

Boston Housing Authority RAB Meeting 1-12-17, at 125 Amory Street

Family Public Housing: *All Members* (Betty Carrington, Kassandra Ledesma, Valerie Shelley, Concetta Paul, Phyllis Corbitt, Betty Rae Wade, Aracelis Tejada); *Alternates* Arlene Carr (Alt 1), Carol Sullivan (Alt 2), Janis McQuarrie (Alt 6): 10

Elderly/Disabled Public Housing: *Members* Michele McNickles, Norman Younger, John Maloni, Richard Gurney, Marlene Nania, Jeanne Burke Patterson; *Alternates* Modesta Ballester (Alt 1), David Turney (Alt 2): 8

Section 8: *All Members* (Jung Wing Lee; Edna Willrich, Judith Frey, Lennox Tillet, Marilyn Lopez, Yvette Moore); *Alternates*: Arlette Coleman (Alt 1), Stephen Tracey (Alt 1), Karen Stram (Alt 5): 9

Absences excused: Meena Carr & Ron Johnson (Family Public Housing); Minnie Jackson, Tara Ruttle, Anita Morris-Merriman (Section 8); Eugenia Smith (Elderly/Disabled Public Housing)

Others: John Kane, Vivian Lee, BHA; Mac McCreight, GBLS; Nancy Figueroa, CBPH; Ethel Hall (Section 8); Arthur Alexander (Franklin Field elderly)

The meeting was chaired by Edna Willrich, with help from Arlette Coleman; Phyllis Corbitt was Timekeeper and Dave Turney was Sergeant at Arms. Minutes of prior meeting were approved.

1/ **Budget**: Arlene did a report from the Budget Committee, and noted that the committee had proposed a budget of \$45,000, with itemizations for conference (\$12,000), training and development (\$5,000), Transportation ((\$15,000), Food (\$8,000), Translation (\$1200), Child or Elder/Disability Care (\$1500), and \$2300 for office supplies. There was some debate about how many to send to certain conferences, with an initial proposal for 3, and then some feeling it should be 6 for NARSAAH. Concetta pointed out that if it was 6, the costs would probably be more in the nature of \$13,000, and there was an alternate proposal for \$46,000. There was also some discussion about how costs could be trimmed, such as by sharing hotel rooms at conferences, cab sharing, etc.

It was moved, seconded, and approved to support a budget of \$46,000, but to leave the details of spending to be worked out within the rough breakouts—i.e., there was no decision at this point about sending 3 versus 6 to certain conferences, sharing of hotel rooms, etc.

2/ **Policy & Procedures**: There will be a meeting next week on Wednesday from 6 to 8 at Amory Street. Topics will including finalizing the travel agreement and beginning to tackle election related bylaw amendments (including whether the disqualification provision for those employed by BHA, REC, etc. is too stringent).

3/ **Filing of Section 8 Membership Vacancy**: It was pointed out that there was a vacancy for a Section 8 member, and there were four potential candidates who were alternate 1. One Alternate 1 didn't want to move up, another wasn't present, and the only Alternative 1 who expressed interest at the meeting in moving up was Mr. Tracey. It was moved, seconded, and approved to move Mr. Tracey up to a full member position (this was voted upon by the Section 8 members).

4/ Annual Plan Response to Comments: John Kane said that he was still finalizing responses to comments on the Annual Plan, but that the final version needed to get to HUD by the next day. He gave the RAB a mostly complete version, and promised to get a final version to the RAB. In many respects, the BHA provided more information or responded to comments (for example, sharing the results of the audit), and in a few areas incorporated suggestions (such as including the Mixed Finance Grievance Procedure). Some would be appropriate discussions for future RAB meetings, such as updating on community services programs, Mass. LEAP, the Resident Services RFP, etc. Some materials would be added to the website, like the Rent Manual. John indicated that the BHA wasn't accepting the proposal of a number of RAB members to retain the existing Grievance Procedure, and thought it would be better to go to a hearing officer system, but had adopted some of the drafting changes suggested (keeping record open. BHA Legal would be happy to come next month to discuss how the Assessment of Fair Housing will be handled. BHA Leased Housing would be happy to be part of a discussion with the City's Office of Housing Stabilization and MBHP about how best to tackle the issue of rising rents, and Operations would be happy to discuss BHA performance standards.

There were a number of comments at the meeting that members didn't think BHA was sufficiently factoring in tenant participation in the current grievance process or the RAB's willingness to take steps to help with recruitment (which was one of the reasons given for scrapping the current panel). [On 1/13, the BHA Administrator decided, in light of RAB comments, to not proceed with the Grievance Panel change at this time, and this will be discussed further.]

5/**CHAPA**: There wasn't any official RAB presence at the Citizens Housing & Planning Association's New England Regional Forum on Dec. 16th. Mac did share his notes from the meeting, which was shorter than many and consisted of a lot of speculation about what to expect with the new Administration, not merely with regard to HUD's budget but also how housing is affected by overall domestic spending and tax policy. There were both national experts and panelist representing affordable housing efforts in each of the New England states. Mac noted that it was interesting but obviously no one has a crystal ball and people will need to stay tuned after 1/20.

6/**Unfinished or New Business, Announcements, Etc.:** There was discussion about how it would be valuable to have some volunteers to take on several tasks:

--(a) look at the draft **RAB/BHA Memorandum of Agreement** (which is done together with the RAB budget) and see if any changes were needed. John K. said this would be an "ad hoc", short-term committee, which likely would meet once before the RAB meeting in February and hopefully the RAB could finalize recommendations at its February (or at the latest, March) meeting before the new budget is approved for April. Val, David, Michelle, Concetta, Judith, Richard, and Mac all volunteered for this.

--(b) Help plan out what conferences the RAB should participate in during the year (get a calendar up), as well as the criteria for selection, numbers, coordinating how attendance done, etc. Val, David, and John M. volunteered;

--(c) Help think out outreach, including reaching out to task forces, etc. Concetta, Judith, and DG(?) volunteered for this. We also wanted to get Edna Rivera Carrasco's help with this.

Future RAB meeting: It was agreed that cab vouchers should be a discussion for the next meeting.

Secretary Report: John and Betty provided a report; Betty's summarized attendance from the beginning of the RAB to the present. It would appear that three members—Emilia Perez and Betty Walker from Family Public Housing, and Jackie Rice for Elderly/Disabled Public Housing, have missed 3 meetings without excuse, and this triggers the usual letter from the Secretary inquiring whether there are any special circumstances that the RAB didn't know about, but otherwise assuming that the individuals would be removed as members and Alternates who meet minimum attendance requirements could move up. It was agreed that letters could be sent, but it would also be wise to make a phone inquiry as well. It was noted that Minnie Jackson had requested a Leave of Absence as a Section 8 member for 3 months due to medical circumstances.

7/ **Evaluation:** Positive: Got things done. Informative

Needs Improvement: Side bars slow things down. Make sure we stay on topic. Not enough time to review BHA's responses. Spell things out—don't use initials. Sometimes hard to hear.