

Missoula Housing Authority Board

Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, June 15, 2022

-MINUTES-

Members Present: Kaia Peterson, Collin Bangs, Jack Richards, Teigan Avery, Kila Shields,
Sheena Comer Winterer

Members Absent: Erma Mack-Wilkes

Staff Present: Lori Davidson, Jim McGrath, Mary Melton, Sam Oliver

Guests Present: Ryan Sudbury (via phone)

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:33pm.
- II. Attendance: See above
- III. Approval of Minutes: Regular Board Meeting – May 18, 2022
 - 1st: Richards
 - 2nd: AveryNone opposed, motion passes.
- IV. Commissioner Comments/Conflict of Interest Disclosure:

None
- V. Public Comments on items not on the Agenda:

None
- VI. Action Items:

None
- VII. Staff Reports:
 - a. COVID-19 update

Davidson: The only difference is the Board is now meeting in person. We will try to meet in person moving forward unless we see something drastic change.

b. Public Housing final close-out

Davidson: We did submit our final audit to HUD electronically about two weeks ago. It was accepted by HUD. Ryan is working on his opinion. Once he's done, we'll bring a resolution to the board. It's a big deal for Ryan because there's no one who's ever done this before.

Sudbury: I'm starting to plug away at it, but it's hard to know where to start or what to look at because I wasn't really involved in it. If someone could put me in contact with someone at HUD Denver, that would be helpful so I know what they're looking for. I'll have it done by the next meeting.

c. Villagio update

Oliver: Building A is dried in. We're moving along with the first-floor units with insulation and sheet rock. The good news is the roof membrane is on and there is no leaking. Windows are in and siding has started. Doors are going in and decks are being built. Between now and end of August it will come together as a finished looking building. Building B is close behind it. You can see now we've built a small neighborhood in two buildings, and you can imagine how the neighbor interaction is going to happen when you see the balconies. It was a tricky site, but now we're realizing all these professionals did their job well and it's a fantastic project. Our general contractor has continued to do a great job with our interest in mind. During these summer months, we'll see some drastic progress.

d. Trinity update

Davidson: The big news is the city council has approved All Nations Health as the provider of services for the navigation center. We think that's really good news. This does not go as far as I thought it did. I thought it was an approval of an MOU, but apparently that is a next step. This first step was only getting the council familiar with what All Nations Health does and the kinds of services they provide. The next step is MOU which will lay out the services they'll actually provide.

Bangs: Are they an organization that's been around for a while?

Davidson: Yes, they've been around a long time. It used to be called Missoula Indian Health Center. They've really expanded their services in the last few years and become much more community based than I remember them being. They serve a lot of people other than tribal members. I think they're really well suited for this. I'm really excited to have them be a part of this.

Oliver: At the Mullan site, the city has vacated the ditch, so we've filled that in and have a lot of utility work going on. The navigation center was left last to

frame in. In the last month or so that area has really come into shape. You can now walk in and lay eyes on the three-dimensional space.

Comer Winterer: What is the navigation center?

Davidson: That is the space the city is leasing from the project to provide services for homeless people. We don't know what those services look like yet. It was designed to have a community space and lots of offices for services providers. Partnership Health Center will also have a medical clinic there that is separate from the navigation center. It's been envisioned as a lot of different things over the past few years. It was designed in collaboration with a lot of the homeless service providers.

Comer Winterer: Is there a shelter component?

Davidson: No shelter component, but there are showers. The navigation center is also separate from the Permanent Supportive Housing, which has its own set of offices, separate entrance, and it will have 24/7 staffing. We don't know yet if the navigation center will have 24/7 staffing. There's been a vision that Permanent Supportive Housing and navigation center will share some service providers, but we don't know yet if that will happen. Partnership Health Center has committed to providing 40 hours per week staffing on the Permanent Supportive Housing side. The rest of the time we have to figure out how to have staff there. It was always envisioned to be a 24/7 staffed side of Trinity. We're still working on budgets there. Between Homewood and MHA, we've committed one million dollars of our developers fee, which will be available over a number of years, to help provide staffing for the Permanent Supportive Housing outside of the 40 hours Partnership Health Center has committed to.

Peterson: Is Partnership Health Center also leasing?

Davidson: Partnership Health Center is leasing the space from the city. The Cooley site is coming onboard around November, and the Mullan site is coming onboard around January, but we are not anticipating the navigation center will open until March or April.

e. Speedway and 819 Stoddard

Davidson: I don't have an update. We know we're waiting for the Stoddard Street sale until we get final approval of Public Housing conversion. On Speedway, we're at a standstill. We've been discussing internally whether we hire a new person who can do public outreach, social media, and someone who can write grants. We're entering into budgeting right now, so we'll see if we can budget that in. We hadn't planned to apply for grants for Speedway until the next funding cycle anyway.

