

External Notes, Boston Housing Authority Resident Advisory Board (BHA RAB) Meeting of October 13, 2022

Minutes from prior meeting approved & agenda reviewed.

1/ Federal Public Housing Capital Plan Update: Randi Holland from BHA noted that BHA had had meetings at all its sites with LTOs and residents about capital plans for coming year (generally in person, a few things were shared after for those who could not attend). Brian will do report next month on the state capital plan. Randi noted that Physical Needs Assessments by independent consultants were done at all sites, and they are still undergoing some internal review to insure consistency.

For Year 23, a major focus will be on windows and ventilation, and elevators at some sites. Prices due to supply chain issues have dramatically increased, and this may mean BHA can't do as much work or may have to defer. Elevator work for Torre Unidad (problems with temperature in machine room affecting the elevator), Commonwealth Elderly (add 2<sup>nd</sup> elevator for 2, 4, 6, 8 Fidelis; and Hassan. A number of others are slated for other years. One problem has been the electronics on elevators and difficulty in obtaining replacement parts. For window replacement, in FY 23 underway for Pasciucco, 91-95 Washington (design). Used to be that cost was \$2400 per opening and now \$8,000). Note that in Brian's report will be the major energy-related work at Msgr. Powers/L Street (state), where DHCD budgeted \$3 million, but now \$5 million. BHA priorities are heat, hot water, and roofs for basic habitability. Randi also noted switch gear and load center work at a number of elderly/disabled sites. Randi screen shared the 5-year capital plan document that had also gone out in mail and by email to RAB.

Questions were asked about elevators in Commonwealth Family—Randi thought that was in 2022, and would check, and noted that there were some different options that were being studied about how to best address that need. A question was also asked about intercoms at Alice Taylor and generally, since this had come up previously. Randi noted that some prototypes were being tested out at Torre Unidad and Hassan with a “butterfly” feature that would allow later video access to who was in entries and for residents to be able to use phones to let in providers, etc., and once evaluated, this should be spread to other sites (previously budgeted in prior years' capital).

Mac McCreight from GBLS asked if, as in prior years, Capital could provide an overall picture, for each site, about both projected work

in future years (as in 5-year plan) and what's gone on for past—for example, people could easily forget, oh yes, we were promised that in 2020, or was that obligated, or where's the money coming from for this? Randi said she could work on it. HUD had given BHA more flexibility about obligation & expenditure deadlines due to COVID, and so there are 6 years' worth of previously approved funding at various points. Mac also asked about what had been reported at the Monitoring Committee, where more money needed to be pulled from Capital to meet ongoing operating expenses, but at some sites, even that was getting into difficulty. Randi said that BHA had increased the Operating draw from Capital from roughly 14-16% to 20% (the HUD max). In addition, while HUD gave a boost in Capital last year (from \$30 million to \$36 million), because of increased expenses, BHA didn't think it could really take on significant new capital work, and so a lot of the increased was set aside for extraordinary maintenance category at sites. /she said to extent this was a RAB concern for the Annual Plan, Debbie Sullivan and George McGrath were the right people to draw in.

2/ Annual Plan Calendar, Public Hearing, and Shifting Jan. RAB Meeting Date: Lueteshia Raymond of BHA presented the proposed calendar on this for both the federal and state plans, and materials will get to RAB and LTOs around Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> with a comment period running through Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>. Plan is for two virtual/Zoom hearings on Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, one at 11 a.m. and one at 6 p.m. She asked if there was a RAB volunteer who could speak to the work the RAB does and mention RAB election coming up next year. A RAB member volunteered. It was noted that, as in the past, it would be good to switch the Jan. Meeting date to the first Thursday so that if there were last minute RAB feedback on what BHA was doing in response to comments, there would be enough time. It was moved, seconded and approved to move the RAB meeting in January to the 5<sup>th</sup> (the December meeting can stay on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 12/8). A RAB member asked if the RAB Budget Committee should change for January (since usually they meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday), and it was suggested that the Committee can discuss that at its next meeting.

3/ Budget Committee Report: A RAB member presented a summary of the Committee's meeting on Oct. 6, and other RAB members split presenting on the bank statement. It was noted that by 10/17, chairs need to pin down for Mass. Union fall conference exactly who is attending, who may need rooms to stay over the night before and what transportation arrangements (who was driving and might be able to take people, and how anyone else would get there).

A few recommendations were made by the Committee to bring to the RAB Board: (1) "get well" flowers should be authorized for RAB members/alternates; (2) the dollar figure for flowers should be increased (and would also cover taxes & delivery); (3) if committee members need to be in office, they should be authorized to spend & be reimbursed for cost of lunch. There was also a discussion about emails for the Zoom accounts. Mac was asked if any of these were bylaw or vote issues. He thought that the email issue was more of a mechanical issue to work out with chairs & committee heads how they wanted to do it, and didn't require a vote. The other issues would require more discussion to pin down details (for example, what would qualify for "get well" flowers). There was general agreement that the 3 issues would benefit from a Policy & Procedures discussion and recommendations back to the Board. However, given the Mass. Union deadline which would happen before any Committee meeting), it was moved, seconded, and approved to allow two designated RAB members a maximum of \$15 for lunch for 2 days each (overall expense capped at \$60) for the immediate work for making the arrangements for the Mass. Union conference, but future policy on this would come out of the Policy & Procedures discussion.

4/ Ad Hoc Election Committee: Lueteshia briefly reported that John Kane of the BHA had gotten feedback from the Committee members about language to be included in the requests for quotes to get vendors to do outreach & help run the RAB elections. A question was asked about when the elections would be—it was noted that they would likely be in February or March, but some flexibility was given to the vendors (6-month window). A question was asked if the LTO process for participating in the public housing elections was the same, and the answer was yes, recognized or conditionally recognized LTOs would be the final ones electing public housing RAB members. Questions were asked about LTO elections, and it was suggested that there be follow up with Lueteshia, Sahar Lawrence, and others at BHA on that.

5/ Other Items, Unfinished & New Business, Etc:

*Update in RAB Membership*: It was clarified that a Leased Housing member had been removed from the RAB (due to absences) and the alternate has been moved up to member status. If anyone wants to invite interested people to become Leased Housing alternates, they can do that.

*NLIHC*: A RAB member noted that in the Budget Committee report, the RAB had paid over \$300 as dues to NLIHC, but she wasn't sure that was

right, and thought it was the much lower amount. Lueteshia will follow up on this.

*Temporary Change for RAB Liaison:* Lueteshia indicated that she would be on a leave during December and January (she would be available for the RAB November meeting) and during that time John Kane had agreed to act as RAB liaison.

*Agenda Topic for November:* It was moved, seconded, and approved that the topic of whether to have a “unity day” or similar event for RAB prior to the end of the fiscal year (3/31/23) would be in next month’s agenda. Noted that this might be a topic for the newly elected RAB, and if it’s decided to do it, there would need to be a planning group.

*Change in Laundry Arrangements:* A RAB member mentioned that laundry machines were disconnected at Alice Taylor 2 weeks ago, and didn’t know that the new plan was. Another RAB member said the same thing happened at St. Botolph but that new service was in place. There was a question of process for this—apparently there was resident involvement with a BHA committee on laundry vendors in 2016 which several from the RAB were on, and then a more recently convened group (which apparently not all from the prior group were included in), but also a question whether all of the information was getting to everyone. Lueteshia agreed to look into this and get back with the RAB members who expressed interest in this.

*Evaluation:* Good meeting, good to hear from everyone. Hope to see people at the Redevelopment Conference, Possible Zone on Saturday, 10/15.