

# CORPORATE MINUTES - BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS 2013

Attending: Chairman Josh Howroyd  
Robert Shanbaum  
Paul Rubin  
Carol Shanley  
Patrick Barder, Executive Director

Absent Flora Jimenez

## I. Call to Order

Chairman Howroyd opened the meeting at 6:02 PM and welcomed the residents of West Hill Gardens to the Annual Meeting of the Manchester Housing Authority.

## II. Public Comments - *These minutes are intended to be an overview of the comments made and are not necessarily verbatim.*

Mrs. Evelyn Babella 12 Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Ms. Babella referenced the last paragraph on page 5 of the meeting of September 11, 2013 regarding Section 8 and that the Manchester Housing Authority was longer has elderly and handicapped housing and that the Board and the Executive Director Barder did not have a say in this change. Mrs. Babella shared she has made several applications through HUD and it is not true that there is no longer elderly housing, it is not mandatory. She feels it is important to say that the residents don't want Section 8 in here. This Community room since Mr. Barder started here we have very little space; you can't even call it a community room. The piano is gone, games are gone, this is supposed to be our home, our community room, room for the residents not office space. A lot of money was spent here but not for the residents. Mrs. Babella added she hopes that she sees some changes for the better. Residents used to be able to exercise in this room – no more. She hopes that the next director cares about the residents that live here, seniors and handicapped people that live here. Mrs. Babella also commented that she has two letters from her physician stating she needs to move to a first floor but that was denied. She will be getting another note from her physician about moving to a first floor unit and hope it will be approved.

Mr. George Hatfield 11 Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Hatfield asked about the snow removal. He parks his car up at Ada Lane and he wants to know why he has to wait until the end of the day to have the sidewalk cleaned to be able to get to his car. Mr. Hatfield said he did not want to walk in the road to get to his car and the sidewalk from Bluefield Drive to Ada Lane was not cleared until late in the day.

Chairman Howroyd shared he came by the complex this morning and at that time he saw the maintenance crew actively removing snow from the driveways, sidewalks and walkways. Maintenance does the best they can, they can't do all areas at the same time and it does take time to clear the snow from this complex.

Mr. Alan Dowd 105D Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Dowd shared he had two items, one good and one bad. First he thanked the people who took care of the heating issue promptly. The second item refers to an issue that was discussed by another resident two meetings ago that has not yet been addressed. The issue is a resident that smokes in his unit and he is on oxygen. The individual continues to smoke while on oxygen and it is against Federal, State and Local Regulations. The issue is two-fold – if there is a

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lawsuit or problems with peoples health and safety it would affect this Federal Housing Authority and secondly it is very dangerous in terms of health and fire to those living in that section of the complex. Mr. Dowd wanted to bring this to the Board's attention and hopes that it will be investigated.

Mr. Martin Baser 27K Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Baser commented about the use of the Community Room and sited swearing and verbal abuse that he has encountered just walking in the door. This is uncalled for, unneeded, unjust, unwanted. Every resident has the right to enter this room, have lunch and Mr. Baser stated he wants this to stop. People making these abusive comments claim they are working for Mr. Barder, which is not true and not affiliated with MHA except for the fact that they live here. It disgusting and degrading; we all live here and pay rent. He stated he has complained about this before and nothing has been done about it and he wants this to stop.

Mr. Richard Brown 64 Case Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Brown shared that communication would have solved 90% of these issues, if we had a better way to communicate. He commented about the snow removal and shared that several morning's at 8:00 he goes to the Veteran's hospital and his walk was not cleared and there was no salt, potential problem. Mr. Brown said that he had his hearing and he won the hearing. There is another case pending and he does not want to do this but until things change and the residents get included instead of excluded it will continue to be this way. Mr. Brown shared there was an individual at the hearing from Rhode Island and from the conversation that he may have been paid by Housing Authority funds for his time. The parking policy – there is a car in the lot a Black Tran s Am, the car has been here for months and there is no sticker in the window. The ACOP says that a Studio apartment should have one person and he has knowledge of a studio apartment that has 2 people there. We have to set policy, be firm in the convictions and follow that policy. If there is a policy about the amount of time people are allowed to speak at meetings then it should be followed.

Chairman Howroyd shared that we do have rules of procedure and at the last meeting because of the size of the crowd we set the time at three minutes. Typically we set the time at 5 minutes but with the size of the crowd in order to be fair to all those that wanted to speak we limited it to 3 minutes. We set aside 1 hour for public comment by residents at each Board meeting.

