

Boston Housing Authority RAB Meeting 3-14-19, at 10 Lamartine St. (Anna Mae Cole Center, Hailey Apartments, Jamaica Plain)

Family Public Hsg: *Members* Val Shelley, Meena Carr, Phyllis Corbitt, Aracelis Tejada, Betty Rae Wade, Concetta Paul, Ron Johnson, Janis McQuarrie, Cheryl Semnack. *Alternate:* Nicole Beckles (Alt 1): 10

Elderly/Disabled Public Hsg: *Members* Michele McNickles, Rick Gurney, Marlana Nania, David Turney. Arthur Alexander, Eugenia Smith, Eddie Hartfield: 7

Section 8: *Members* Edna Willrich, Jung Wing Lee, Arlette Coleman, Lennox Tillet, Judith Frey, Karen Stram. *Alternates:* Therese Browne (Alt 2), Robin Williams (Alt 3), Georgia McEaddy (Alt 4): 9

Absences excused:

Others: John Kane. BHA; Mac McCreight, GBLs; Steve Meacham, CLVU; ***, West Broadway; *** (interpreter),

The meeting was chaired by Michele McNickles. Arthur Alexander was Timekeeper; Phyllis Corbitt was Sergeant at Arms. Minutes from prior meeting were approved with correction (Therese Browne noted she had an excused absence for the last meeting).

1/Ad Hoc Committee on RAB Training Conference: John noted that the conference on the Future of BHA Public Housing and Section 8 was due to take place on Saturday at the Anna Mae Cole Center, with registration from 9-9:30, introductory remarks from Bill McGonagle on why BHA is proposing redevelopment of many of its public housing developments. A first panel would focus on how BHA is doing this, with the variety of approaches at different sites. A second panel would be on resident voices/concerns in the process. There would then be lunch, and a third panel would discuss how the Section 8 and public housing programs are similar and different. About 140 people had RSVP'd, which was a tribute to the outreach work of the committee members. John anticipated there may be some bottlenecks given the number of people taking cabs and the limited supply of ITOA cabs. He noted that there were volunteers already for a number of tasks, but additional volunteers are needed. Janis agreed to help with putting up signs/balloons to help guide people to the Center. Val and Michele volunteered to be additional greeters/sign-in people, and those in this group may also shuttle out to arriving cabs with vouchers. Val agreed to help with box lunches. Eddie agreed to help with taking things down at the end of the meeting. It was agreed that there might be bottlenecks with cabs at the close of the meeting, and it would be good for people to identify, when they sign in, which development/neighborhood they're coming from/returning to so we can group people together; voucher arrangements for return could be done at the beginning, and if people arrive late, we can also alert people to go to the three chairs at lunch to sort this out. (Any chair can give vouchers to any BHA public housing or Section 8 voucher tenant needing a cab to return.) RAB members can seek mileage reimbursement if they drive to the meeting.

2/ Extending the RAB Term: Mac covered this and other Policy & Procedures matters at Rick's suggestion. Last month, the RAB revised its bylaws to permit a RAB, in its third year, to

extend the term to an additional 4 year for good cause. The Committee recommended that there was good cause to do this because otherwise there was little time to do election preparations between now and July, and the BHA is also doing its 5-year plan in the fall and it would be good to do this with an experienced group. Mr. Lee asked if this meant the next RAB would have a 4 year term and would then be voting to go to a 5th year, and so on; Mac explained no, the basic term remains 3 years, but future RAB Boards would have the option, in their 3rd year, to decide whether to extend for good cause or not. It was moved, seconded, and adopted for the current RAB to go to a 4th year (term will expire at end of July, 2020).

3/ Committee Reports:

Policy & Procedures Committee: Mac reported 3 recommendations from the Committee. Much of this had been discussed at the Committee's meeting in January, but because the February RAB agenda was jammed, the balance of the Committee report couldn't be done.

- Option to pay rent electronically: The committee recommended that the BHA be asked to explore and report back on an option for residents to be able to make payments electronically to BHA for rent. This would not be required—residents who wanted to could still pay the regular way—but it would mean that BHA was operating in a way similar to how people make other kinds of payments, and records could promptly show the payments. There would be option to do “one time” payment or regular payments. In response to a question, it was noted that private management may already have this, and others who manage mixed finance and other sites could be encouraged to adopt this, but the policy recommendation was directed to BHA. This was moved, seconded, and after discussion, was adopted with one opposed and 2 abstaining.
- Voter registration: The committee recommended that BHA explore and report back on the ability to give public housing and Section 8 tenants the option to register to vote at recertification (either at their developments or at BHA's central office). Here again, it was noted that if a site was privately managed, this would have to be a separate discussion, although it could be pushed with the Mixed Finance group. There was discussion that voter registration was not enough—residents need to actually get out and vote—but this could help in getting more residents voting. It was moved, seconded, and adopted with 2 abstentions.
- Changing RAB meetings to include a “report in/take away” aspect: At the last RAB meeting, another bylaw amendment that was adopted was that RAB representatives and alternates had some responsibility to bring information from the RAB back to their communities, and to bring community concerns to the RAB. To help implement this, the committee had recommended that in the introduction part of each meeting, RAB members/alternates would be asked if they had any issues/concerns to report to the Board, and in the evaluation part of the meeting, whether there was anything they planned to “take away” from the meeting to bring back to their community. The committee had asked Mac to draft a letter which could go to BHA & private management staff and local tenant organizations which would let them know about RAB responsibilities. BHA has some thoughts about the letter and so it still needs to be worked

