

# CORPORATE MINUTES - BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS 2014

Attending: Chairman Josh Howroyd  
Carol Shanley  
Paul Rubin  
Robert Shanbaum

## I. Call to Order

Chairman Howroyd opened the meeting at 6:30 PM and welcomed the residents of Spencer Village.

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

Mr. Michael Kelley 22B Case Drive addressed the Board. Mr. Kelley asked about the replacement for the Executive Director and what are the plans in the interim. Chairman Howroyd explained the contract for Patrick Barder expired at the end of 2013. We have a search process underway and applications closed last week. The Board will go into Executive Session later this evening and have some preliminary discussions. We will be spending more time in the next couple of weeks scheduling special meetings to review the resumes of candidates that have applied and schedule interviews as quickly as possible. There are local candidates and some from outside the state that we will be considering. We would like to get someone here as quickly as possible. If it looks like it will be an extended process we may have to look at an interim relationship. Chairman Howroyd commented he has spent a considerable amount of time in the MHA office and it has been quite an educational process for him even though he has been on the Board for five years. He has a greater appreciation for what the MHA staff does on a day to day basis. The Board deals with the policy issues and not the day to day operations, one of the important decisions we make is selecting who will be the Executive Director. The Board wants to be sure we select the right person to set the right tone for everyone; the staff, the tenants and the community.

Ms. Valerie Roche 14B McGuire Lane addressed the Board. Ms. Roche asked if something could be done about cars parking in front of the sidewalk ramps. She explained she has a mobility issue and not being able to access the ramps makes it even harder. Chairman Howroyd said we do not want to post no parking signs everywhere but we could have maintenance look into painting the curbs yellow in those areas, this may help. Ms. Roche shared she sometimes uses a walker and a walker is not safe on the grass.

Mr. Greg Dupont 28D Pascal Lane addressed the Board. Mr. Dupont commented the roof in his unit leaks. When it rains he has to put a bucket under the drips. Chairman Howroyd asked if a work order has been put in for this problem. Mr. Dupont stated yes he has placed a work order and nothing has been done. He asked why money is being spent moving the lawns and not putting that money into replacing the roof. Chairman Howroyd explained Spencer Village has a lot of repair needs and recently MHA had a study done that did a cost analysis of those items that need to be replaced. MHA is hopeful there will be some significant money from the State to repair or replace things like the roof, driveway and parking area. This complex is over 30 years old and many items are in need of attention.

Ms. MaryAnn Handley 133 Prospect Street addressed the Board. Ms. Handley is here regarding a letter that she wrote to the members of the Board in October or early November that she never received a response to. The letter expressed her concern about idea that elderly and disabled automobiles are being towed from complexes because they do not have or show a parking sticker and she said this is totally inappropriate. Ms. Handley also commented she was happy to see this item on the agenda and she will leave a copy of her letter for reference. Chairman Howroyd thanked Ms. Handley and said this will be discussed by the Board later in the agenda.

Mr. Jose Ruiz 58 H Pascal Lane addressed the Board. Mr. Ruiz commented he has found people sleeping in the laundry room and community room here at Pascal Lane. He asked rather than leaving this building open to keep it locked and give tenants keys to get in and out of the building. This is a safety issue. The community room looks nice and he does not want to see it ruined by individuals that don't live

**CORPORATE MINUTES 2014**

**MANCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

---

here. He also asked that people not leave their trash around, put it in the dumpster. Mr. Ruiz also commented he has found individuals smoking crack at the back end of the driveway near the wooded section and he did call police and they responded. Chairman Howroyd thanked him for this information and stated that should residents see people around that do not belong here, call the MHA office and let them know. He stressed that residents should not put themselves in harms way to call the police and let them handle it. Chairman Howroyd remarked that the Community Room has been painted and new doors have been installed and the Board will discuss getting keys for residents.

Mr. Ruiz asked if he could put carpeting in his unit. Chairman Howroyd asked him to speak with the property manager Martha Bertrand on that issue.

Ms. Nicole Seymour 50 Pascal Lane addressed the Board. Ms. Seymour asked if parking lines could be painted in the lot. People do not know where to park – so we need the lines. Chairman Howroyd stated this is not something we can do in the winter but will put it on the list of items to address in the spring.

Mr. Wayne Madden 28G Pascal Lane addressed the Board. Mr. Madden commented about locking up the community room but not restrict the use of the laundry room area. At times during the day all the laundry machines are being used and night time the machines are not as busy. Keys would cut down on vandalism but then there is the expense of getting the keys and replacing them when residents loose them. Mr. Madden also reported nurse's aides doing their own personal laundry here, not just the residents they are helping.

