



Watertown City Council

Administration Building

149 Main Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: 617-972-6470

Committee on Human Services

Monday, September 14, 2023

Members Present: Councilor Tony Palomba, Chair; Councilor Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and Councilor John Gannon, Secretary

The Committee on Human Services held a public meeting on September 14, 2023, at 6:00pm to:

- 1) consider the reappointment of Dr. Dominic Amirtharaj to the Board of Health for a term expiring on February 2, 2026; and
- 2) consider the reappointment of David Leon to the Affordable Housing Trust for a term expiring on June 30, 2025.

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Palomba called the meeting to order at 6:12pm and introduced the other committee members present: Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and John Gannon, Secretary. Also present during the course of the meeting were Dr. Domenic Amirtharaj and David Leon.

2. Interview of Dr. Dominic Amirtharaj for Reappointment to the Board of Health for a Term Expiring on February 2, 2026.

Dr. Amirtharaj is a current member of the Board of Health. He is a practicing doctor with a specialty in internal medicine and has affiliations with many hospitals, including Mount Auburn Hospital. He stated that he's been very interested in the local government processes in terms of public health and appreciates serving on the Board of Health. The Board of Health has seen an increasing amount of activity in the biotech field. He would like to see the Board of Health take on a bigger role with respect to opioid addiction and other substance use disorders. He has been involved with the Board's addressing of issues with respect to rodent control. Councilor Bays moved that the Committee recommend that Dr. Dominic Amirtharaj be reappointed to the Board of Health, seconded by Councilor Gannon. The vote to approve the nomination was 3-0.

3. Interview of David Leon for Reappointment to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for a Term Expiring on June 30, 2025.

David Leon has an extensive background in real estate finance and development, specializing in the development of affordable housing. He brings a broad range of expertise to the Watertown Affordable Housing Trust, including his service on the Watertown Housing Partnership for over twenty-three years. He stated that as a present member of the Trust, he has been invigorated on affordable housing issues due to the collective talents and backgrounds of the other members of the Trust. He stated that the Trust has been reviewing potential sites for affordable housing, along with the assistance of a Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate student using MIS data. He is pleased that the City has a City Manager with such an extensive background in planning and affordable housing development. He also praised the staff support provided to the Trust by Larry Fields of the Department of Community Development and Planning. He would like to see discussion of the possibility of increasing the required development percentage dedicated to affordable housing. Councilor Gannon moved that the Committee recommend that David Leon be reappointed to the Trust, seconded by Councilor Bays. The vote to approve the nomination was 3-0.

Councilor Gannon made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Bays. The vote was 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.

Action Item 1. Confirmation of Dr. Dominic Amirtharaj for Reappointment to the Board of Health for a Term Expiring on February 2, 2026.

Action Item 2. Confirmation of David Leon for Reappointment to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for a Term Expiring on June 30, 2025.

Meeting minutes prepared by
John Gannon, Secretary

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Anthony Palomba,
Chair

Caroline Bays,
Vice Chair

John G. Gannon,
Secretary