

Boston Housing Authority RAB Meeting 7-12-18, at 125 Amory Street

Family Public Hsg: *Members* Val Shelley, Phyllis Corbitt, Concetta Paul, Kassandra Ledesma, Aracelis Tejada, Betty Rae Wade, Betty Walker. *Alternates* Ron Johnson (Alt 1), Pamela Lewis-Hoyt (Alt 9), Cheryl Semnack (Alt 10): 10

Elderly/Disabled Public Hsg: *Members* Michele McNickles, Rik Gurney, Eugenia Smith, Marlena Nania, Modesta Ballester, David Turney. *Alternates:* Alex Rosin (Alt 1), Arthur Alexander (Alt 2): 8

Section 8: *Members* Edna Willrich, Lerona Diggs, Jung Wing Lee, Lennox Tillet, Stephen Tracey, Judith Frey, Minnie Jackson, Arlette Coleman. *Alternates:* Karen Stram (Alt 1), Robin Williams (Alt 5), Georgia McEaddy (Alt 6): 11

Absences excused: Jeanne Burke-Patterson, John Maloni, Arlene Carr, Meena Carr. [It should be noted that while excused absences were also noted for Eddie Hartfield and Anita Morris-Merriman, this is unnecessary for alternates.]

Others: Rachel Goodman & John Kane, BHA; Mac McCreight, GBLS; Tim Depin, Attorney General's Office; Gail Sokolov & Carrington *, United Way; staff from ROCA; Jane D'Angelo, Mission Main

The meeting was initially chaired by Val Shelley. Kassandra Ledesma was Timekeeper; Rik Gurney was Sergeant at Arms. Minutes of prior meeting were approved (Georgia noted that it might be important for Budget Committee, etc. to review the issue on the cap for food expenses).

1/ **Attorney General's Office & Trainings on Issues of Importance to Community:** Tim Dupin from the Attorney General's Office did a presentation on trainings available through the Attorney General's Community Engagement Division, which was created in 2015. They do community action hours in conjunction with community groups that have invited them, and also have office hours out in community sites, as well as hotlines. Trainings include on topics such as Identity Theft/Scams, Consumer Rights, Insurance/Financial Literacy, Buying Cars, Civil Rights, Worker Rights, Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law (Notario Scams). The AG's office also is teaming up with community partners like legal services offices to do debt collection clinics (designed to lessen defaults in courts) and wage theft clinics (based at Suffolk Law. Handouts were provided to the RAB if members wanted follow up on any of the topics or to arrange for trainings/presentations.

2/ **LAUNCH:** Rachel Goodman noted that a number of years ago, BHA was selected to be part of a pilot by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program for heads of household in state public housing and the Mass. Rental Voucher Program, called Mass LEAP. This is now in its 4th year. DHCD has decided to start a new initiative which would focus on educational and employment opportunities/enhancement for youth ages 18-24 in those same programs, and has focused on five target communities: Boston, Revere, Chelsea, Everett, and Lynn. Several other community partners are involved, including ROCA, United Way, Boston Private Industry Council, JVS Boston, Lynn Housing Authority, Chelsea Connects, and Year-Up. The goal is to get at least 400 youth from the state assisted housing programs enrolled for financial coaching and services

to get linked with jobs, enhanced educational benefits, etc. There was a handout provided, and staff from United Way spoke (and introduced staff from ROCA). Some questions were raised by RAB members that need to be answered: (a) Can Section 8 members participate? [The answer appears to be that DHCD Section 8 tenants can, but not those with Section 8s administered by BHA.- From Rachel Goodman -That is correct; BHA MRVP participants are eligible to participate in Launch but not the BHA HUD Section 8 members.] (b) Is there any kind of disregard of increased household earnings due to youth between 18 and 24 getting employment? Rachel and others agreed to follow up on these issues.