Peterson: Do you have an update on the other marketing steps?

Davidson: Adam has been talking to one of the firms and starting to give them some input on how we'd like to see the website change.

f. Annual Plan draft – out for public comment

Davidson: There isn't much different there. I was thinking we'd have new strategic goals to include, but it's only the annual plan, not the five-year plan. Typically, in the annual plan you're referring to the last five-year plan and giving updates. We've pretty much accomplished all of the goals that were in the last five-year plan. By next year's annual plan, we can probably include the results of our current strategic planning process. Next month we'll have public comment on the plan. We have a 45 day public comment period before we submit it. We put it on our website and advertised in the Missoulian.

g. Strategic planning – Succession and Measuring Success discussion

Peterson: The two big items for tonight are succession planning for the Executive Director and starting deeper conversation around measuring success. We sent out the Executive Director job description which came directly from what's already being used. What we're thinking for the process for the search is opening to internal candidates mid-August, requesting a cover letter, resume, and references. The small hiring committee will conduct interviews, which is me, Collin, and Sheena. We don't want it to just be a board exercise, so we should include some staff members on that committee. After interviews, then the hiring committee will bring a recommendation for a candidate to the full Board to offer in September and then decide if we move to an external search.

Bangs: It's important that some staff have the opportunity to interview the internal candidates. We did an entire staff interview with Lori.

Peterson: It's probably appropriate for the management team to come up with a plan to engage staff.

Davidson: This process follows the usual hiring procedure that we use, where we do an internal invitation first and then decide if we want to go to external. It's up to the board to decide if they want to go external and how far. Ryan has investigated to make sure there's no requirement for doing a different process. It's entirely a Board decision as to how you conduct the search.

Bangs: I'm hoping we don't have to go externally because the people who showed up last time were jokes. The good candidates were the ones on our staff.

Peterson: What was the hiring committee like last time?

Davidson: There was a hiring committee with some board members, but also some external people, like the mayor. It was a different process because we were coming out of a difficult time then.

Bangs: I remember the HR person from the city being helpful.

Davidson: She was helpful in putting the process together and it was very formal. She ran the process because we didn't have an HR person at that time. There's a different HR person at the city now.

Comer Winterer: I can see value of having external people on the hiring committee, but I can also see it being complex. What do you think?

Bangs: I think we do an internal process first, which could probably be more informal. If we don't hire someone internally, then maybe reach out to someone with more experience for help. If we can handle it internally and do it ourselves, that would be good.

Comer Winterer: It seems like the work culture is healthy. It makes sense to keep it the way it's going rather than anyone from the outside changing the culture.

Peterson: So we have the small board hiring committee, and then looking for feedback from leadership about how to engage staff.

Bangs: I think it's important to have their involvement, but let them decide how they want to do it.

Peterson: Let's look at the job description. I took the current internal description and put things into categories.

Davidson: Since we don't have Public Housing anymore, the Public Housing certification doesn't apply.

Comer Winterer: If you're not already within the group, it's very daunting, because it seems to imply a lot of knowledge about how MHA works. It's a good internal description, but for external it could be daunting.

Bangs: That was my thought. How could one person possibly do all of that? It needs to clarify that the Executive Director is responsible for all of that, but not solely, it's with the support of staff.

Peterson: There is some opportunity to simplify some of this. I felt it didn't highlight strongly enough the public facing role of the Executive Director.

Comer Winterer: It's very duties based, versus what type of person we're looking for.

Davidson: The Executive Director's job is to oversee the financial health of agency, and same with compliance. I'm not directly working with compliance but it's my responsibility to make sure it's getting done and getting done well. I'm not interacting with those tasks on a daily basis, but I make sure it gets done. I have a great leadership team that makes sure a lot of these other pieces are getting done, and I'm overseeing them. More of my time is spent on the development aspect because between Sam and I, we're the only ones that do it. I'd like to involve other staff more, but staff don't have the time to step away. A lot of the development work I'm personally involved in and doing in conjunction with our consultants.

Melton: Lori is the owner's representative. For example, if I'm doing things for compliance, Lori has to sign off on it.

