUD to assess program performance.

Action: Board members were asked to sign the certification. No vote was required.

IV New Business / Board Votes

a) New Hires

The Board approved the hiring of two candidates for the State Program Specialist and Section 8 Program Specialist positions.

Motion: Authorize the Interim Executive Director to hire the selected candidates by Board Member Pill, Seconded by Board Member Wolters.

Vote: Dodds aye; McCarthy aye; Wolters aye; Pill aye. LeBeau aye. Motion passes 5-0

b) Memorandum of Understanding – Worcester Housing Authority

Motion to approve a MOU allowing the Worcester Housing Authority to assist with CHAMP processing and tenant qualification for Pittsfield units by Board Member LeBeau, Seconded by Board Member Wolters.

Vote: Dodds aye; McCarthy aye; Wolters aye; Pill aye. LeBeau aye. Motion passes 5-0

c) Memorandum of Understanding – Adams Housing Authority

Motion to approve an MOU allowing former PHA Maintenance/Modernization Director Bill Schrade, now with the Adams Housing Authority, to provide modernization project assistance and consultation from Board Member Wolters, Seconded by Board Member LeBeau.

Vote: Dodds aye; McCarthy aye; Wolters aye; Pill aye. LeBeau aye. Motion passes 5-0

d) Project 236101 – Fire Doors, Phase 2

Motion to approve the Certificate of Substantial Completion for Project 236101 at Francis Plaza from Board Member Pill, Seconded by Board Member LeBeau.

Vote: Dodds aye; McCarthy aye; Wolters aye; Pill aye. LeBeau aye. Motion passes 5-0

e) Project 236094 – Roof Replacement

Motion to approve the Certificate of Final Completion for the roof and siding replacement project at Essex Street by Board Member Pill, Seconded by Board Member Wolters.

Vote: Dodds aye; McCarthy aye; Wolters aye; Pill aye. LeBeau aye. Motion passes 5-0

f) Project 236106 – Driveway Replacement

Motion to approve both the Certificate of Substantial Completion and Certificate of Final Completion for Project 236106 at 78 3rd Street by Board Member Wolters, Seconded by Board Member LeBeau.

Vote: Dodds aye; McCarthy aye; Wolters aye; Pill aye. LeBeau aye. Motion passes 5-0

g) MBI Grant

The Board discussed the MBI grant intended to establish computer labs and improve internet/computer access for residents.

Due to the December 31, 2026 deadline, limited staff and contractor capacity, and concerns about completing the proposed computer labs within the remaining timeframe, the Board determined that the original scope was not practical.

The Board authorized staff to communicate with MBI regarding returning the grant as currently structured while maintaining the possibility of future cooperation or alternative funding opportunities.

Motion to authorize the Executive Director and Board representative to communicate with MBI regarding returning the grant while maintaining a positive relationship for future opportunities by Board Member LeBeau, Seconded by Board Member Wolters.

Vote: Dodds aye; McCarthy aye; Wolters aye; Pill aye. LeBeau aye. Motion passes 5-0

V OTHER BUSINESS

Special Board Meeting – Wahconah Heights Paving Project

Staff reported that bids had been opened for the Wahconah Heights paving project on August 14, 2026. Because the Authority has 30 days to accept the bid, a special meeting was scheduled.

Special Meeting:

Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 2:45 p.m.

Pittsfield Housing Authority – Columbia Arms

Motion to Schedule special Board Meeting August 26, 2026 at 2:45 pm at Columbia Arms by Board Member LeBeau, Seconded by Board Member Wolters.

Vote: Dodds aye; McCarthy aye; Wolters aye; Pill aye. LeBeau aye. Motion passes 5-0

VI Public Comment

Ron Stoddard – Reported that Gateway Fiber has been installing fiber optic service on Flint Street near Wahconah Heights and suggested it may provide an additional internet service option for residents.

Robert Wincek – Wahconah Heights – Asked about the timeline for internet service to become available at Wahconah Heights. Staff explained that the project is being completed by the internet provider and that residents must contact the provider to sign up for service. Staff offered to distribute information about available internet service to residents.

Chandra Holland – Dower Square – Asked whether the Housing Authority could expand its use of solar energy to generate additional revenue or help residents with electricity costs. The Board discussed the existing solar net-metering arrangement and the possibility of exploring additional solar opportunities in the future.

Joshua Jordan – Dower Square – Asked for clarification regarding the \$107,000 in non-routine expenses and the \$58,000 Section 8 deficit discussed during the financial report. Staff explained

that the Section 8 deficit resulted from HUD providing less administrative funding, rather than the money being lost or unaccounted for.

Asked for clarification regarding the Housing Authority's grill policy and whether the previous requirement to remove grills had been eliminated. The Board explained that the directive requiring residents to remove grills had been rescinded. A subcommittee is reviewing the various developments to determine how residents can maintain grills while complying with fire-safety requirements, including the requirement that grills and sources of ignition be kept at least 10 feet from buildings.

Joe New- Columbia Arms – Asked about the expected timeline for the elevator to return to service and raised concerns about the length of time residents were without elevator service. The resident also asked whether the Housing Authority could consider an elevator company with a faster emergency response when both elevators are unavailable. The Board acknowledged the concern and discussed the age of the elevators and the possibility of future modernization.

Raised a concern regarding a \$50 maintenance charge that had appeared on his rent for an alleged toilet issue. He explained that the actual maintenance work involved repairing the toilet tank/cage and questioned why the charge had been assessed. Staff explained that the maintenance system had previously been configured to automatically apply certain charges and that those default charges had been removed. The specific charge was subsequently addressed.

Christina Dronava- Wilson Park– Reported inadequate lighting near her street, particularly around a corner near vacant apartments, and expressed concerns about inappropriate activity occurring in the dark area. Staff discussed determining whether the lighting issue was the responsibility of the Housing Authority or the City and provided information regarding contacting security.

Kelly Phaneuf– Wilson Park – Raised concerns about a maintenance employee arriving before 6:00 a.m., sitting in a tenant parking area, smoking, and leaving cigarette butts. The resident also expressed concerns about the work habits and conduct of maintenance workers, including excessive breaks and use of tenant areas. Staff indicated the concerns would be addressed.

Aja Young– Dower Square – Questioned the decision to bring Bill Schrade back to assist with modernization projects, expressing concern about the condition of PHA properties and the need for resources to be directed toward maintenance. Staff explained that Mr. Schrade's role will be administrative and focused on modernization project procedures, documentation, and compliance.

Reported that a resident's interior staircase had partially collapsed and that the maintenance call had been classified as a non-emergency because it was categorized as carpentry. The resident expressed concern that unsafe stairs should be treated as an emergency. Staff agreed to follow up with the maintenance department and the resident.

Amy Machaffie– Dower Square – Asked about a family member's household composition and bedroom size. She questioned why a child who spends 50% of the time with a parent could not remain on the household's lease and asked about a separate family that had been waiting for a larger unit. Staff explained the requirements for determining household composition, including custody arrangements and the child's official school address, and discussed the current transfer list and efforts to address over- and under-housed families.

Raised concerns about suspected drug activity at Dollar Square and stated that the activity was occurring throughout the night. Staff encouraged residents to report suspected criminal activity directly to the Housing Authority and security so that it can be investigated.

VII Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn by Board Member LeBeau, Seconded by Board Member Wolters.

Vote: Dodds aye; McCarthy aye; Wolters aye; Pill aye. LeBeau aye. Motion passes 5-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Knights
Section 8 Program Specialist
Pittsfield Housing Authority