

## **Boston Housing Authority RAB Meeting 8-9-18, at 125 Amory Street**

Family Public Hsg: *Members* Arlene Carr, Meena Carr, Phyllis Corbitt, Concetta Paul, Betty Rae Wade. *Alternates* Ron Johnson (Alt 1), Janis McQuarrie (Alt 4), Cheryl Semnack (Alt 10): 8

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

Section 8: *Members* Edna Willrich, Jung Wing Lee, Lennox Tillet, Stephen Tracey, Minnie Jackson, Arlette Coleman, Yvette Moore, Karen Stram. *Alternates:* Therese Browne (Alt 3), Robin Williams (Alt 4), Georgia McEaddy (Alt 5): 11

Absences excused: Val Shelley, Aracelis Tejada, Betty Carrington, Kassandra Ledesma, Modesta Ballester, Leron Diggs, and Jeanne Burke-Patterson

Others: Bill McGonagle, David Gleich, John Kane, BHA; Mac McCreight, GBLS; Steve Meacham, CLVU; Jane Archibald, Commonwealth; Ethel Hall, Section 8, Sarah Byrnes, Mel King Institute MACDC.

The meeting was initially chaired by Edna Willrich with assistance from Robin Williams. Dave Turney was Timekeeper; Phyllis Corbett was Sergeant at Arms. Minutes of prior meeting were approved. Since BHA Administrator Bill McGonagle hadn't yet arrived, it was decided to switch the order of the agenda to start with Section 8 issues.

**1/Proposed Changes in the BHA's Section 8 Administrative Plan:** David Gleich, BHA's Chief of Leased Housing, provided a summary of proposed changes in the BHA's Section 8 Administrative Plan. He stated that there was nothing "major", and there would be a 45 day comment period in the near future. While the draft said this would be effective Sept. 1, that wasn't true and it would more likely be sometime later in September. The handout has the changes—not everything was changed, but just the italicized portions. [David G. got through many but not all changes given time limits and questions during his presentation.] (1) Superpriority—for public housing modernization/redevelopment, keep this from time you vacate unit until there is an offer made to return. Question was asked what happened to the voucher upon right of return. David G. said it would be relinquished—it might go to the next person on the waiting list, or might not be used, depending on the funding situation. David T. asked about the question of keeping a priority for a 1-BR unit if you were in a studio; David G. said this was a public housing ACOP issue, and not one of the Section 8 Admin Plan. Karen asked about her 13A issues. David G. said that for the federal expiring use sites, HUD covers this with enhanced vouchers, and BHA is trying to get the state to do the same thing for 13A state sites—BHA has had some initial discussions about trying to create a similar program on the state side. Karen said this affected over 100 tenants at her site, and while the date of loss has been moved back (to Sep. 2021), she's concerned because of how long it takes to get placed on waiting lists.

David discussed other changes: (2) footnote making clear if offered return, priority withdrawn; (3) Sections 2 and 3—some clarifying language on superpriority; (4) CABHI—similar to BHA's old SAMSHA proper, with referrals back from Boston Public Health Commission; (5) eliminate the Social Innovations Funding priority; (6) for Leading the Way Home, saying at least 25 persons (previously said 500, and this might not be possible given either voucher supply or

number of referrals); (7) use of the City's Coordinated Access System; (8) updated the definition of homelessness to include Rapid Rehousing [Mac asked if this would include those in HomeBase, and David said in some instances—can describe further by email]; (9) clarifying language on the working families preference/exception; (10) right of first refusal; (11) long term homeless—this is something the City of Boston wants, as it is targeting certain PBV units to make sure Long Term Homeless get preference; (12) unit size—not a separate bedroom just based on generational gap (for example, uncle and nephew would normally be required to share a BR); (13) some revision in how zero income reported/tracked. Ran out of time.

