

Missoula Housing Authority Board
Regular Board Meeting & Public Hearing
Wednesday, March 25, 2009

-MINUTES-

Members Present: James Hoffmann, Collin Bangs, Betty Zander, Joe Pietro, Sheila Lund, John Boyle, Sandy Mitchell

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Lori Davidson, Jim McGrath, Adam Ragsdale, Merah Shurtliff

Guests Present: Keithi Worthington, Melissa Bangs

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:36 p.m.
- II. Attendance: See above
- III. Minutes:
Regular Board Minutes February 18, 2009: Hoffmann called for comments. Pietro moved to approve the minutes, Mitchell seconded and the minutes passed with all in favor.
- IV. Commissioner Comment/ Conflict of Interest Disclosure: NONE
- V. Public Comment: NONE
- VI. Grievance Hearing
 - a. In accordance with MHA's public housing grievance procedure, the Regular Meeting will be closed unless the tenant waives the right to privacy. All those present except Board members, MHA's attorney, required staff, the tenant, and anyone attending at her request will be asked to leave. The Regular Meeting will be reconvened following the grievance hearing.

The grievance hearing was postponed and will be held at a later date and time.
- VII. Action Items:
 - a. Resolution 887: Authorizing MHA to enter into Property Management Addendum for Equinox. Davidson explained this resolution authorizes MHA to enter into a Property Management Addendum for homeWORDS's new project, Equinox, as required by the investors. The Addendum is identical to the one entered into for Lenox Flats. Lease-up is expected to start in June 2009. Davidson explained they are preparing an RFP for someone to manage the waiting list and do the initial lease-up of the units for Equinox. MHA staff will review applications. In response to a question by Hoffmann, Davidson said current staff would be overwhelmed with 35 lease-ups on top of their current work

load. Bangs moved to approve Resolution 887, Pietro seconded. Hoffmann called for questions and comments. There were none. Resolution 887 passed with all in favor.

- b. Resolution 888: Accepting an Award of Capital Funds authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 in the amount of \$427,852, adopting and amended procurement policy as described in PIH Notice 2009-12, and setting a Public Hearing for April 15, 2009 (*this date was changed at the end of the meeting to April 20, 2009 to coincide with the rescheduled April Board Meeting.*) Davidson explained HUD requires that each Housing Authority pass a resolution accepting the additional capital funds. Davidson handed out to the Board members a proposed budget for the funds. The intent of the funds is for modernization that has been deferred because of lack of funding. HUD encourages Housing Authorities to use the funds for modernization items that are currently in the five-year plan and start them within the next 120 days. Before the funds can be used on items not included in the five-year plan an environmental review needs take place. Davidson would like to use some of these funds for the Charlo Site and the five-plexes at Russell Park. Because these two sites would include construction they would need a separate environmental review. Davidson has taken the steps to get these environmental reviews completed.

Davidson is asking for changes in the procurement policy for these funds only. She would like the Board to authorize the raise in procurement level from \$25,000 to \$100,000. This would expedite and facilitate the use of the funds. The funds need to be obligated within one year and spent within three years. Davidson informed the Board that a public hearing is required to amend the Five-Year/Annual Plan for the Cap Fund budget changes.

Mitchell moved to approve Resolution 888, Pietro seconded. Hoffmann called for questions and comments. There were none. Resolution 888 passed with all in favor.

VIII. Old Business:

a. Board Strategic Planning:

1. Report on meetings held to date and consideration of Mission Statement rewrite.

BOARD STRATEGIC PLANNING

Melissa Bangs facilitated this section of the Board Meeting. She gave a brief overview of the topics to be discussed.

Mayor Meeting

Davidson gave a brief synopsis of the key points from the meeting with the Mayor, John Engen. She stated the Mayor said he was intrigued by the notion of having a “go-to” organization for housing issues. The Mayor wants to know how MHA would legitimize playing this role and how MHA would bring all the organizations together with out stepping on the toes of any organization and making them all feel included. He likes the idea of centralizing the housing message and efforts in Missoula. During this meeting they spoke with the Mayor about damage control. The Mayor recognizes MHA is working hard to change the

direction the organization is headed. After reading the emerging agreements he feels very good, confident, and supportive. The Mayor said he would be willing to help out when MHA foresees troubled waters ahead. He would be willing to attend meetings with MHA and other stakeholders.

Bangs was encouraged by the meeting with the Mayor, because not only did he agree with the goals presented by MHA but he took them a step further. The Mayor would like to see a report created and presented to City Council on a regular basis.. Hoffmann has nothing additional to add.

OPG Meeting

Davidson said she would like to hear the thoughts of the others who were present at the meeting.

Hoffmann said there was frustration between OPG staff and MHA staff while working on the subdivision. He did not press this issue during this meeting because he felt it was not the proper time to address those issues. Hoffmann asked OPG how MHA can help them with their zoning rewrite as a bridge-building effort.