Davidson: Because of the shortage in the finance department, I'll be doing some hands-on help in putting the budgets together. I don't expect that a new Executive Director would take that on, but I have that finance background because I started as the finance officer. They do need an understanding of how to read financial statements and where MHA needs to be to have that financial stability. It doesn't get too specific about you have to know about section 8, etc because if you have to go to external search, you're not likely to find someone who has that in-depth knowledge. An overall understanding of how HUD works is important, but not the details of the programs. I think it's really important to point out that we're so unusual as a housing authority because the scope of what we do is so broad. Most housing authorities don't do all the things that we do. Our staff is incredible that we take on so much here and we do it with quite a small staff – we cover a lot of territory. Someone coming in from the outside to understand the breadth of what we do here is really hard.

Peterson: We need to make it more clear about what is the oversight role is and what are the things you're actually doing. I can clean that up and make it a little clearer and bring this back in July.

Collin, Sheena, Lori, Ryan, and I are meeting with Mike Nugent and Heidi West from the city council and Ricki Henderson from the city housing office on Friday to start the discussion we had brought up at strategic planning about what is our relationship with the city.

Let's talk about this idea of how do we define success.

Bangs: Can we get people who are using our services to speak about how we're affecting their lives.

Avery: The number of families served might be a metric. Also the number of people who have graduated in FSS program.

Peterson: How do we report ourselves to funders?

McGrath: Numbers and outcomes. People leaving our program successfully versus not, the types of population we serve, being able to make use of resources and leveraging. I think about it in terms of partnerships. We're providing the housing, but we're able to have a greater impact because we're then partnering with a service agency. It's an overall positive economic impact in the community. And the impacts of homelessness on a child versus having a home.

Oliver: Leveraging in those partnerships starts in the conception of a project. Development partners, financial partners, and MHA have their stamp on that project. Putting projects together, employing people to build, having staff and programming on the backend to support are all positive impacts.

Davidson: We have unrestricted funds that can be used for leveraging. And vouchers and unrestricted capital to invest. Vouchers coming into projects make those projects possible.

Melton: The buildings themselves – we build beautiful buildings. And we have staff longevity.

McGrath: The impact of our work in a neighborhood itself. It goes along with the beautiful buildings. In other communities, you can spot the public housing.

Davidson: Think about all the siding we did on the Public Housing units before we converted. Those are the nicest buildings in that neighborhood. We've never put ourselves forward as improvers of the neighborhoods.

Shields: Staff longevity, health of the culture, and employee retention are important to use as a measure. Without that piece, none of this is possible.

Davidson: As part of our new personnel policy, we're incorporating a longevity bonus.

Peterson: The role of MHA as an employer contributes to the overall community economic benefit.

Davidson: MHA is a significant economic engine of putting money out into the community through things like contracting and housing assistance to private landlords.

Peterson: When you look at quality of buildings, one way to measure is dollars of rehab and property improvements. Is there some other way to measure that?

McGrath: Quantitatively we can talk about how recently upgrades have been done. We don't have a lot of really old things that we don't upgrade.

Peterson: It's a problem other housing authorities across the county have and we don't have that problem.

Davidson: We have the energy performance contract in Public Housing which included energy improvements like metered water, low flow toilets, and new caulking. It's an example of how we leverage the money we have and the opportunities we have available. We grab them and implement them.

Peterson: What about looking at demographics and populations served?

Davidson: We've consciously tried to develop projects that serve people who are formally homeless. We started with Uptown, then Valor House, then Cornerstone. We've always had Shelter Plus Care, which is now called Permanent Supportive Housing. To the greatest extent possible in an organization with our capacity, we've tried to serve homeless. Trinity is an extension of that.

Comer Winterer: How do you define low-income populations?

Davidson: HUD programs concentrate on 50% AMI or below and Tax Credit programs focus on 60% AMI or below. At Trinity with income averaging, we'll be able to serve 70% AMI there. At Silvertip we can go up to 120% AMI. We've tried to broaden the income range we serve, but we're confined by regulations.

McGrath: We define population in many ways – seniors, disabled, veterans, our neighbors, coworkers, parents, children. We do serve a disproportionate number of Native Americans.

Bangs: We've changed as the community needs changed. We sold off houses that weren't needed, and now we're building larger units needed at Villagio. As the needs have changed, it didn't take us long to make that shift.

Peterson: Also the scattered site nature of our work ties back to the neighborhood concept. Could the number of evictions be looked at as a measure?

Melton: It depends on how you want to define eviction. We terminate lease agreements and a lot of times they move out before the eviction court process. It's fairly rare that we get all the way to eviction.

McGrath: It might be easier to look at it from reverse and look at length of tenancy.

Peterson: I'll organize this in some way and bring it back next month. Being able to look at this data historically and what we've done in the past will help us discuss what we should do in the future.

VIII. Other Matters:

None

- I. Adjournment: The regular meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.

Kaia Peterson, Board Vice Chair

Lori Davidson, Executive Director