

MEETING OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF MANCHESTER
May 16, 2012
6:00 PM

Attending: Chairman Josh Howroyd
Vice Chairman Timothy Becker
Paul Rubin
Robert Shanbaum
Patrick Barder, Executive Director

Absent: Flora Jimenez

I. Chairman Howroyd opened the meeting at 6:05 pm.

II. Public Comments

Chairman Howroyd invited residents to make comments.

He informed everyone that the published minutes will be a synopsis of the comments made and are not necessarily verbatim.

Mrs. Jean Paulin addressed the Board.

Mrs. Paulin commented about the minutes of the last meeting. She indicated the trees in back of her unit have not yet been trimmed there are branches still on the ground waiting to be picked up. The urns in front of the units look terrible they are like something from a funeral home as was written in the minutes. Mrs. Paulin made a new comment that the neighbor's property is getting messy and they should be spoken to one on one and not in a general letter to everyone.

Mr. Will Paulin addressed the Board.

Mr. Paulin commented recording secretary should be writing the comments as stated and not sugar coating them to make them look good. Landscaping and lawn mowing is far from what it used to be. He asked about the list of charges for maintenance work and replacement of defective or malfunctioning appliances and how does it get decided what it is and who is responsible for making these changes. He also wanted to know who arrived at the charges, was it one person or a group. If patios are available, how does a tenant apply for one, who do we have to speak to about getting one.

Chairman Howroyd asked what Mr. Paulin meant about the replacing the appliances.

Mr. Paulin explained tenants were given a list of charges for maintenance work and replacement cost for broken or malfunctioning appliances, who decided whose responsibility it is for that list of charges. Mr. Barder explained if the charge is deemed to be due to tenant negligence the charge is time (to the half hour) and materials for the repairs per the policy. The decision as to whether or not it is due to tenant negligence first comes from the Director of Maintenance. It then gets reported to the Property Manager and it is the Property Manager's decision is final. The tenant still has the right to file a grievance and that gets heard by the Executive Director. Mr. Paulin commented that the lawn mowing

and general maintenance around the complex is not what it used to be. The lawn is looking very shabby and trimming the back of his unit has not been done.

Chairman Howroyd mentioned that MHA has a new contractor doing the lawn maintenance and an evaluation will be done by MHA. This is the growing season and with the recent rains the grass has been growing faster. Chairman Howroyd said that Mr. Barder and the maintenance staff will stay on top of the contractor to make sure we are getting timely cuts of the lawn.

Mr. Paulin asked about the patios and who does a tenant need to speak to about getting one installed at their unit.

Mr. Barder indicated tenants need to speak to him. The first one that was installed was a test to see how it would turn out and it looks pretty good. Installation of patios is going to be part of the future improvement packages here. It may come sooner than some of the other improvements we have planned because it is fairly easy fix. MHA had to repair some sidewalk behind Building 11 and decided since the cement truck was here to pour a pad for a patio.

Mr. Charles Fuller addressed the Board.

Mr. Fuller asked if the lady that was missing has been found. If the tenants had been notified sooner that someone was missing they might have been able to have helped because they may have seen something.

Chairman Howroyd stated the person has been found, she was at the Hartford Public Library. He also stated he does not know when the missing person report had been filed.

Mr. Barder commented that this was under the control of the Manchester Police Department. As soon as MHA found her missing the police were notified of it and they took charge of the situation.

Chairman Howroyd remarked we would like to schedule community session with the Manchester Police Department at all the MHA locations for residents to attend. A community police officer would come and speak to the tenants about issues such as missing persons as well as any other concerns the residents may have. If residents see things that are questionable they should call 911 and report it. Chairman Howroyd encouraged residents to call 911 if they see anything suspicious or out of the ordinary in their neighborhood.

Ms. Doris Perozziello addressed the Board.

Ms. Perozziello reported the kerosene heater is still in the basement of building 27. She also mentioned that the trash has not been picked up this week and there is a couch that was left by the dumpster. Ms. Marsha Harris-Webb, who works for MHA, said a work order has been placed and the trash will be picked up along with the couch that was left next to the dumpster.

Public comments closed at 6:20 pm.