Bangs said one part of the meeting focused on the working relationship between the two organizations for the planning process. Bangs felt that this part of the meeting went well. The second part of the meeting focused on MHA being the spokesperson for housing. Mike Barton feels that MHA has created its own problems by being the “bully on the block”. Barton says if MHA wants to take on the role of being the spokesperson in Missoula for housing then MHA has some serious fence building and work to do with the other organizations in the community. In response to a question by Lund, Davidson said Barton was referring to other non-profits in Missoula.

McGrath said the good thing about Barton’s comments was that he was honest. McGrath, however, does not think the situation is as bad as Barton portrays it.

Melissa Bangs said the language in the strategic plan and the process that is designed for engaging these partners one-on-one and in a group needs to reflect that MHA has heard that message.

Hoffmann said Davidson, as Executive Director, is a valuable spokesperson for MHA in this effort. It also establishes a more firm role as Executive Director.

Melissa Bangs said that she does not feel it is a matter of trying to convince other agencies of MHA’s good intentions. It is forming partnerships with them that are formed by listening to them and hearing their concerns, strengths, weaknesses, objectives, and challenges.

Next Steps

Davidson said they need help from Melissa Bangs with this part in terms of moving forward. Davidson said she is going to continue to attend meetings for the zoning rewrite and encourage folks to participate as much as possible. She is working with ADAPT and staying informed.

McGrath said the meeting with OPG was in a way a next step. OPG was telling MHA during the meeting how the organization could help them. Davidson said a next step could be coordinating a meeting with the County and other organizations to put together an application for the Neighborhood Stabilization Act Funds and uses for this money.

Mission Statement

Melissa Bangs had the Board Members read a draft mission statement which included all the language and key words the Board brain-stormed during the last session. This draft is not strongly recommended and no real polishing of the draft has taken place. Melissa Bangs explained the parts of a mission statement are purpose, primary methods, geographic scope, and target population. A strong mission statement is also inspiring, concise, and informative with parts being easy to remember and repeat.

The Draft Mission Statement:

Missoula Housing Authority acts as a spokesperson and advocate for low to moderate income households while treating them with dignity and respect, educates the community about innovative affordable housing solutions and leads through creative collaboration and strong partnerships as we build, own, manage, and assist individuals with their housing needs within the City of Missoula plus 10 miles.

Are the key concepts and parts in the draft there? Are there any particular words or phrases that you like or dislike? Are there any missing parts? Run-on sentences, spell check, etc. will be addressed.

The target population is accurate and will stay accurate in the coming years. The scope of Missoula and 10 miles is the correct scope and will be the in the coming years. However, the Board does not like the “10 Miles” and should be replaced with a different word or phrase, possibly the phrase “surrounding area”.

Concepts and Phrases: Hoffman believes the last sentence should be the first sentence. Lund wants “acts as” replaced with “is” in the first sentence. It is more powerful. Mitchell does not like using both “spokesperson” and “advocate”, “dignity” and “respect”, “collaboration” and “partnership”. Mitchell wants only one of the words used. Lund & Mitchell do not like the word “own”, but like the word “provide”. Hoffmann and Bangs, however, do like the word “own”. Hoffmann believes the word “own” indicates a more important organization. MHA has assets. MHA acquires real-estate. The Board likes the word “develop”. Bangs says the wording needs to be so that the reader understands MHA owns property. Bangs does not like the “educate the community”, however, Mitchell likes “educate the community”.

Melissa Bangs wants to accurately communicate how MHA provides housing. Another draft of the mission statement will be prepared and provided to the Board members.

Demographics

McGrath provided to the Board a memo with excerpts from various sources of information looking at demographic needs. At the previous strategic planning session, the Board wanted MHA staff to provide recommendations on specific target populations to serve. McGrath said

from the research he has conducted the average household size is decreasing, the average household age is increasing, and the number of households is increasing quicker than the population. The aging population vs. working population is proportionate. In Missoula County there is continual growth in all age groups. McGrath said the highest rent burdens currently are on seniors who are renting. They pay more than 35% of their income towards rent.

Davidson said after looking at the demographics she has a hard time attaching percentages to target populations and would like to see the goals in the five-year plan broader to maintain versatility and flexibility. There are four key factors that she wants addressed while making decisions. She wants to make sure decisions are mission driven, to look at the community need, possible funding opportunities, and look at it from a business perspective. Davidson wants a variety of income levels served and a variety of types of housing provided. Davidson would like to create a values statement. She added that by making the goals broader input from community partners could be included.

Bangs said demographics are important but it is important to remember that everyone's needs are very different and they do change and this is not a numbers game.

Role of the Board and Governance

Melissa Bangs wanted thoughts from the Board members about their knowledge and feelings on Board governance and Board goals.

Bangs said it is very important to delineate between Board responsibilities and Staff responsibilities. It can be confusing at times. Boyle said sometimes it is hard to step back from their day jobs and take a more hands-off approach on day to day decisions. Davidson informed the Board that the five-year plans in the past have never had Board goals included and she feels it is a worthy task.

