

APPROVED

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
PITTSFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY (PHA)

March 17, 2026

Participation was done entirely in person
Columbia Arms, 65 Columbus Avenue, Pittsfield, MA
12:00 p.m.

I Call to Order

Chairman McCarthy called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. PHA Board of Commissioners in attendance: Justine Dodds, Edward Carmel, Jared LeBeau, and Chairman Mike McCarthy. Absent: David Pill. 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: Executive Director (ED) Tina Danzy, Assistant to the Executive Director Madonna Meagher, Director of Finance and Administration Susan Martino, State Property Manager/MOD Coordinator Gwen Cariddi, State Assistant Manager Yandelin Peralta, Public Housing Manager Chelsea Gancarz, Federal Housing Specialist Izaiya Mestre, Section 8 Polly Racicot and Director of Maintenance Pete Marino, State Housing Specialist Christine Viel, Security John Newton,

Public: Francis D., Ron S., Karen K., Kelli M. Lisa M., Joe W.

Chairman McCarthy introduced Jared LeBeau as the new appointed member of the commissioners. Mr. LeBeau introduced himself and gave a brief history of his work as a union representative and 22 years working experience that can relate to the PHA.

II Approval of board minutes from: 2/17/26

There were no corrections to the February 17, 2026 minutes. **Board member Carmel made a motion to approve the draft minutes, seconded by Dodds. Vote: Dodds, aye; Carmel aye, LeBeau aye; McCarthy, aye. Motion passes 4-0**

III Executive Director's Report

The board was informed that the Columbia Arms handbooks will be handed to tenants next week at the quarterly meeting. RSC Veronica Warren will be having a movie in the afternoon after the quarterly meeting and elder services will also be on hand to field questions and promote their services.

PHA Web conversion began last week with training of all staff. They will return on March 23 for additional training. Executive Director Danzy mentioned that the software is user friendly, residents will be able to log on their portal (Veronica Warren as RSC will assist them in navigating the portal) and eventually tenants will be able to pay their rent directly on line.

APPROVED

The Go-Live celebration in the community room at Columbia Arms was well attended on March 4th. The broadband service is now in place and tenants and visitors can utilize the free broadband wifi in the community room.

Several current topics were reported to the Board. Executive Director Danzy arranged a welcome meeting with new Commissioner LeBeau. It was a chance for him to meet the staff and get a view of the PHA organization as a whole. Aaron's Furniture Store donated an unwrapped surplus couch to be used in one of our community rooms. Professional artist Gregory Crewdson would be staging one of his photographic art compositions at the Wahconah Heights community in March.

a) Financial Update:

Director of Finance and Administration Susan Martino reported that reserves are in good shape as PHA is seven months into the fiscal year. All of the PHA departments are around 1% which is right where she wants them to be. Chairman McCarthy asked for a motion to approve Fenton Ewald February financials as presented. **Carmel made a motion to approve the February financials as presented seconded by Dodds. Vote: Dodds, aye; Carmel aye, LeBeau aye; McCarthy, aye. Motion passes 4-0**

Discussion ensued that there are 70 tenants in court for cause or non-payment. Ms Martino mentioned that in the A/R report in the packet, the board would see the numbers decline because we are setting up payment plans, evicting, and people are paying what they owe us because we are holding them accountable. Chairman McCarthy asked for additional details on the spread sheet and Ms. Gancarz will reformat the sheet and Ms. Peralta will highlight the figures in the A/R report from this March meeting to give to the Chairman.

b) Maintenance Update:

Director of Maintenance Pete Marino updated the board on the results of the harsh winter freezes and the relief of better weather. He reported that he is down two maintenance personnel and asked tenants for patience if non-emergency work orders get delayed a little. The priority list changes by the hour, so the maintenance staff is challenged every day.

Discussion ensued with questions regarding mitigation of asbestos at the sites. Both the Executive Director and Mr. Marino spoke directly to address that Tom Boyer from EOHLC reported that no sealing of flooring was acceptable and that it must be removed and having the apartments vacant was optimal to proceed. Executive Director Danzy has a signed contract for the asbestos removal project but she is waiting for the notice to proceed from the state which can happen any day now.

Mr. Marino stated that the shift in scope of work for the maintenance crew would now be on clean-up: spring clean up of sites. He has assigned one point person and two other crew personnel to continue site to site with the hope of all being done on or around earth day. He will be working on scheduling dumpsters for bulky waste.

APPROVED

Reporting on other sites, Executive Director Danzy reported that there has been a change of scope of work at Christopher Arms, and re-gutting the units is not needed. The Providence Court fire door project is nearing completion with the painting of the doors as the final step.

