

Missoula Housing Authority Board

Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, June 21st, 2023

- MINUTES-

Members Present: Sam Oliver, Kaia Peterson, Jack Richards, Sheena Comer Winterer,
Jennifer Cerutti, Colin Bangs
Via Zoom: Teigan Avery

Members Absent: Kila Shields

Staff Present: Mary Melton, Debbie Hibbits, Evan Hauser, Adam Ragsdale
Via Zoom: Ryan Sudbury

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

II. Attendance: See above

III. Approval of Minutes: Regular Board Meeting – May 17, 2023
Comer Winterer: Moves
Cerutti: 2nd
Approved

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. Discussion of Draft Resolution Defining Procurement Limits for Executive Director

Oliver: I made a few small obvious edits and placed it in the packet for your review/
approval for ratification.

Peterson: If we feel good about it, we can put it on the agenda for ratification next
month?

Oliver: I can send it in a separate email to board members for review.

Peterson: Does that work for everyone to have one last review and have it ready for
ratification next month? We will need any comments back a week prior to the July
board meeting.

b. Discussion of Legislative Session 2023 Housing Initiatives

Oliver: In the board packet we have included the best summary available at the time for what had come out of the session. House Bill 819 was ratified. Puts \$175mil towards housing initiatives and authorizes another \$50mil for low interest loans for developers with multifamily affordable housing projects. Happy to see something make it across the finish line here.

Peterson: We were tracking HB819 closely. \$100 mil for infrastructure, \$50mil for home ownership, and \$50mil for the coal trust fund(multifamily affordable development). The Board of Housing is ready to start distributing those funds when people start applying, which is exciting. I think it will be the fastest money to get out on the ground and then the home ownership piece there are still a lot of questions on how that will be structured and implemented. More to come on that.

Oliver: There was a focus on zoning reform for developers to make things easier. There seems to be a couple of opposing views between city and state. Nothing that was done looks attractive to MHA as far as funding.

Peterson: The coal trust money requires you to pay property taxes on any project and given that MHA properties are tax exempt this funding would not be applicable to our organization. We would have to decide for some reason that there was a project where it made sense to pay property taxes and then you could utilize those dollars. Many advocates and organizations were hoping there would be more money for social services and for supportive housing and really nothing came out of the session to support that need. For HB819 if you read the whereas portion, I think there is some really powerful language in there that sets precedents for recognizing affordable and obtainable housing as a public good in Montana. Something that is critical for communities critical for economic vitality, and that framing is not something that we have seen codified in state regulation historically and I think that is a huge win. Up until the first \$15mil was allocated 4 years ago there was zero state money for housing. The \$200mil may seem small comparatively but it is a huge step when you look at the lack of state investment in this sector historically.

Oliver: The folks that are not satisfied with the outcomes realize that they need to be louder, more involved, and really band together to advocate. Hoping for big things next time.

c. Review of Dayspring Restoration's request for MHA inclusion on marketing

Oliver: Has come to us because they have put tother some marketing information and would like to use MHA as a case study locally and potentially nationally. I have made some edits and the management team has reviewed the document before we brought it to you today. We do not owe this company anything but frankly we want to maintain the relationship we have with them, and they do give us preferential treatment, especially with weather-related events at our properties because we are such a large account.

Comer Winterer: What is their intent?

Oliver: Probably about a page case study.

Bangs: In my experience with Dayspring if there is a company that we want to recognize as being superior they definitely are. It is a good reflection on us that they would ask.

Peterson: Ultimately, I think this is Sam and the staff's decision. I think it is great to recognize partnerships with other local businesses and I do not have any concerns. I appreciate how thoughtful you have been about it.

d. National Museum of Forest Service History

Oliver: The owner and design team are working together to fortify their bid for the design drawings. When they came back this go around their numbers jumped considerably so much so that the project is in question where bid sits right now. We are meeting as a team to discuss other options. It is a really tricky thing right now across the entire industry with costs what they are. The Museum does have a cap on the budget and do not feel they can go back and raise more money. They have a ton of donated materials and raw lumber, and we need to get going on this building. It is tough right now, but we will get through it and hopefully bring better news next month.

e. Closeout of Public Housing

Oliver: We did see another step. We received a de-obligation letter. They de-obligated ½ a million dollars from our agency. We don't know what kind of final letter there is, but we do have a contact and check in about once a month. I want to ask for a trophy or something after all the work it took.

