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August 23, 2021

Kittery Town Council
200 Rogers Rd.
Kittery, ME 03904

Re: Year-End Transfers

Dear Councilors,

My name is Emily Flinkstrom and I am the director of Fair Tide. I am writing to recommend that a portion of the budget surplus from FY21 be allocated to affordable housing, and specifically to the Housing Reserve Fund. This pot of money was established by the Town Council for the purpose of, “supporting the creation, rehabilitation, and retention of affordable housing units in Kittery.” The Kittery Housing Committee has the charge of making recommendations for the use of these funds, allowing you, the councilors, to assure the monies are spent in accordance with the town’s affordable housing goals.

The pandemic has exacerbated the housing crisis in our community in multiple ways. Thanks to the possibility of remote work and the appeal of a more rural setting, Kittery saw an influx of new residents. This increase in demand further skewed the housing market and has resulted in historically high prices for both rentals and home ownership. At the same time, many families were impacted financially by COVID and are still struggling to catch up. Fair Tide continues to field requests for assistance paying bills so folks can remain in their homes.

While I am not speaking on behalf of the Kittery Housing Committee, as a member I can report that we are making good progress toward some creative and effective programs to alleviate the affordable housing crisis in our town. The Housing Reserve Fund currently sits at \$150,000, but that money will go fast. Adding additional funds from this surplus will allow the work of the Housing Committee to have even more reach and impact during a time in which this issue continues to become more dire.

I am happy to provide any additional information that might be helpful in your deliberations and I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Emily Flinkstrom, MSW
Executive Director
executivedirector@fairtide.org