Melissa Bangs said Board development has become a major focus and priority for the non-profit sector when looking at everything from major scandals all the way to major successes. What has the Boards role been in the success of organizations? Non-profits are being much more purposeful, thoughtful, and strategic about the leadership of the Board and about where there are distinct and shared territories. There is no one right answer. Every Board needs to clarify for itself and the agency where there are shared and distinct territories. It changes over time so it is important to revisit. It is important for a Board to decide what governance model to use.

The Board would like an orientation packet prepared because of the complexity and uniqueness of the MHA Board. Davidson would like input from the current Board members on what specific information would be useful for the orientation packet.

Melissa Bangs noted that the two sample Board assessment forms provided in the packet are very different examples - from two different roles of Board governance. She said it is important for the Board to have education on governance while having conversations and decision making in tandem with an assessment.

Melissa Bangs wants two Board members to work with her to develop draft goals to bring back to the entire Board for review and revision. Worthington thinks the Board goals are a great idea and she would like to have some emphasis on training. Melissa Bangs said this can be a goal if the Board wants it to be a goal. Bangs and Davidson like the idea of setting distinct goals and territories for the Board. Mitchell feels the opposite and does not see the need to do this. Worthington suggests making a “job description” for the Board.

Boyle, Lund, and Bangs agreed to work with Melissa Bangs to develop the Board goals.

Melissa Bangs wanted to clarify that the one-to-one meetings with partner agencies and other non-profits is not part of the planning process. These meetings will be part of the implementation of the plan. The goals and objectives will reflect the intent to hold these meetings.

Melissa Bangs, McGrath, Davidson, and Ragsdale will, during the drafting process, develop financial goals and objectives, fundraising goals and objectives, and administrative goals and objectives.

Target Dates

- April 8, 2009 - Draft plan to the Board for consideration
- April 20, 2009 - Discuss at the Board Meeting and make revisions
- May 20, 2009 - Second draft of plan at Board Meeting and release for public comment
- June 2009 - The Board must adopt the five-year plan
- July 2009 - Submit five-year plan to HUD

b. Staff Satisfaction Survey update: Davidson said she had met with Mitchell and Terry Kendrick. They believe it would be best to administer the survey over the internet and then have two or three possible face to face interviews with staff. Kendrick would then provide feedback from the responses. The Board discussed the survey provided in the Board Packet. Mitchell does not like the survey presented by Kendrick. The Board discussed possible ways of wording survey questions. Davidson said the survey by Kendrick would be about \$1,100-\$1,500. Boyle believes the survey by Kendrick is a good start. Mitchell feels for that price she would like to go with a different survey. Ragsdale thinks administering a survey that has meaning and depth is more important than worrying about the cost. He also thinks there should be a separation in surveys among managers and other staff. Bangs said he would like to see a decision made by the next Board Meeting or proceed with the survey proposed by Kendrick. The Board does not want to see the survey before it is administered to staff.

IX. Staff Reports:

a. PH FSS Coordinator: Davidson informed the Board that MHA was not granted a Public Housing FSS Coordinator. However, this decision made by HUD was based on an error on the part of a person at HUD. Davidson is in the process of appealing the decision to

HUD. She believes MHA will have priority next year. There has been no word on the ROSS Grant Coordinator.

- b. Palace Apartments: Davidson said MHA has a Work Experience person staffing the Palace half days. Representatives from the UM School of Social Work visited the Palace and want to make it a permanent site for training interns through the Social Work Program. The flooring has been replaced on the entryway stairs and landings, and maintenance staff has been repainting baseboards. The Palace celebrates its 100th Anniversary this year. Staff is gathering historical data and is planning a celebration.
- c. Disposition of public housing: Davidson said the disposition is moving forward. One family has already moved. Davidson attended the Administrative and Finance meeting at City Council. She answered questions and explained the rationale behind the RFP for a single buyer. She feels City Council is on board and gives its support. Davidson will go back to City Council after she receives the RFP's back. The RFP's are due on April 13, 2009.
- d. IDC/Garden District Update: Davidson stated it is under construction. The Groundbreaking Ceremony was held on March 6, 2009. The foundations are poured and the ditch siphons are installed. Overall the construction is proceeding smoothly. Davidson expects \$315,000 from the closing.

Davidson said the tax exemption will go into effect this year for this lot instead of next year.

Davidson informed the Board they will be using double pane windows instead of triple pane windows and radon piping will need to be installed under the slab. Bangs asked if the builders have provided a broke down time-line. Davidson said she receives monthly updates. In response to a question by Zander, Davidson said the units will be ready for lease up in October. They are not obligated under the terms of the contract until November, but Sirius believes they may have them ready by October. The buildings have staggered completion dates.

There has been no new information provided by the realtors regarding the other lots.

- e. NAHRO Legislative Conference: Davidson and McGrath gave a brief summary of their trip to Washington D.C. for the NAHRO Legislative Conference and their meetings with Montana's Congressmen and staff.

X. New Business: NONE

XI. Adjournment: The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:45 pm.

James Hoffmann, Board Chair

Lori Davidson, Interim Executive Director