

Town Of Falmouth Inspecting Housing Fund

By CARRIE L. GENTILE 16 hrs ago

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An emergency housing assistance fund administered by the Falmouth Housing Authority is in its second month of review by town officials, and the authority's director said he has not been informed why it is under scrutiny.

In March, assistant town manager Heather B. Harper sent a letter to Thomas Lacey, the executive director of the Falmouth Housing Authority. She wrote her office "became aware" by the community preservation committee administrative staff of a complaint made to the CPC office about the use of the stabilization program funds.

"The Town of Falmouth does not have direct oversight of funds as distributed by the Falmouth Housing Authority and we recommend that the complainant file this complaint directly with the FHA to allow you an opportunity to respond," she wrote.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lacey said Thursday, June 9, the person who made the complaint has never come forward nor has it been made clear to him the specific concerns.

"All I can do is be open and up front and provide the town with what they request," Mr. Lacey said.

The Falmouth Housing Authority is a quasi-governmental entity that manages various Federal housing assistance programs on behalf of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Created in 2013 with CPC funds (\$125,000 to date), the housing stabilization fund provides rental assistance to Falmouth individuals or families that are homeless or at risk of becoming so. A person or family can only use it once.

"We've stuck to program guidelines all along," Mr. Lacey said.

As requested by the town and the CPC, Mr. Lacey said he provided in May a tracking worksheet and copies of cancelled checks to all landlords paid from the stabilization account, with the tenants' names redacted for confidentiality purposes.

Shortly thereafter, he said Falmouth Finance Director Jennifer Petit came to the housing authority's office and looked through more "back up" documents related to payments.

"I have always given information related to payments and have always given what was requested of us," he said.

A meeting between Ms. Petit and Mr. Lacey was scheduled for Friday, June 10.

In asking the town for details of the review, the Enterprise received the following response via e-mail from town manager Julian M. Suso:

"The Falmouth Housing Authority is cooperating in this process. The review is ongoing and there is nothing further to report at this time. We will generally anticipate further information becoming available later in the month of June."

The stabilization fund has been shut down; however the Falmouth Human Services and the Falmouth Service Center are collaborating to create a similar fund with a broader scope.