Mr. Jude Therrien 36F Pascal Lane addressed the Board. Mr. Therrien remarked that getting keys for the residents would cut down on vandalism and people sleeping inside but what about the expense of replacing the keys when residents loose or misplace them. If people want to get into the building they can always break in and damage the doors and the room. He is worried about vandalism and would it be possible to ask the police to patrol this area more often. Chairman Howroyd suggested installing cameras on the doors might deter break-ins. He suggested if residents see people using the laundry or loitering around to take a picture of them and their car and get them to the MHA office.

Ms. Kathleen Pittsley 66B Pascal Lane addressed the Board. Ms. Pittsley shared that sometimes she starts her laundry and then her nurse's aide brings it back to her in a black garbage bag. Her aide is not one of the ones doing her own personal laundry.

Chairman Howroyd said that the residents can be MHA's eyes and ears and if they see something happening to report it to either the MHA office or the police. He stressed residents not putting themselves in danger.

Ms. Karen May 36D Pascal Lane addressed the Board. Ms. May shared she will be moving to another unit and currently she has carpeting and she asked if she could have carpeting rather than linoleum in the new unit. Chairman Howroyd indicated that he does not know what the plans are and asked Ms. May to speak with the property manager Martha Bertrand. Ms. Bertrand said she would get back to Ms. May.

Mr. Timothy Loosemore 42 D Pascal Lane addressed the Board. Mr. Loosemore commented that people staying at the motel are cutting through the complex. He has told them it is private property and he asked if he should do something or call the police. Chairman Howroyd said it is one thing to tell trespassers it is private property but he reiterated that residents should not get into an altercation with trespassers but residents should call the police and tell them there is someone trespassing on private property.

Mr. Madden asked if it is okay to leave things on the table to donate. It is a good way to clean out their apartment and recycle. Ms. Bertrand asked that residents do not put any large items in the community

CORPORATE MINUTES 2014

**MANCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

---

room. She asked if residents have bulky items they contact the office and let them know they have a bulk item that needs to be removed.

Mr. Therrien commented about the security cameras. Would it be possible to have a closed circuit TV as well to watch – residents could feel safer. Chairman Howroyd said the Board will discuss this and other possible options.

Mr. Madden thanked the Board for the nice stove and refrigerator. The community room looks much nicer. He is hoping we can get more washers and dryers. Chairman Howroyd stated the washers and dryers are owned by MacGray and it is up to them to determine if additional machines are warranted depending on the usage. There have been discussions about getting laundry cards rather than having to use coins. Residents would get a card and be able to add money to the card. We have this at the West Hill and Mayfair complex and residents seem to like it. If MacGray switches to the card system they would install a kiosk device that residents would be able to use to put money on the card. This would also deter non-residents from using the machines.

Chairman Howroyd closed the public comments at 7:00 pm.

**A. Discussion of Public Comments**

Chairman Howroyd said he is concerned about the safety issues here. Mr. Shanbaum commented that security cameras are relatively inexpensive and it could be set up to stream to a computer. They can turn and record on when they detect motion. Mr. Rubin added the tapes renew themselves every couple of days and if there is a police incident we would have the ability to check them out. Chairman Howroyd said this is worth looking into. Certainly having a video camera on the door may deter vagrants and vandalism.

Mr. Shanbaum commented about the new doors and how they look more secure. He said the cost of replacing the keys are minimal and even if we had to change the locks once a year it would certainly help residents feel more secure and deter any vagrants and vandalism. Mr. Rubin added residents will still have access to this room even if they misplace their key their neighbors may and other outsiders from coming in. Chairman Howroyd indicated the new doors are far more secure than the previous ones.

Chairman Howroyd spoke about the question of painting the curb cuts to prevent people from parking in front of them. He mentioned too the repainting of the lines for parking spaces but both would have to be done in the spring.

**III. Adoption of Minutes – Meeting of December 18, 2013**

Chairman Howroyd asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2013 meeting. Mr. Rubin moved to accept the minutes of December 18 as written. Mr. Shanbaum seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

**IV. Correspondence - None**

**V. Accounts Payable**

Chairman Howroyd said there were no extraordinary expenses for the month of December. Mr. Shanbaum asked about the \$700 Verizon bill. Chairman Howroyd explained this cost is for about 16 phones and the cost is reasonable for that many phones. If funds becomes available he would like to

**CORPORATE MINUTES | 2014**

**MANCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

---

upgrade the existing phones for smart phones. This would allow maintenance the ability to enter a completed work order.

