Boston Housing Authority Resident Advisory Board (BHA RAB) External Notes

Meeting, October 10, 2024

Ground rules were approved as were the internal minutes from Sept. Meeting (no external minutes).

1/ Federal Capital Plan – Rick Jegorow from BHA shared a document on screen and John Kane of BHA handed it out in the room. This is a one-page large spreadsheet for all of the federal public housing sites that haven’t yet been converted to Section 8, etc., and shows both, in the prior 3 years, funds approved & being spent, as well as the plans for spending for next 5 years. Rick noted that a number of sites are due to have intercom (butterfly systems), elevator, or fossil fuel free upgrades. A RAB member asked if this came from a Capital Needs Assessment for each site. Rick said yes (done by consultants), coupled with feedback from site management staff about complaints received and from resident feedback. He noted that a few sites were due to have capital work done in conjunction with conversion to Mixed Finance/Section 8 conversion. At St. Botolph, hope to have contractor underway by winter. At Doris Bunte, this would be spring/summer 2025. For Ausonia, comprehensive design work is underway. Another RAB member asked if this meant people had to relocate. Rick said plan was to relocate people within the building as work done. John noted that this was just a one-pager, and the RAB would be receiving soon 60-70 pages with all of the site-by-site details. Mac McCreight of GBLS asked about state capital plan, and John said that would be part of next month’s presentation.

2/ RAB Calendar -- John went through a draft RAB calendar, highlighting what will be coming up particularly for when the RAB would receive the BHA’s draft Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plan for both its Federal and State programs, that there would be a 45-day comment period, public hearings (both in person and on line), BHA compilation of comments received from the RAB and others and at public hearing, and a final summary of those comments & BHA responses prior to submission to HUD (by Jan. 15th) and to EOHLC (by end of January). He requested, as has been done in the past, that the RAB authorize moving its meeting for the month of December to December 5th (1st rather than 2nd Thursday of the month) since this fits better with public hearings (which are slated for Monday, Dec. 9th). A RAB member raised concern about various items in the RAB calendar that were really matters for the RAB to agree on, outside of what was driven by PHA Plan submission deadlines. John agreed the rest was totally up to the Board, and he was just seeking an OK to switch the December date (the January date can remain the 2nd Thursday, since the first Thursday is early). It was moved, seconded, and approved to change the RAB meeting to the 1st Thursday in December (Dec. 5th). John also noted that this is the year that the RAB also has to prepare a 5-year plan, and as part of this BHA had issued a survey asking residents to prioritize needs. BHA received about 450 responses and is compiling those. A session will be held on Sat. Nov. 9th at the Johnson BCYF facility next to Alice Taylor Apts (near Ruggles T stop on Orange Line) where BHA Administrator Kenzie Bok will be sharing her thoughts on this but getting resident thoughts as well. RAB members got a flyer on this and can register to attend either by email or by using QR code on flyer. (There was some further discussion of this event later—see notes below.)

3/ Selecting 2nd Representative from Each Constituency to Be On Budget Committee. Mac facilitated this. He noted that in addition to the Officers who serve on the Budget Committee (Chairs, Treasurer, and Vice-Treasurer), there is a 2nd person that is chosen by each constituency to fill out the committee, but we ran out of time at last meeting to do this. Second members were selected for Elderly/Disabled Public Housing and Leased Housing, and there was a tie for the 2nd position for Family Public Housing, with the two people agreeing to rotate the position.

4/ Treasurer Financial Report & Budget Committee – The RAB Treasurer provided a financial report, which summarized the bank statement at the end of September, with beginning balance, expenditures, and ending balance (there was a handout in the room and those on Zoom either have received by email or will get by mail soon). The Vice-Treasurer was selected chair of the Budget Committee—notes for Committee’s Oct. 3 meeting were prepared by Mac but not yet approved by Committee (and not in packet), and Committee will need to pick a member to do its notes going forward.

5/ Policy & Procedures Committee – Mac noted that the Policy & Procedures Committee is one of the RAB’s two standing Committees, and unlike the Budget Committee, is not an elected position—instead, people volunteer to serve on it. The Committee will also need a new chair, since there is a new RAB (person who was past chair is no longer on the RAB). Budget Committee members cannot vote on Policy & Procedures, but they can participate in discussions. The Committee does things like discuss bylaw amendments, develop/amend Travel Policy, etc. It was mentioned earlier in meeting that issues like whether transportation costs for a non-committee member to attend a meeting (not currently covered) could be revisited by that Committee to bring recommendation to the Board. Seven (7) people volunteered to serve on Policy & Procedures. Mac will not take up more time tonight but will email people to find out any preferences for time/place of meeting (could also just be on Zoom) and will let all know. (All committee members are open to anyone to attend, even if only members of the Committee are voting on the recommendations for the Board.) A RAB member asked if Committee could look at certain issues related to Travel Policy.

6/ Unfinished/New Business –

1. *RAB Table at Future of the BHA Event on Nov. 9th –* Elizabeth Aguilar from BHA asked if the RAB wanted to have a table at the “Future of the BHA” event on Nov. 9th (this is before next RAB meeting) so residents could get information about the RAB and what it does (this could include both returning RAB members and those newly joining the RAB). 4 RAB members volunteered to help with this.
2. *Mass. Union convention* – A RAB member asked if the RAB was sending anyone to the Mass. Union convention in Springfield on Sat. Oct. 19th. Several people said that the RAB had previously discussed this and had decided that the scheduling did not work with onboarding the new RAB, particularly since there needs to be a training of the new RAB about the Travel Policy (how to select people to go to conferences).

Meeting was adjourned by motion without evaluation.