

Boston Housing Authority Resident Advisory Board Meeting Jan. 5, 2023 (external notes)

Minutes from prior meeting were approved.

1/ Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH): John Kane of BHA noted that Bob Terrell of BHA's Office of Civil Rights had been slated to present on this tonight, but had left the BHA. The AFFH piece was not formally part of the BHA's Annual Plan submission to HUD (since HUD doesn't yet require this), but BHA did want to get feedback on its report as part of the PHA Plan process (and was glad for responses it received). BHA will be convening a Fair Housing working group to analyze the responses and at some point there will likely be a further report to the RAB. A RAB member noted that it should be clear that a number of groups may face discrimination (for example, Jewish people or people with Section 8 vouchers) and the report should make clear that all are covered and protected.

2/ Annual Plan Submissions: John announced that HUD had approved Amendment 1 to the FY 2022 PHA Plan (the disposition of the small parcel at Orchard). He also sent to the RAB, shortly before the meeting, BHA's proposed responses to various comments received on both the federal and state plan. He noted that for the Resident Participation Policy (RPP), while there had been a number of good comments raised, BHA realized that there needed to be discussions, and so it was not submitting this as part of the Annual Plan. BHA intends to continue to discuss this with resident leaders and advocates, and it could well be that a mid-year amendment will be submitted. In the interim, if there are things that LTOs were anticipating in the new policy that they want to pursue, they could consult with BHA about that. A RAB member asked about the ability to work out arrangements with Mixed Finance partners (such as regarding stipends). Mac McCreight of GBLS suggested that since a Mixed Finance Resident Group is meeting Feb. 7th, this would be a good topic to include there. There was some discussion about stipends, including whether there could/should be RAB stipends. John noted that existing HUD/BHA policy does provide for stipends, but provides that any stipend beyond \$200/month must be reported as income. He noted that in the past, the RAB had discussed the possibility of stipends, and this would be a good topic to include for the next Budget Committee, since it will need to work out a RAB budget for next year which could include stipends. Mac noted that this was a zero sum game, and just like a public housing LTO may need to decide between using its funds for stipends or other purposes (like sending people to conferences), the RAB would have some similar balancing. A RAB member noted that since Section 8 doesn't have LTOs, there are no funds for Section 8 to use for stipends. John noted that if the RAB had stipends, they would be available whether a person was Section 8 or public housing.

On the overall comments, John said that he planned on getting HUD submission in by Jan. 13th, but the DHCD submission wasn't due until the end of the month. Therefore, if people had comments on federal side (for example, it would help if BHA clarified something or

added more detail), they should get that in by Monday, Jan. 9 or Tuesday, Jan. 10th at the latest. For state plan, comments that came in by the following week would be fine.

3/Budget Committee: Mac asked if he could present on this, since the committee chair was not available and the vice-treasurer had indicated she was also dealing with a school meeting at the same time. He read a letter which the Budget Committee has asked him to prepare, trying to get people off on the right foot for 2023 but reminding them about reimbursement protocols.

Mac then summarized the beginning part of the Budget Committee report, including a few recommendations. The committee had noted that certain checks had been issued without following the right protocols. In one case, however, the member was not at fault, and while the check issued prematurely (before the back-up paperwork had come in), the paperwork was there. In the other case, though (involving the Treasurer's request for reimbursement for MBTA costs from Jan.-Dec. 2022, totaling \$402.00), there was no back-up documentation, the request was not signed off on by the chair, and the check was signed by the Treasurer, contrary to the long-standing Budget Committee policy that individuals don't sign on their own reimbursement checks. Because of these irregularities, the committee recommended that the check be reimbursed to the RAB. It was moved, seconded, and approved (with one nay) to require reimbursement in 30 days.

The committee had also recommended that it be made a formal bylaw amendment that there not be self-reimbursement (i.e., that Budget Committee member should not sign own check for reimbursement). ***This was moved, seconded, and approved with one abstention. (Mac Noted that this couldn't formally be done until February meeting given rule that bylaw amendments must be sent out at least 7 days in advance.)***

Finally, the committee had recommended that the Treasurer would not carry out normal functions pending an investigation into whether he could carry out his role, and the vice-treasurer would act as treasurer until the investigation was complete and Board considered any recommendations from a committee of neutrals (and that Treasurer would return keys to RAB office and would not be signing checks, etc. in interim). There was discussion of this, and there ended up being a tie vote, with 8 voting for the committee recommendation, 8 against, and 4 abstaining. As a result, no action was taken on this recommendation. The vice-treasurer does have the debit card, which had been turned into John at the BHA by the Treasurer voluntarily, and she can use this to authorize expenditures, etc., in the interim.

It was decided to not go through other items on the Budget Committee report (although a few of them did come up later—see below).

4/Other Business: Mac noted that the RAB got information that a former member from Mission Main had passed away and has a funeral next week, and that he had gotten information to the acting secretary and vice-treasurer about this. The vice treasurer said

she would work on the flowers for the deceased former RAB member, as well as the “get well” flowers for several current RAB members on medical leave, and would let Budget Committee members know if there were any issues.

Meeting was adjourned without an evaluation.