Mr. Brown commented about the minutes on line, they are not posted according to State Statute, they are not posted, it is a hassle and he has to call the Mayor's office. Mr. Brown also commented about the Tenant Representative, the current tenant representative has been absent from many meetings, if there is a policy then it needs to be adhered to. In conclusion Mr. Brown said that he hopes that the new Executive Director will communicate better with the residents to make this the best housing authority. Chairman Howroyd shared are there rules for procedure on line and he will provide a copy to Mr. Brown.

A question was raised by a resident about Section 8.

Chairman Howroyd commented - there is no Section 8 here at this complex. Mr. Shanbaum shared that mention of Section 8 in the minutes was made by a resident and not by the Board. Chairman Howroyd added the issue is the Elderly Only designation for this complex no longer exists. There are a handful of other Housing Authorities in the State of Connecticut that operate under waivers who do have the designation of Elderly Only. MHA used to have a waiver for many years and that waiver expired. HUD has been phasing out Elderly only housing

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authorities. This complex is federally funded and does not allow Section 8 residents. The Federal Government has not permitted the use of Elderly only except in certain areas. Originally when this complex was built the first 100 units were designated for Elderly. Mr. Shanbaum shared that MHA is following the rules set by the Federal Government and HUD. Those rules include that we have to include several categories so that it appears that we are being fair to who we rent to. It is different in the ways things were done in the past. Chairman Howroyd added that MHA has to jump through several hoops to satisfy both State and Federal partners as it relates to the management of all the complexes. We are not going to have many families here because of the size of the units that we have. We actively did purchase duplexes to house low income families. We may have small families but the number of family members will determine the size of the unit they can rent.

Chairman Howroyd closed the public comments at 6:20 pm.

**A. Discussion of Public Comments**

Mr. Shanbaum asked for a comment from the Executive Director about the smoking/oxygen issue because it has been brought up a couple of times.

Mr. Barder reported that he has referred this issue to the property manager and he found no issue with it. We are continuing the policy of gently breaking people of smoking in the units. He will speak to the property manager again.

Chairman Howroyd shared we did encourage soft enforcement when we initiated the No Smoking policy however, because of the oxygen component it not only makes it a risk to the resident but also the neighbors.

Mr. Barder said it's being dealt with at the Property Manager level.

Mr. Shanbaum stated smoking in a unit that has oxygen is not a smoking issue but a safety issue and it is dangerous behavior. It should not be allowed under any circumstances. It should not have been allowed even when we did not have the No Smoking Policy. In this case it should not be treated as a No Smoking issue but as a dangerous behavior issue.

Mr. Shanbaum spoke about the snow issue. The maintenance crew is trying to get all the areas cleared of snow as soon as possible and someone will be first and others last. He suggested that the crew vary the order they start the snow removal process.

**III. Election Of Officers**

Chairman Howroyd reported that we annually elect the Vice Chairman position. He asked for a nomination for Vice Chairman. Mr. Rubin nominated Robert Shanbaum for the position of Vice Chairman. Mrs. Shanley seconded. With no other nominations offered, motion passed 4-0.

**IV. Adoption of Minutes – Meeting of November 20, 2013**

Chairman Howroyd asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 20 board meeting. Mr. Rubin moved to approve the minutes of November 20. Mrs. Shanley seconded. Motion passed 3-0 with Mr. Shanbaum abstaining.

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Chairman Howroyd said he has to leave early and asked to suspend the rules so that the Board can discuss the action/new business items. Mr. Barder reported the Board needs to adopt the 2014 meeting schedule, and he needs direction on the New Business on the Pilot payment reduction.

Chairman Howroyd asked for a motion to suspend the rules to take up item X – New Business adopt Resolution 2013-18 – 2014 Meeting Schedule and Pilot payment reduction. Mr. Shanbaum moved to suspend the rules. Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

**New Business**

**A. Resolution 2013-18 Adoption of 2014 Meeting Schedule**

Chairman Howroyd reported that according to our by-laws we can be flexible with the day of the week for the Board meetings. The Annual meeting has to be on the third Wednesday in December. Mr. Shanbaum moved to accept Resolution 2013-18. Mrs. Shanley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

**B. PILOT Payment Reduction**

Mr. Barder explained these expenses are separate from our operating fund; these expenses are on the Federal side for AMP I and II. Since the sequestration the fund has been paid at 81.56%. MHA has to reimburse the Town of Manchester and he wants to know if we want to pay the entire fund the money will be coming out of the AMP Funds. We have unrestricted funds to make this payment to the Town. This only applies to the Federal Program.