III. Adoption of Minutes – Meeting of April 25, 2012

Chairman Howroyd asked that a correction be made to the minutes of April 25 to the comments by Mrs. Paulin in sentence 5 of the first paragraph rather than saying the landscaping is looking much better it should read that the landscaping looks terrible the trees were not trimmed and branches have not been picked up; and she does not like the flower urns, they look like they are from a funeral home.

Mr. Becker moved to accept the April 25 2012 minutes as amended. Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 4.0.

IV. Correspondence

Mr. Barder shared the Congregate residents took a vote as to whether or not pets would be allowed there. The vote was 17 in favor of pets and 16 opposed to pets. Mr. Barder said the pet policy needs to be consistent at all properties, pets have not been allowed at the Congregate but they are at other complexes. A pet policy will be made part of the new lease agreement.

Mr. Barder passed out a copy of the proposed agenda for the NERC/NAHRO conference in Maine. All board members were registered for the conference and rooms have been reserved in their names. He asked if any board member wants to bring a guest, or stay additional nights, to please let him know.

Mr. Barder reported he had two meetings with the residents of Spencer Village to talk about the proposed rent increase and any other issues the residents may have. The meetings went well. The \$50 rent increase will be entirely set aside for the Capital Funds Reserve.

Mr. Barder introduced the Section 8 Staff - Ms. Jacqueline Mercado, Ms. Marsha Harris-Webb and Ms. Otila Jones. The group has worked on a handbook of Section 8 rules and regulations and they passed copies to the Board members. This handbook will be used as a reference guide for filing applications for Section 8 housing.

Ms. Mercado explained MHA has not been accepting any new applications for housing since 1999, which had 127 requests for housing. The last time this list was purged was 2007. This list was purged and we now have 54 families in need of housing.

Mr. Becker asked how the rent is determined for Section 8 tenants, what is the percentage of their gross income that is used to determine the cost of their rent.

Ms. Mercado explained that the tenant pays 30% of their gross income for rent and the rest is subsidized by State funding.

Mr. Becker asked if there is anyway the Board could extend the availability of these grant to more people.

Ms. Mercado explained the minimum percentage is 30% but it could go as high as 40%. In the private sector the amount of the rent is determined by the landlord and only the landlord can lower it. Ms. Mercado explained that we can lower the payment standard, and currently we are at 100% of the FMR. Changing this percentage would create additional hardship for many people. For example say a rent is \$1,038 and the landlord wants to receive that entire amount in rent. Then the landlord would have to include all utilities at \$1,038 maximum. Mr. Shanbaum asked for clarification on why the subsidy is between 30 and 40%.

Ms. Mercado explained we cannot exceed 40% of a tenant's gross income. The percentage does vary depending on the tenant's income and any assistance they are qualified for but it cannot exceed 40%. It could be less but cannot be more. MHA uses 30% for everybody.

Mr. Becker moved to suspend the rules to go back to Public Comments. Mr. Shanbaum seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Mrs. Evelyn Babella addressed the Board.

Mrs. Babella said the garbage has not been picked up for two weeks and it is disgusting.

Chairman Howroyd explained that a work order has been filled out and the trash will be picked up.

Mrs. Babella commented the lawns look awful, they are not edged anymore and this looks like a run down project now. The new urns look like something from a funeral home they are ugly. She asked why wasn't stone used for the retaining walls instead of wood, the wood looks awful. Mrs. Babella also commented she has submitted two requests, with certificates from her physician explaining the need for her to transfer to a first floor unit. Both requests were denied by Mr. Barder and it is not right.

Ms. Beverly Tesimone addressed the Board.

Ms. Tesimone stated she is having a problem with second hand smoke, mildew and water in the basement. There are water bugs from the water in the basement and she has silverfish in her apartment in the silverware drawer and the cabinet where she keeps her pots and pans. The smoke is coming from her next door neighbor who smokes out on the porch from 8:00 in the morning to 8:00 at night. Ms. Tesimone said she purchased an Oreck air purifier and it has helped some, but her bedroom smells like an ashtray from the smoke coming in. She asked if she purchased a divider could it be installed on the porch to help divert the smoke from coming in her apartment. The items she has in her storage unit are ruined by the water.

Chairman Howroyd asked how long there has been water in the basement and she said 3 years.

Chairman Howroyd thanked both residents for their comments.

V. Accounts Payable

Mr. Barder reviewed the financial reports.

