

MELROSE HOUSING AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
AUGUST 13, 2024
PUBLIC SESSION

A regular meeting of the Melrose Housing Authority was held on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, in the main office of the Melrose Housing Authority, C.J. McCarthy building at 910 Main Street, Melrose, Massachusetts 02176 at 7:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Ellen Connolly	Present
Dana LeWinter	Present
Charlie Harak	Present
Doreen Breland	Present

Commissioner Steven Douglas was absent.

Martin Corona, Executive Director, was also present as well as Lisa Young, Executive Assistant, who served as Clerk.

Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared a quorum present.

2. Minutes Pending Adoption

The Board of Commissioners reviewed and discussed the July 2, 2024, MHA Regular board meeting minutes. Upon a motion by Dana LeWinter, duly seconded by Doreen Breland, and unanimously approved, the board voted to approve the July 2, 2024, MHA Regular board meeting minutes. Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared the AYES have it.

Executive Director, Martin Corona presented the board with the audit report at the last board meeting and wanted to follow up with some of the findings the MHA received. The MHA had a deficit because the 2023 bills were all paid in advance. Martin stated the MHA will refrain from doing this again. Another finding was the MHA needing an IT Disaster Recovery plan. Martin stated he will begin to work on this with IT.

3. Tenant Association Representative Participation

The Board of Commissioners welcomed the new Tenant representative, Doreen Breland, who is a resident of the C.J. McCarthy building. Ms. Breland did not have any specific items to address but said she has been hearing from other residents and hopes to visit the Steele house in the next few days. Doreen is happy with some of the changes that the MHA has made in recent months. Doreen thanked the board for welcoming her.

4. Communications

- (i) Massachusetts Union of Public Housing residents meeting

Executive Director, Martin Corona informed the board that a representative from the Massachusetts Union of Public Housing Residents came out to meet with residents of both the McCarthy and Steele House buildings to discuss how to form a LTO (Local Tenant Organization).

There are several residents from the McCarthy building who have formed a tenant group and are going through the process of becoming an LTO with the Massachusetts Union of Public Housing residents. These residents are forming by-laws and will be placing ballot boxes throughout the buildings so residents can vote on the members.

5. Report of the Executive Director

- a. State-Aided Elderly /Handicapped Programs 667-1 & 2
Elderly/Family Housing 667/705/AHVP

- (i.) July 2024 Vacancy Report

As of July 31, 2024, there were two move-outs at the Steele house and one new move-in at the Steele house. There was one move-in at the McCarthy building.

A new family will be moving into 446 Lebanon St, Unit 1 this week. Martin Corona hopes to provide the board with the scopes of services for 969 Main St. and 487 Lebanon St. at the next board meeting.

Special Needs Housing Program (689)

Nothing to Report

b. Rental Assistance (Section 8/MRVP/DMH/PBV)

(i.) September 1, 2024, Report

As of August 1, 2024, there are 231 of 237 HCV (Housing Choice Voucher) vouchers leased up for the Section 8 program. Martin Corona informed the board that HUD (Housing & Urban Development) (Housing & Urban Development) has put out a Shortfall Action Plan because HUD anticipates a funding shortage. HUD said MHA would have a \$36,000 deficit by the end of the year if MHA continues to issue vouchers, so Martin Corona has completed an application for shortfall funding to cover the \$36,000 deficit. Martin said the deficit was due to rent increases above the payment standards and overpayments. HUD is trying to recapture any overpayments to try and recover some of the funds.

There are 57 out of 57 PBV (Project Based Voucher) vouchers leased up between the Levi Gould and the Fuller House. Reports were received and placed on file.

c. Financial Administrator's Report

Martin Corona said he spoke with someone about the solar credits on the National Grid bills. MHA has credits that they cannot access. The representative said MHA would receive a check for a quarter of a million dollars within six weeks.

(i) Approval of Disbursements- June 2024

The board reviewed and discussed the disbursements for June 2024. Upon a motion by Charlie Harak, duly seconded by Dana LeWinter, and unanimously approved, the board voted to approve the June 2024 disbursements in the amount of \$694,083.31. Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared the AYES have it.

(ii) Review of Disbursements- July 2024

The board reviewed and discussed the July 2024 disbursements. The July 2024 disbursements will be approved at next month's board meeting. Report was received and placed on file.

d. Personnel

(i) Hiring of Public Housing Coordinator

Executive Director, Martin Corona informed the board that he has offered the Public Housing Coordinator position to Ms. Tracy Breedon. Martin will be scheduling Tracy for training that she will need. Tracy is going to start at the MHA on Monday, August 26, 2024.

e. All other matters that may be presented

(i) Discussion on Annual Plan meeting

The MHA will have its Annual Plan meeting on Tuesday, September 10, 2024. Martin Corona provided the board with copies of the annual plan for review. This is a public meeting. The MHA's annual plan can be viewed online.

(ii) Review/discussion of MHA policies

One policy Executive Director, Martin Corona, would like to create is an Anti-Bullying policy for residents. Commissioner Charlie Harak stated that the Smoking policy should also be reviewed and updated. Martin Corona would like to table this discussion when there is more time to review the current MHA policies. The board agreed to table this discussion for a future board meeting.

(ii) Energy contract

The MHA's energy contract is up for renewal with Direct Energy and Martin Corona is scheduled to meet with Al Frazier from Direct Energy next week to discuss a new contract. Martin will report back to the board at the next meeting.

6. Report of the Maintenance Department

(i) July 2024 Report

The Board reviewed the Maintenance report for July 2024. The maintenance staff are working in one of the affordable housing units and should finish next week. Maintenance has responded to all work orders within 48 hours. Report was received and placed on file.

7. Report of Committees

Nothing to Report

8. Unfinished Business

(i) LPI Publishing (MHA newsletter)

Executive Director, Martin Corona has discussed publishing a monthly newsletter to be distributed to all residents. LPI Publishing is a group Martin has been working with and LPI has provided Martin with answers to the board's questions. LPI does not provide one-year contracts and cannot make an agreement for less than three years. LPI did say that once the initial 3-year contract is up, one-year contracts would be available. LPI will deliver the newsletters to MHA within seven business days guaranteed. The board would like to see an updated contract before signing with LPI Publishing.

9. New Business

Nothing to Report

10. Litigation or Possible Litigation

Nothing to Report

11. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Dana LeWinter, duly seconded by Doreen Breland, and unanimously approved, the Board voted to adjourn the MHA Regular Public Board Meeting at 8:35 p.m. Chairperson Connolly declared the AYES have it. The next MHA Regular Public Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Martin Corona, Executive Director, J.D., P.H.M.