Mr. Rubin asked if we have an option to pay this,

Mr. Barder said there is no provision to "prorate" and also shared that other housing authorities have asked for waivers. Mr. Barder went on to say we are funded at 82%. Chairman Howroyd suggested we pay the full amount rather than the pro-rated amount. Mr. Barder explained that MHA does not pay property taxes to the town and this is due to the Town 60 days after the end of the fiscal year. We have a corporation agreement with the Town and this resolution was passed in 1942 for us to exist as housing authority.

Chairman Howroyd said he would rather honor the full obligation going forward and we need to discuss this with the Town administration as to what to do going forward, we may need to consider a waiver. As a matter of principal as the Town goes into their budget process we need to let them know that we may need to request a waiver because we are not fully reimbursed for this.

**Chairman's Report**

Mr. Barder shared we have a draft of the audit report and the Auditors require a meeting with one or two of the Board members. Chairman Howroyd and Mr. Shanbaum agreed to attend this meeting.

Chairman Howroyd spoke with Tim O'Neill from the Town about North Elm Street regarding the immense capital needs for that complex going forward. Based on that conversation the Town requests a capital needs assessment, which makes a lot of sense to come up with a priority list of much needed repairs. The Town wants MHA to pay for it out of the reserve funds we have for capital needs. The Town wants to

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suggest a couple of vendors to come in and inspect the property and give us an assessment of the things that need to be repaired and or replaced. The Town has no debt on this property, and they need to wean themselves off the income stream. They need to invest a portion of that and they will take a hit but North Elm is 25 years old and it needs a lot of work. MHA has \$50,000 in the Capital needs fund for North Elm and the Town wants us to draw on that. Chairman Howroyd will speak with Mr. O'Neill and get back to Mr. Barder.

Chairman Howroyd left the meeting at 7:11 pm and Mr. Shanbaum took over.

**V. Correspondence**

Mr. Barder has a copy of the language assistance plan that was executed by HUD. This plan means we have to keep a log of everything staff does with any participant that has trouble with English and requires assistance with it, we have to log it. The Voluntary Client Agreement was executed by Ms. White the previous Executive Director back in 2010. This is part of that original agreement that we have never complied with. We have to have a log that is maintained by someone in the office, so if language assistance is required, we have to log it in. We also have to translate some of our documents in to Spanish as part of this agreement. Vice Chairman Shanbaum asked for clarification and Mr. Barder indicated this agreement was initiated in 2010 and amended in 2011. MHA has to have a formal process in place on how we handle non-English speaking participants. Vice Chairman Shanbaum indicated that we have two sets of action items and one is to come up with a language assistance plan within 120 days.

Vice Chairman Shanbaum received a letter about an incident of a car being towed on October 18. He would like to see something on the future agenda to discuss the parking/towing situation.

**VI. Accounts Payable – No questions or issues from the Board.**

**VII. Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Barder shared that counsel has reviewed the ACOP for Public Housing and they made all necessary changes. It will require that the Board act on items that are marked "XX" in the report.

Financial Report – Mr. Barder stated the numbers are as of November 30. We are two month into the year and there are no major issues. The Audit is complete.

Section 8 – November and December have been paid. We have been notified by HUD that we will receive an allotment so we should be able to pay the landlords for January. The budget is being voted on as of this evening, but there is no communication as to what the numbers will be. MHA is in good shape all things considered. We don't know what the outcome will be or how much money will be given to us. We are breaking even.

Management Reports – the Occupancy rate looks good and we are almost at 98%.

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Vacancy Report – This report is broken down by AMPS. We are waiting to hear about the replacement of handicapped shower kits. We have to get a substitute due to the delay in shipments.

Vacancy Loss – This report is from October 1 to December 1 and it is divided by sites.

Work Orders – This is through December 16 and by project.

Electronic Payments – About 70 residents are using the electronic funds transfer for payment of their rent. MHA debits their accounts on a monthly basis.

**VIII. Chairman's Report – See above**

**IX. Old Business - None**

**X. New Business – See Above**

**XI. Items for Future Agenda -**

- Parking/Towing
- Adoption of ACOP

**XII. Executive Session – None**

**XIII. Adjournment**

Mr. Rubin moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 pm. Motion was seconded by Ms. Shanley. Motion passed 3-0.

The meeting adjournment at 7:43 PM.