

Boston Housing Authority RAB Meeting 10-10-19, at 10 Lamartine St. (Anna Mae Cole Center, Hailey Apartments, Jamaica Plain)

Family Public Hsg: *Members* Val Shelley, Meena Carr, Phyllis Corbitt, Betty Rae Wade, Concetta Paul, Arlene Carr, Cheryl Semnack, Janis McQuarrie. *Alternates:* Nicole Beckles (Alt 1), Meriem Arachiche (Alt 2), Jeannie Archibald (Alt 2): 11

Elderly/Disabled Public Hsg: *Members* Michele McNickles, Dave Turney, Rik Gurney, Arthur Alexander, Eddie Hartfield, Dan Horne. *Alternate:* Anita Pleasant {Alt 1}: 8

Section 8: *Members* Edna Willrich, Stephen Tracey, Lennox Tillet, Karen Stram, Therese Browne, Lerona Diggs, Arlette Coleman *Alternates:* Robin Williams (Alt 1), Georgia McEaddy (Alt 2): 9

Absences excused: Jung Wing Lee (leave of absence), Minnie Jackson, Jeanne Burke Patterson; Ron Johnson; Judith Frey(leave ended, but excused); Modesta Ballester; Eugenia Smith

Others: John Kane. Joe Bamberg, BHA; Mac McCreight, GBLS; interpreter; Steve Meacham, Judy Burnette, Gabrielle *** (City Life/Vida Urbana)

The meeting opened with a moment of silent to honor Bill McGonagle and his untimely passing. The meeting was chaired by Michele McNickles. Robin Williams was Timekeeper; Edna Willrich was Sergeant at Arms. Minutes from the prior meeting were approved.

1/Five-Year Plan: Joe Bamberg handed out a draft list of goals/objectives for the BHA to accomplish in conjunction with the next 5 years; this year is the year when BHA needs to establish these. More text will be added, but he looked forward to feedback tonight, by email, and in the future meetings during the PHA Plan Process (John Kane also had the PHA Plan calendar available for the RAB). Main points: 1. BHA wants to achieve and maintain high performer status. 2. For the public housing program, HUD recently issued a letter to executive directors explicitly recognizing that HUD funding has been inadequate and will remain inadequate and the need to “reposition” funding so it can be sustainable for housing into the future. This can include using the RAD program and public/private partnerships while at the same time staying true to our mission. How to insure funding to shore up our activities. Physical needs assessments will be done but identifying funding sources is key. 3. Preserving the number of deeply affordable units and adding to the supply wherever possible. 4. For the Leased Housing (Section 8) program, taking opportunities to increase budget to serve & house people, and maximize how many people can successfully utilized their vouchers (a challenge in today’s market). Included with this is BHA’s ECHO initiative (to help families that wish to to successfully move to communities of higher opportunity) and Small Area FMRs (fine tuning what subsidy can be paid to reflect local markets). 5. Increasing resident participation, capacity building, self-sufficiency, and quality of life issues. Measure to what extent we are getting broad participation. Ideas about voter registration with recertification. Ambitious goal of increasing the number of FSS participants from 200 to 800. 6. Staffing: As developments move from public housing to Section 8 and public/private partnerships, keeping up staffing capacity, and as there is retirement, training/recruitment of staff as to what functions needed, mentoring, have units communicating with each other. David asked if the switchover in programs would lead to staff

reductions? Joe said prior to now, layoffs had been avoided, and there were reassignments, but it was a good question. Michele noted that it was often hard to get job descriptions. Joe said to the extent possible, BHA would like to keep properties under direct BHA control, but there were questions of how to shore up portfolio/management.

Val noted that it was a major discussion at the recent NARSAAH conference about effect of RAD, switching to Section 8, and fear that people might be high and dry several years later. What guarantees could people get? She noted that it had been 22 years at Orchard since HOPE VI, and there were needs for upgrades. Joe noted that one of BHA's goals was to institutionalize protections and long-term compliance regardless of which particular program is used. Betty Rae Wade mentioned that homeownership was one option some were interested in, but it is a real challenge for single parent households. Joe also mentioned another goal was customer service to both residents and the public and large. We ran out of time; Joe encouraged people to contact him.

2/ NARSAAH Reports: Anita reported that there were workshops with innovative solutions, working with community developers and service providers. Focus on what worked, what didn't, and mobilization. Those who focused on getting good MOUs won out, involved community activities, attorneys, local politicians. Need to bring the right people to the negotiating table.

There was some discussion about whether there would be oral reports or written reports. Mac noted that this was later on the agenda (Committee recommendation) and one thought was that if a report was very long, it should not be read at the meeting. People were asked if they could provide brief summaries. Nicole said she found the experience eye-opening, and that there have been bad experiences in a number of states—Mass. is fortunate that residents sit on boards and many states have weak participation. Therese said she was disappointed that the session on RAD was canceled, but Tom Davis from HUD talked about RAD and residents having a seat at the table, and said HUD wanted to hear if housing authorities/owners weren't following HUD rules. PHAs must pay for relocation both ways, right to return. She reported that Minnie Jackson got sick but would be getting her report in, and the same with Eugenia.