**VI. Executive Director's Report**

Chairman Howroyd reviewed the financial statements for December. Mr. Rubin asked if there are expenses we are cutting back on because we do not have an Executive Director. Chairman Howroyd indicated there are no new requests for money. He has told staff that until we get new leadership to hold expenses down as much as possible. Previously we did some big ticket landscaping and going forward we won't be doing that. We will be doing the basics, snowplowing and lawn mowing. Mr. Rubin asked Ms. Martha Bertrand what the status is on outstanding projects particularly at Mayfair. Ms. Bertrand reported there are two projects; the remaining patios and the fence between the MHA property and the Lithuanian Club. The fence has been chosen from Hartford Fence and installation depends on the weather. There is money set aside to finish the patios. The only other problem that has arisen is at North Elm Street, where several units are having heating issues. Maintenance is looking at it and will report back to her. The only outstanding items at West Hill are the handicapped showers for units 261 and 262 and it is her understanding that the shower units are backordered. The priority wise the projects are the patios, the fence and then do the showers and tubs and she understood all these to be capital expenses. The items at Pascal Lane are to change over the washers and dryers to the card system, replace the floor in the community center and the repair/replace the roofs. Chairman Howroyd indicated that we are only going to do the minor types of things until we find out if there are grants available for the larger projects. Ms. Bertrand also commented at this complex the door was removed connecting the laundry room from the community room. We could reinstall that door and keep it locked at night. There has been damage to the exterior doors and they are never damaged enough not to be doors.

Chairman Howroyd reviewed the Vacancy Report and shared that maintenance has maintained turning over units for occupancy in a timely manner.

**VII. Chairman's Report**

Chairman Howroyd shared he has received some information from NAHRO. Congress will act this week on the budget. There is report that there may be some additional money above the sequestration rate for Section 8. We are watching the allocation for Section 8 on a month to month basis. Capital funding will be flat.

**VIII. Old Business – None**

**IX. New Business**

**A. Parking/Towing Issues**

Martha explained we have a contract with Jay's Towing Service. Chairman Howroyd said he would like to get out of the contract and just have it be towing upon request rather than giving them carte blanche to tow any vehicle that does not have a sticker. The stickers are a good thing but there have been some incidents where cars have been towed because the window with the sticker is down. The existing policy seems to give Jay's towing permission to be judge and jury. State statutes allows a towing company the right to keep the vehicle on the truck, even the police do not have the authority to have the car taken down. The only way the vehicle can be released is by paying the towing fee. If the owner does not have the money to pay the towing fees the towing company can charge storage fees as well. As Ms. Handley shared this evening, we are dealing with residents in public housing and they don't have disposable income to pay these fees. We need to insure that tenants have access to their parking spaces and this has been a big issue at Mayfair particularly. The stickers have helped in this respect and if we have chronic abuses he would rather have the ability to tow

**CORPORATE MINUTES 2014**

**MANCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

---

upon request rather than at the towing company's initiative. Mr. Rubin asked how we not go back to the old way; we made this policy based on the complaints from residents about unauthorized cars in the lots. Problems are going to arise in the evening when residents are coming home or first thing in the morning and staff will not be in the office to take the call to tow the car. What do we do to alleviate the original concern about non-resident cars in the parking lots? Chairman Howroyd explained the issues are different at each complex. Mayfair has a problem with too few spaces for the size of the complex. This is where the issue about parking was started. The issue of towing problems seems to be based at West Hill. Mr. Rubin asked for comments from Ms. Bertrand. Martha stated she has had no complaints from Mayfair since the policy started. We had a number of vehicles being towed from Lisa Drive and there were people living in the units that were not on the lease. Lisa Drive residents were calling the office to say they needed a parking sticker and when questioned we found that there were people living in the units that were not on the lease, their income was not being counted. This parking policy has cleaned up non-residents living and parking there. Steve Itsou and I have been consistent telling residents that the parking sticker must be visible at all times. Mr. Rubin asked if the sticker could be relocated to the front or rear window to alleviate the possibility of the window being left down. He asked if there are other complexes where residents have complained about the policy. Martha remarked that initially North Elm residents were upset but they have assigned spaces. Their complaint was about visitors staying over night. She has explained to the residents in a case where they have an occasional overnight guest they put a sign in the window saying they are a guest and the car will not be towed. Mr. Rubin commented that maybe we can fix the problem without changing the policy all the way back. Maybe as simple as replacing the stickers from the side window to the front or rear windshield. This may solve the majority of issues that residents have.

Chairman Howroyd requested a motion to table the parking issue and towing contract to the next meeting. Mr. Shanbaum moved to table this discussion about parking and the contract with Jay's Towing to the next meeting. Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

**X. Items for Future Agenda**

Towing contract with Jay's Towing  
Parking stickers

**XI. Executive Session**

Motion was made by Mr. Rubin to move into Executive Session at 8:00 pm to discuss personnel matters related to the search process for the Executive Director. Ms. Shanley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Rubin moved to close the Executive Session at 9:01 pm. Ms. Shanley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

**XII. Adjournment**

Mr. Rubin moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 pm. Ms. Shanley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.