on and this can be discussed at the next committee meeting. It was moved, seconded, and adopted to incorporate the “report in/take away” aspect to RAB meetings; 2 abstained.

Budget Committee: The Budget Committee had prepared a set of recommendations which were distributed for consideration and vote. 3 specific items were voted on:

- Recommendation 1: That there be no cash withdrawals greater than \$200 without prior Budget Committee approval, and the only people authorized to make a cash withdrawal would be the Treasurer or a Chair. This was moved, seconded, and adopted, with 1 opposing and 2 abstentions.
- Recommendation 2: That after 6 p.m., the RAB sign-in sheet would go to the chair, and members who arrived after the meeting started would have to sign in with the chair hosting the meeting. There was some discussion about what the consequences would be of a late sign in; it was clarified that there was none under this recommendation by itself, although a later recommendation (not yet voted upon) might mean that those arriving late would not get full reimbursement. This was moved, seconded, and adopted by 14 for and 8 opposed (no abstentions).
- Recommendation 3: It was moved and seconded that this NOT be adopted, i.e., that when the fiscal year ended, members would have 30 days to submit reimbursements. This was unanimously adopted.

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously adopted by those voting that all remaining Budget Committee recommendations would be tabled, with the Budget Committee reviewing them more to streamline them and bring back to the Board. It was also clarified, as had been stated at prior meetings, that any change made by recommendations would be prospective, and would not affect the right of members/alternates to prior reimbursements appropriately documented.

4/ Selection of Representatives to Attend Mass. Union Spring Conference; Question of Revisiting “No Fly” Period: 9 representatives were selected to attend this conference; it was clarified that Karen Stram, Anita Morris Merriman, and Concetta Paul could not be cleared for this because they were on the “no fly” list. It was clarified that while Concetta Paul had not been identified as being on the “no fly” list at the February meeting, a review of the disciplinary action taken by the Board earlier in the term noted that it included a ban on RAB-funded conferences for the balance of the RAB term. *Selected were Val, Nicole, and Aracelis for Family; Therese, Edna, and Robin for Section 8; and Michele, David, and Eugenia for Elderly/Disabled.*

Concetta said that at the time of the disciplinary sanction, she thought the bar would be lifted at the end of July, 2019, and what was the effect of the vote to extend the term. Mac said the bar would be through July, 2020. Concetta asked if the Board could reconsider this and shorten it. John pointed out that one of the terms of the disciplinary sanction was a written apology, and he had not yet received it; Concetta wrote out an apology and handed it to him. It was moved, seconded, and approved that the question of whether to shorten the “no fly” sanction would be submitted to the Policy & Procedures Committee for review and recommendation to the Board.

5/ Secretary Report; Unfinished/New Business/Possible Removal: John noted that Alex Rosin had requested a 3 month leave of absence. Questions were asked about moving up of

various members, and Mac clarified that for Family Public Housing, letters had gone out removing various people for non-attendance and Ron, Janis, and Cheryl had all been moved from alternate to member status, leaving Nicole as the sole Family alternate. There are no Elderly/Disabled alternates (Eddie was already moved up). Edna asked if any Section 8 alternates had moved up, and noted that there had been three consecutive unexcused absences for Yvette Moore, and that Therese Browne had met the minimum attendance requirements. Mac said we should double check if a letter went out to Yvette, but if not, a letter should go to here and Therese would be moved to member status, with Robin and Georgia moving up the alternate list.

Rick said, on the Budget Committee report, there were notations about the Cabrini Green video, and he had a clear recollection of the video being in material on the floor near a desk in the RAB office (it had been used by Outreach group). He said that he would take it upon himself to pay for the cost, and asked that this be removed from Concetta's responsibility and dropped as an issue. This was moved, seconded, and approved by a vote of 6-1 of those voting.

Robin noted that while she had discussed the possibility of David Turney's removal, he had apologized to her, and she accepted his apology and was withdrawing the request. Robin did ask that David tone down the way he talks with people.

6/ Evaluation: Interesting. Some good things done, but need to focus more on moving forward and having progress. People should get the same level of consideration. People need to start acting like adults. Letting people know that Beacon is taking over Lenox/Camden at the end of the month under RAD.