**2/ BHA Administrator—Tenant Participation and Other Issues:** Bill said he was here at the RAB's invitation and was happy to talk about anything they wished to discuss. He wanted to commend David and the Leased Housing staff—HUD recently gave BHA a 100% (perfect) score on assessing its Section 8 program. BHA is moving ahead with redevelopment, including here at Amory St.; BHA will be spending roughly \$120,000/unit at Lenox/Camden for heating system and other upgrades. At Whittier Street, one of the main buildings was demolished. At Orient Heights, just did a ribbon cutting on Phase I, and starting demo for Phase II, replacing 100 units. BHA about to move forward for demo for 225 units in Phase III at Old Colony (Feb.-March 2019). Significant progress at Bunker Hill with Charlestown Resident Alliance and anticipate announcements there soon. For all of these deals, one-for-one replacement, and at Whittier Street, gaining 10 units. Janis asked about Camden/Lenox—residents there were told that as of 9/1, BHA would no longer be there. Bill confirmed that Beacon (who currently manages Old Colony) will be managing there, but not sure about the 9/1 date. Janis & Bill talked about problems with HUD inspections which were absurd—HUD would cite obstructions of window access if there was an air conditioner, and this was in the middle of a heat wave (as well as whether a chair was in the way of a window). BHA has objected to HUD about this (as well as being “furniture police”—while notices may talk about citations & evictions, if these are the issues, this is not something people should worry about. Michele asked about RAD at St. Botolph. Bill said there were 3 elderly/disabled sites in first phase of RAD, and 3 later—BHA will pursue where beneficial & provides sufficient additional revenue to make a difference for capital improvements (not true at all sites). Mentioned St. Botolph, W. Ninth, Walnut Park (Bunte Apts.) Bill had met recently with MSAC on this—bringing in the loop and why BHA pursuing. One aspect of this is the greater political support for RAD/Section 8 voucher funding in comparison to public housing operating subsidy.

Betty walked about tenant participation and training for Boards, and the Resident Empowerment Coalition isn't where it should be now—our Board at Commonwealth isn't that transparent in terms of funding—can you come to talk with our Board? Bill said happy to come out. BHA lost 2 wonderful people, Edna Carrasco & Vivian Lee. Have rewritten the job descriptions and are in the process of reviewing resumes, etc. Edna said that there were a number of RAB members who had been involved previously with this, but had been left out. Bill said, you let me know how you want to be involved—come see me—ultimate say about who's hired is up to him. Betty said there was another issue about minutes for their Board meeting—she had thought it was OK to tape meetings so there was an accurate record, but then it became an issue. Bill said he couldn't comment on the legal issues of taping (there was a memo that said this needed to be with everyone's agreement, and otherwise not allowed, and said he ultimately couldn't make people get along—but it was important for everyone to understand the important challenges facing public housing & Section 8 now, and focus on that instead of fighting with each other.

John M. asked about services for veterans. David G. said that BHA had 580 VASH vouchers, and had 520 leased up, and is working closely with the VA. They will be putting in an application for additional VASH vouchers. Karen complained that she can't get things in writing from BHA about water & sewer obligations & how this affects Section 8 rent. David G. promised to get her something in writing. Arlene said that some Section 8 tenants at Franklin Hill were having their rents go up \$200/month due to water & sewer expenses. David G. agreed to look into this and get back with her.

### **3/ Committee Reports:**

*Policy & Procedures:* Rik reported that the Orientation Packets were completed, and people picked them up in folders. These will be provided as new members/alternates join the RAB and in conjunction with next year's RAB elections. On campaigns by organizations that RAB members could plug into, Mass. Senior Action Council had presented on that. Janis described a campaign that Mass. Alliance for HUD Tenants (MAHT) has, pushing for a \$5 million City-funded voucher program similar to what they have in D.C. She also discussed 13A optouts, and about 50 people showing up for a coffee with the Mayor. There are plenty of demonstrations that MAHT is involved in; people can contact Janis if interested. Steve Meacham from City Life/Vida Urbana said there was an email from him to the Board on the table about campaigns. The APM campaign had been successful in getting owner to commit to limit rent increases to the Section 8 payment standards. CLVU is likely to pursue this with owner larger owners and would appreciate any support RAB can lend to this. He also said it would be good with Section 8 Tenants, Inc. to organize zip code meetings again of BHA Section 8 participants, given what's happening with rent increases in the private market.

Rik also noted that there was a bylaw amendment which would allow the issue of whether someone was in "bad standing" to be a tie breaker in cases where 2 or more alternates were eligible to move up. This was moved, seconded, and approved (one nay).