Mr. Becker asked about the certification of Section 8 inspector.

Mr. Barder explained the inspector has agreed to go to training to become state certified. By year end he will become a licensed inspector and if not his services will no longer be used.

Mr. Barder explained the Community room and offices continue to be updated. He reported that LYCO has been refurbishing file cabinets and refinished the conference room table. The work is excellent and it is less expensive than purchasing new furniture.

VI. Executive Directors Report

A. Financial Statements & Management Reports

Mr. Barder distributed the financial statements and management reports and said they look good.

Mr. Barder reviewed the management and the unit status report and said he has received a warning call from HUD regarding the length of time it takes MHA to turn over units for rental. This needs to be rectified by 9/30/12.

Mr. Barder explained to rectify this backlog he needs to hire more maintenance staff. The current staff is working on turning over units for occupancy but they are also responsible for regular unit maintenance.

Mr. Barder also stated we need to work on how to prioritize the units that need to be repaired. By having more maintenance staff MHA will be able to get the units up and rented sooner. He plans to hire more maintenance workers with more specific skills such as a plumber, licensed

electricians and carpenters. This will help reduce the need for specialized contract workers going forward.

B. ACOP Policy Update

Mr. Shanbaum commented the ACOP is in good shape.

Mr. Becker said he is hung up on the transfer policy and MHA needs to decide what that policy is. He also asked about a smoking policy.

Mr. Barder agreed that MHA needs to make a decision to ban smoking on in the units. Existing smokers would be grandfathered in but no new tenants will be allowed to smoke in their units.

Mr. Barder explained it is very costly to renovate a unit where the tenant has been smoking. The unit has to be completely gutted because no amount of paint will get rid of the smoke on the walls and ceilings.

Mr. Shanbaum suggested the board speak with other housing authorities at the NERC/NAHRO conference as to what they are doing with regard to smoking. Other board members agreed.

Mr. Barder introduced Attorney Ryan Barry. Mr. Barder explained that received a request from a tenant who is planning on getting married and they want to add their partner to the lease as a family member. The issue is a same sex marriage. Currently in our lease we have no definition of a "family" in such a situation. He requested Attorney Barry look into this and bring his findings to this meeting.

Attorney Barry explained MHA has State and Federal Units. The State law recognizes same sex marriages. Fed's adopted a new rule in March of 2012 that ignores the marriage issue but assures that its core programs are open to all eligible individuals and families regardless of sexual orientation.

The program areas are 1) Rental Assistance; 2) Home Mortgage programs; 3) Community Development programs and 4) Public Assisted housing programs.

Mr. Rubin asked Atty. Barry if a couple comes to MHA and applies for housing MHA does not have the right to question their "family status". Atty. Barry said this is broad because there is no clear definition to the word "family" as it relates to housing.

Mr. Barder commented he wants to know if the lease goes bad – who does he sue. Any person over 18 years of age has to sign the lease at MHA so who is considered the "head of household". This is his quandary. Mr. Barder suggested the ACOP needs to define family and Chairman Howroyd suggested making reference the HUD rule. This also needs to be stated in the Annual Plan.

VII. Chairman's Report - None

VIII. Old Business – None

IX. New Business

A. Audit Report

Mr. Barder reviewed the audit report.

Mr. Becker moved with **Resolution 2012-6** to accept with our Audit Report as presented.

Mr. Shanbaum seconded. **Resolution 2012-6** passed 4-0.

B. Ethics Policy Revisions

Mr. Rubin moved to table Ethics Policy Revision.

Mr. Becker seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

C. Items for Future Agenda

- Reverse 911 – check into system/service to cal all residents
- Emergency Plan

X. Executive Session

A. ED Evaluation

Mr. Shanbaum moved to go into Executive Session at 8:38 pm. Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion was passed 4-0.

Motion to adjourn Executive Session @ 9:15 PM by Becker. Seconded by Rubin. Unanimous.

Resolution 2012-7

Pursuant to its corporate authority and its contractual arrangements with the Executive Director, the Board awards a 3.5% increase to the Executive Director's base salary, retroactive to October 10th, 2011. Furthur, the Board establishes for itself the next evaluation date of October 10th, 2012.

XI. Adjournment@9:20 PM.: Motion Rubin; Second Becker; Unanimous.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST: _____

SECRETARY