Executive Director Danzy discussed the new maintenance tracker form that helps with move outs and designed to address lease violations, health issues, unit damage and public housing inspector Eric Depson will report Executive Director Danzy within 24 hours. The goal is to have faster reporting on conditions to turnover units promptly.

c) Waitlist/Vacancy Update:

State Assistant Manager Yandelin Peralta updated the board on vacancies including large pull lists.

There were 8 offers given and 5 lease ups.

d) HUD/Section 8

Section 8 Director Polly Racicot reported that the West Housatonic apartments have a Certificate of Occupancy and are almost ready for move-ins. She has 20 out of 28 tenants ready to go!

e) Other:

State Property Manager Cariddi will continue quarterly meetings, the next on 3/20/26 and advanced notices will be sent to the tenants.

Ms. Danzy met with the federal auditors when they completed their annual audit of the federal sites we oversee.

Executive Director Danzy reported that an estimate for just labor (\$266,000) from Cornerstone for Wahconah Heights projects had been received from EOHLC's Rob Garrett. Ms Danzy will update the board at the next meeting.

Additionally Ms. Danzy reported she had a tenant meeting at Wahconah Heights and over a dozen tenants attended. Rob Penagos from RCAT reported to the tenants about the paving project and Veronica Warren gave an overview of her RSC position and how she could assist tenants and she would be on site for appointments or walk-ins.

In a staffing update, there are two vacancies for maintenance, and one hire of Izya Mestres as Federal Housing Specialist and RSC for the federal sites began this month.

Executive Director Danzy also reported to the board that she presided over an all staff meeting and discussed employee expectations for all staff.

Also ongoing is the state Annual Plan status. Executive Director Danzy has met with RCAT's Rob Penagos reviewing the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). There is only

APPROVED

\$157,000 of funds for utilization of site projects which is not enough and will have to be strategically used.

IV NEW BUSINESS: Board Vote
None

V OTHER BUSINESS: (may require a board vote)

1. Tenant Parking:

Chairman McCarthy made a motion to table the discussion of tenant parking and towing/plowing as board member Pill was not present and had concerns about these items at the February board meeting. **Carmel made a motion to table the tenant parking agenda item seconded by LeBeau. Vote: Dodds, aye; Carmel aye, LeBeau aye; McCarthy, aye. Motion passes 4-0**

2. Intercept Program:

Continuing with finances regarding the intercept program, Executive Director Danzy reported that PHA had received two individual intercepts from the Comptroller's office totaling over \$5000. In addition to that there were two other payments and the total for intercept was over \$6000.00 Executive Director Danzy recommended that the funds be used for a pavilion at Wilson Park and asked for ideas for providing enhancement at the properties including furnishing the community rooms. Board member Dodds suggested PHA apply for a Community Preservation Grant in the fall, as that kind of pavilion project aligns with the mission of community preservation.

Executive Director Danzy stated that developing a Youth Enhancement program for the betterment of PHA's younger tenants might be a good way to utilize the Intercept funds. Director of Finance Susan Martino stated that there were two additional payments made (from tenants listed on the intercept list) that had paid directly to PHA's rent office. Those repayments were not being counted as "intercept" funds but were being coded differently and entered in the rent accounts.

Additional discussion ensued and Chairman McCarthy suggested further discussion on the topic and asked to table the discussion. Responding to **Carmel made a motion to table the intercept discussion seconded by LeBeau. Vote: Dodds, aye; Carmel aye, LeBeau aye; McCarthy, aye. Motion passes 4-0**

VI BOARD/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Board Comments:

Board member Carmel requested a copy of emergency versus non-emergency form for tenants that call the maintenance hotline. Carmel also requested information about no trespassing violations in our buildings.

Dodds suggested contacting the new Police Chief for Pittsfield to discuss the safety of all PHA residents.

Public Comments:

Karen K from Columbia Arms, had maintenance concerns about an apartment in her unit that was malfunctioning. Cheryl M., tenant from Columbia Arms made suggestions

APPROVED

to staff and residents regarding end-of-life paperwork that can help protect the distribution of their belongings and basic estate. Cheryl also requested the maintenance director to update his staff on routine maintenance calls to units, and commented that tenants need to be more specific when calling in work orders.

NEXT MEETING: April 21, 2026 @ Noon: Wahconah Heights

VII ADJOURNMENT: 1:15 p.m. Without Objection: **Vote: LeBeau aye; Carmel, aye; Dodds, aye; McCarthy aye. 4-0**

Respectfully submitted,
Madonna Meagher
Assistant to the Executive Director
Pittsfield Housing Authority

Documents reviewed:

Agenda 3-17-26, Draft board minutes of 2/17/26, vacancy reports, February 2026 financials, TAR report, move-in/move-out information sheet, vacancy list, towing for PHA sites: a comparison, draft Parking and Towing policy, Intercept activity report, Go-Live event pictures, Veronica Warren RSC information, responsibilities/powers of the Chairperson