*Budget:* David said there was a balance of over \$18,000, including a recent Mass. Union reimbursement of a check, and John indicated that roughly \$15,000 was to be advanced soon for the next period. We're now in a time crunch to book for NARSAAH conference from 9/19 through 9/22. He calculated this with air fare, hotel, and registration fee, and it comes to \$1,565 per person, so it would cost \$4700 if 3 people went, \$9300 if 6 people went, and \$14,088 if 9 people went. David also noted that BHA was looking for new people to serve on the Monitoring Committee, and there were a number of important redevelopment projects that had been held up because of a lack of a quorum (David, Meena, and Edna had attended, but not a quorum); if people are interested, they need to know it's a real commitment.

### **4/Old Business, New Business, Announcements, Etc.:**

*Officer Resignation; Filling of Vacancies:* David noted that Phyllis Corbitt had been elected as Assistant Treasurer at the July Board meeting, but had found that due to other commitments, she couldn't take this on, and resigned. David nominated Arlene Carr to serve, who indicated her willingness to take the position. This was moved, seconded, and adopted.

David also noted that John Maloni had expressed willingness to serve in the Secretary position (no one had been willing to run at the July Board meeting); John indicated he would do this, and

had previously been RAB Secretary in 2016-2017. This was moved, seconded, and adopted. Mac asked if anyone on the RAB was willing to serve as an assistant secretary to John; Yvette Moore expressed willingness, and this was moved, seconded, and adopted.

Keeping of RAB Records in RAB Office: Rik noted that there was one other recommendation from the Policy & Procedures Committee—that all records be kept in the RAB office. This was moved, seconded, and adopted.

Committee to Look Into Charges Regarding Concetta Paul & Potential Removal: Volunteers were sought for a committee to look into the charges regarding Concetta Paul and whether removal was warranted, with the committee to gather information and make recommendations back to a future Board meeting. It was noted that the volunteers should be impartial and ideally there should be at least one from each constituency. As was done previously, objections as to the impartiality of a volunteer could be made either by Ms. Paul or by others on the Board. Three volunteers were selected: Marlene Nania, Janis McQuarrie, and Karen Stram. (Objections were made to Lennox Tillet, Edna Willrich, and Betty Rae Wade as volunteers.) The committee will confer by email as to when and where it will meet and who all else it may want to involve in the matter (Mac assisted a prior committee but did not vote).

NARSAAH: It was moved, seconded, and approved (with one abstention and one nay) to send 6 people to NARSAAH—2 from each constituency. Mac pointed out that there is a selection preference for those who haven't attended a prior national conference funded through the RAB, and it will be good for the new Secretary to maintain a log so we know who's attended national and local conferences. It was clarified that in order to be selected, persons had to be in attendance at the meeting. For Family Public Housing, Concetta Paul & Cheryl Semnack volunteered (Arlene Carr will be the backup traveler in case one of them can't attend). For Elderly/Disabled Public Housing, Eugenia Smith had preference (didn't previously go to a national event). Both John Maloni & Michele McNickles volunteered, and both had previously attended; neither was willing to designate one as the lead and one as the back-up. Robin picked out of a hat and Michele was selected as the main traveler and John as back-up. For Section 8, Therese Browne and Jung Wing Lee volunteered (Karen Stram applied but was ruled ineligible by Edna due to not being in good standing); Edna was the backup traveler. Karen disagreed with this (and has the right to contest that through the Budget Committee first). John M. asked if he got himself to the conference on own and paid for accommodation, could he be partly funded. Mac said that this would be contrary to the Travel Policy, as essentially it would be an additional 1/2 slot for Elderly/Disabled, and then the question would exist, should the same be offered for Family and Section 8, which would change the budgeting, although the Board could approve this if it wanted to. Matter was dropped.

Officer Training: Mac reminded people that there will be an officer training on Thursday August 16, from 6-8 p.m. in the Amory Street training room. This is mandatory for the newly selected officers, but is open to any RAB members/alternates to attend.

**Evaluation:** OK meeting. Hard to hear at points. Need to start answering questions.