3/ Clarifying RAB Membership and Good Standing; Officer Elections: Mac facilitated this part of the meeting. Prior to doing the Officer elections, Mac clarified that there were two member vacancies that needed to be filled: (a) For Elderly/Disabled, it was clarified that Norman Younger no longer wished to serve. Alex Rosin met minimum attendance requirements (tonight was 4th meeting in past year attended), and was the 1st Alternate—so it was approved that Alex moved up to an Elderly/Disabled member position. (b) For Section 8, Tara Ruttle had left the Board. Karen Stram and Anita Morris-Merriman were tied as Alternate 1, and both met minimum attendance requirements. Anita had been unable to make tonight’s meeting due to transportation issues. Karen spoke to why she wished to move up to the member position. It was moved, seconded, and adopted that Karen would move up to a Section 8 member position.

Mac also clarified that for the main officer positions (Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer), only Members were eligible to run (or vote); for the assistant officer positions, alternates were free to run and to vote. Anyone who was not in good standing would not be eligible to run for an Officer position; the only person currently in bad standing (need to straighten out financial issues from past RAB conferences/events) was Anita Morris-Merriman, according to the Budget Committee.

The floor was open for Chair elections. Edna Willrich, Val Shelley, and Michelle McNickles were the only nominees for Section 8, Family, and Elderly/Disabled, respectively, and their elections were adopted by acclamation of the members of their constituencies. Robin Williams, Kassandra Ledesma, and Eugenia Smith were the only nominees for the assistance chairs for Section 8, Family and Elderly/Disabled, respectively, and their elections were also adopted by acclamation. (A question was raised whether someone could be nominated who wasn’t present; Mac said this was up to the group, but traditionally this hadn’t been done, because if the person wasn’t willing to serve, you’d have to start over.)

No one was willing to be nominated for Secretary (there were a number of nominations that were declined.) It was suggested to table the Secretary and Assistant Secretary elections, since it might be that others who weren’t present might be willing to serve; Mac agreed to get out notes in the meantime.

For Treasurer, David Turney was the only nominee, and Phyllis Corbitt was the only nominee for Assistant Treasurer. A question was raised about whether the Board’s prior action against David Turney (sanction) barred him from being elected Treasurer; it was clarified that it did not, but it did bar him from using the RAB office. It was agreed to revisit this sanction after the elections were completed. The Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer elections were adopted by acclamation. The other openings on the Budget Committee (other than the Chairs, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer), based on a bylaw change made earlier in the year were then voted on;

there was a reminder that if you serve on the Budget Committee, you cannot be a voting member of the other Standing Committee (Policy & Procedures). Both Minnie Jackson and Robin Williams volunteered to be Section 8 members; while there is nothing foreclosing the assistant chair from also being the elected Budget Committee representative, Robin decided to withdraw her name and Minnie was chosen. Betty Walker and Pam Hoyt each volunteered to be Family Representatives to the Budget Committee, and by a vote of 4-3, Betty was elected. Arthur Alexander was the sole volunteer for Elderly/Disabled, rounding out the Budget Committee.

The Board then voted to lift the sanction barring David Turney from using the RAB office (12 for, 1 against, and 2 abstentions). Since Val had been re-elected as chair, it was agreed that facilitation for the balance of the meeting was returned to Val.

4/ **Committee Reports:**

Policy & Procedures: Rik asked if Mac could summarize the report, which was a handout. Mac noted that included in the Committee's report was a recommendation for a letter to the Administrator, asking for follow-up on filling of certain positions critical to resident participation and the Resident Empowerment Coalition (REC), and for a follow-up discussion with him on this topic. John noted that the position was posted and in a hiring process at BHA. It was moved, seconded, and adopted (with one abstention) to send this letter signed by the three chairs and the chair of Policy & Procedures.

Budget: There was some discussion of the balances left in the RAB budget and expenditures authorized (including food for tonight's meeting); the chairs and budget committee will meet with the outgoing Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer to make necessary changes in names on bank records, etc.

5/**Old Business, New Business, Announcements, Etc.:**

Issue of Removal of Concetta Paul: Given that it was 8 p.m., this was tabled to the next meeting. It was noted that Concetta had exercised her right under the Bylaws to request that the charges be reviewed by a committee, and it was asked that members/alternates in the meantime think about who would be willing to serve on such a committee (should be persons who can be neutral/objective in looking at the issues).

Evaluation: Good meeting, went well.