Peterson: I know others are looking to you all as an example of this process.

f. Villagio Update

Oliver: Building A has been turned over to us. We had a staff meeting out there last week which was wonderful. It is a beautiful project. We are moving on the landscaping and playground, but we are essentially good to go. They have moved the active construction site to building B only. Shoutout to our MHA team who have been doing some real heavy lifting when it comes to screening and leasing process.

Hauser: A moving truck was out front yesterday which is always great to see. Building systems have been working great. There was a gentleman that crashed his car further up the road which shut down power and the generators kicked on immediately. We are scheduled to perform our first round of interior punches on building B. Minor touch ups are needed on the exterior of A.

Comer Winterer: Is there a way to know where the tenants are coming from?

Melton: We can track that. It is good information for us as well. The 2 tenants in there currently were previously houseless. We have a 3rd moving in tomorrow. There are 32 project-based vouchers between the 2 buildings, and we have 20 files that have been sent up to Blueline for those thus far and a number of those are houseless people. A lot of these units are below 30% adjusted monthly income but we are seeing these fill up. It is a fortunate yet unfortunate situation.

Oliver: Sounds like some of the folks that need it most are getting it first.

g. Trinity Update

Oliver: Cooley is full, and Stoddard is well on its way. Recently we started leasing the workforce housing portion of Maple Street Flats. As the trades finish up larger parts of this it pushes them towards what is left which is the permanent supportive housing wing. It looks like we will have that full in no time which we all know is a giant need in this community. We are happy to be going to exterior punch list shortly.

Hauser: Majority of the radon testing was just completed on both sites. Still working through problem solving. Hopefully we have a lot of those resolved tomorrow. Things are just heating up now. They are moving fairly quickly with Blue Heron given that is a fraction of the size of the workforce housing.

Comer Winterer: Any high radon readings?

Hauser: We have not received the results yet.

Oliver: Typically, it is a check box deal but, in this instance, it was a lender requirement and effects payments. We had an issue with some of the thresholds in the units after it rained heavily water came into the units.

Hauser: That is one of the design issues I was referring to that we are working through right now. We are trying to come up with some long-term solutions.

h. Speedway & 819 Stoddard

Oliver: Still hanging out there as we know, waiting for our official closeout. Sarah might be very valuable there with her grant writing background. She might be able to get us a couple of projects going there.

i. Strategic Planning

Oliver: The three we left on there one was agency wide succession planning by department, and I will start meeting with department heads and talking about what that looks like. We are strategizing and we know we have a couple of staff members we would like to hire in the next year or so to really fortify our foundation. There will be more to come on that. The next was an open discussion about rebranding and the third item was to formalize our annual presentation to the city and county. We will be leaving those on here for further discussion.

Peterson: I think we were going to wait to get through city budgeting before we reached out but if you wouldn't mind, Sam, taking the lead and ccing me. I think it is nice to have a little lead time so we can really put together a solid presentation. Really looking on your lead with County as well since you have ongoing contact with them.

Comer Winterer: We should have a really good presentation this year in light of all we have accomplished.

Peterson: The Housing Trust Fund just did a presentation to the housing committee of council, and it was great to see all the different projects that have been funded in a 2-year lookback. There is a lot of great work happening. They did a wonderful job of being proactive about the budgeting process this year to create a strong case to present to the council.

Oliver: We did have a small budget ask for the navigation center at Blue Heron. Just south of \$200,000 and we did go in for that myself, PHC, Homeward, and All Nations went and spoke to the mayor about it. He asked about the 5-year history of the project, and it was great to bring him up to speed on the entire project.

Comer Winterer: As this role out and the new tax assessments are coming out this is setting up for a big clash.

Oliver: I spoke with a city official whose taxes are more than her retired mothers with a 2-million-dollar home in San Diego.

Peterson: I have heard rumors the governor may start looking at a sales tax. It is clear that we are strapped in terms of resources and a change in revenue would lead to a decrease property tax. It is hard to tie affordable housing to the increase in property taxes which in turn increases the costs of rent. We have very few avenues to go down.

VIII. Other Matters: None

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm

W. Samuel Oliver

Sam Oliver, Executive Director

Kaia Peterson, Board Chair