3/ Committee Reports (and Bylaw Amendment):

Policy & Procedures Committee: Rik and Mac presented on this, and noted that the Committee had come up with revisions to the Travel Policy and the Travel Agreement, which would make clear that there should be written reports from those attending conferences, submitted within 2 weeks or by the next RAB meeting (whichever was later). Failure to submit a timely report could lead to denial of ability to go to future conferences. The Budget Committee would decide if a late submission should be excused, and if the Member/Alternate didn't like the decision, this could be brought to the Board. Rick also noted two other recommendations: (a) that if there was a lobbying aspect to a conference, there should be a pre-meeting of those organizing legislative visits so people could be briefed about what was going to be done; (b) that at Mass. Union conferences, there should also be some good discussion about federal public housing issues as well as state public housing issues.

Concetta said she was fine with the concept, but thought that all decisions about good standing should be made by the Board, and not just be up to the Budget Committee and an appeal. Mac pointed out that doing it this way would require a bylaw amendment (since right now, it only

gets reviewed by the Board if it's appealed). It was moved and seconded and approved by a majority that Policy & Procedures should consider a bylaw amendment to do this on any good standing issues (1 opposed, 2 abstentions). Further action on the committee recommendation was tabled.

Budget Committee: Arlene reported as secretary for the committee. She noted that at first her name was added as a second to the card, but then it was decided that the card should have the treasurer's name and the name of one chairperson—the 3 co-chairs need to figure out who else is listed. Eddie is off the no-fly list. Recommendation was for future NARSAAH conferences to go to it the day before (so people could go on the affordable housing tour) and leave the day the conference ends. Meena wasn't able to attend, but said she was willing to serve as chair, and by a vote of 6-2 she was elected chair. There had been an issue about the RAB advancing funds for Meena to go to NARSAAH and getting reimbursement from Washington Beech LTO. A check was subsequently received for the amount, but several people wanted to see the check, and it was produced. There was an issue about when the Committee would meet. Therese wanted to shift the date from Fridays because of a school commitment, but the majority of committee members were not willing to do this; it was then suggested that Therese could appoint someone to come in her place, and she selected Edna. (Mac noted that this is not authorized in the bylaws, but if the Board wanted, this could be reviewed by Policy & Procedures as a bylaw amendment, and people agreed that should be done.

Val asked who gave Meena permission for the RAB advance, since this was not something authorized by the RAB Board vote on payments. David said there was no time for an emergency meeting, and he had little time to make the decision because of the 72 hour window about cancellations and loss of discounts; he said he resented the question, because it meant that neither he nor Meena were trusted. Leona said that things should just have been left at, I couldn't do that, and explain the 72 hour window. Betty noted that there were bylaws to be followed, and something like this which was unexpected should be reported to the chairs at least. Meena said she would defend herself, there had been an internal problem, and she was given an ok by her co-treasurer at Washington Beech. Val said she was not saying that she didn't trust David or Meena, but that the treasurer shouldn't make the decision on this without consulting the Budget Committee.

Concetta made a motion that it would be helpful to clarify the Travel Policy about the issue of the pooling arrangements where the RAB is pooling arrangements to book travel/hotel with others to get discounts, so these things are clear for the future, and this could be taken up by the Policy & Procedures Committee and brought back to the Board. This was seconded and adopted by a majority (with 4 against and 3 abstaining).

4/ Mass. Union Conference: The Budget Committee had indicated there was sufficient funding to send 15 people to the fall Mass. Union conference in Norwood for the day (Oct. 19th). Only 9 people indicated interested, and they were approved to go: Arlene, Concetta, Meriam, and Nicole for family public housing; Robin & Edna for Section 8, and David, Michele, and Anita for elderly/disabled public housing.

5/Secretary Report; Unfinished/New Business/Announcements: Mac had a handout on proposed HUD rent changes (HOTMA) and he will be presenting at the Mass. Union conference on this. It was agreed that the RAB would authorize flowers or a donation (if that was the

family's preference) up to a limit of \$200 in recognition of Bill McGonagle's life/contribution to BHA residents. Val indicated that she had sent a letter to Anita Morris Merriman to inquire whether she, as a non-attending alternate, was interested in still being on the RAB list (and to remind her of her need to reimburse the RAB for funds). Mr. Lee is on a 3-month leave which will run until December. Judith Frey's 3-month leave was up this month, and Therese clarified that she is not seeking an extension on the leave, but had an excused absence for tonight for family reasons. Rik asked if there could be some reporting back from the Resident Empowerment Coalition meeting, and there were some remarks from different people who attended the meeting, indicating they are still working on issues/workplan.

Evaluation: Some passed; others said all right. Needs to be sufficient food ordered to cover how many people are attending (or people who take food early need to be aware of others). Room was cold (needs heat/close doors). Settled some issues.