MELROSE HOUSING AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 10, 2024

PUBLIC SESSION

A regular meeting of the Melrose Authority was held on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, in the main office of the Melrose Housing Authority, C.J. McCarthy building at 910 Main Street, Melrose, Massachusetts 02176 at 7:30pm.

1. Roll Call

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

Martin Corona, Executive Director, was also present as well as Susan Tuminelli, CHAMP Coordinator, who served as clerk.

Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared a quorum present.

2. Minutes Pending Adoption:

- Minutes from November 12, 2024, MHA Regular Board Meeting

The Board of Commissioners reviewed and discussed the November 12, 2024, MHA Regular board meeting minutes. Upon a motion by Commissioner Charlie Harak, duly seconded by Commissioner Dana LeWinter, and unanimously approved, the board voted to approve the November 12, 2024, MHA Regular board meeting minutes. Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared the AYES have it.

3. Tenant Association and Public Comments:

McCarthy Tenant representative/Commissioner Doreen Breland brought up the AED/defibrillator in both McCarthy and Steele. This is of interest to the tenants and they would like to learn to use this. Commissioner Doreen Breeland got ahold of the health department and asked if they would be willing to come and do a demonstration for us. Martin Corona stated this matter is on the agenda as item 5g, looking at the reinstallation of the defibrillators and getting training. Commissioner Doreen Breland stated everything has been positive in regards to the holiday celebrations, tenants are having a tough time at the McCarthy building without Betsy Kantt but they are doing what they can to keep everyone in good spirits.

- Recognition of McCarthy and Steele Tenant Associations

The McCarthy Tenant Association and the Steele House Community Tenant Association are requesting to be recognized as valid LTO's with official names and by-laws. Commissioner Charlie Harak moved to recognize the McCarthy Tenants Association and the Steele House Community Tenant Association as official associations, Chairman Dana LeWinter seconded the recognition of both tenant associations. Chairperson Ellen Connolly asked all in favor, the AYES have it. Martin Corona informed the board that Irene Doyle has resigned as President of the McCarthy Tenant Association and Doreen Dillon is now the acting interim President.

- Approval of Steele TA By-Laws

Approval of the McCarthy Association by-laws was done at last month's meeting. The Steele Association is looking for approval of their by-laws at this meeting. Chairperson Ellen Connolly read the by-laws and had some thoughts. In the Steele Association by-laws it lists there is an election and people are elected for 3 years. In the McCarthy by-laws there is not a term of office. Martin Corona suggested an amendment be added to the McCarthy by-laws stating the 3-year term. Chairperson Ellen Connolly stated there was a petty cash fund of $250 in the McCarthy by-laws but not in the Steele by-laws. The Steele Association stated they are not comfortable with a petty cash fund and feel safer with a reimbursement system. Chairperson Ellen Connolly commented she is fine with their decision but just wanted to mention it in case it was an oversight. At the end of the year the associations will be submitting their receipts and their accounting to be audited and ensure it is consistent with the purpose of the associations.

- Approval of Tenant Association FY2025 Budget

The budget submitted for the Steele Tenant Association is $3875. The budget submitted for the McCarthy Tenant Association is $3750.

At this time, Chairperson Ellen Connolly asked for a motion to suspend the regular minutes and open to public participation. Commissioner Dana LeWinter made the motion and Commissioner Charlie Harak seconded. Chairperson Ellen Connolly stated that the AYES have it.

Gail Gaudreau stated when the leaves were cleaned up by the landscaper at the McCarthy building it was an incredibly windy day and the leaves were blowing back into the carports. She asked if the landscaper would return to clean these leaves. Martin Corona stated the company will not come back but our maintenance department will take care of this clean-up before the weeks end.

Doren Dillon asked for a letter of recognition for the tenant's associations. Martin Corona stated he would provide the letter.

Julie Malonson asked if they were getting $3875 for fiscal year ending 2024 and Martin stated this can be discussed. Julie stated they would be getting the MassUnion involved regarding this issue. The Steele Association felt they should get this money. Commissioner Charlie Harak asked if it was possible to provide a pro-rated amount in order to provide some of these funds to the associations. Martin Corona stated we have made some payments/investments that we are not deducting from these funds. We have installed Wi-Fi throughout the first floor of both buildings at a cost of about $3,500 and the McCarthy Tenant Association purchased chairs that they were reimbursed for. This discussion will be continued.

Leo Pagliarulo informed the board that the Steele Association has a U-Tube channel where they hope to interview some local politicians, the Chief of Police, the Chief of the Fire Department and to do some cooking demonstrations. They also have a Facebook page. They are also looking into joining the Melrose Chamber of Commerce.

Chairperson Ellen Connolly asked for a motion to close the public participation and return to the agenda. Motion made by Commissioner Dana LeWinter and seconded by Commissioner Charlie Harak.

4. **Communications:** (Nothing to Report)

5. **MHA Program Management/Operations Report (Executive Director Report):**

a. *CHAMP Admission/Intake/Screening*:

- Update on Applicant Processing

We have no vacancies at this time but we are still processing applicants in anticipation of some openings.

b. State-Aided Elderly/Handicapped Programs (667-1)- Elderly/Family Housing (667/705):

- Rent Collection Report (November 2024)

The Rent Collection Report is as of November 30 for the most part, possibly due to the holidays, there are some arrearages in the family development. The McCarthy building tenant in arrears has paid through RAFT. Commissioner Charlie Harak questioned a tenant at the Steele building paying $5.00 a month in rent but owes $1,000. Martin will look into this situation. The other Steele building delinquency is for a 12-month period and we are awaiting a court date.

- Vacancy Report (November 2024)

2 units are off-line in McCarthy. We will be looking at these two units after this rain tonight to see what happens in those units. We have some ideas of how to make these units handicapped-accessible by doing tub-cuts and other improvements while they are off-line.
2 family units are offline – These units are currently under mod right now, there are capital repairs being done.
1 unit off-line at Steele seems to be a plumbing issue. This situation is being investigated and it could possibly be a venting issue.

- EOHLC Subsidy Agreement Signed from June 2025-December 2030

This 5-year EOHLC Subsidy Agreement contract has been signed.

c. Special Needs Housing Program (689): (Nothing to Report)

d. Maintenance Department:

- November 2024 Work Order Report

The work order report shows nothing major. There was a Steele building smoke alarm issue. This particular issue raises a red flag not only for smoking but also they may be smoking more than cigarettes. We got an alert at this unit for disconnecting the smoke detector. We are addressing this issue.

e. Rental Assistance (Section 8/MRVP/AHVP/DMH):

- Approval of Manette Donovan's contract

Included in this packet is an amended fee agreement. Manette Donovan amended her contract to increase her hourly rate from $225 to $245. Commissioner Charlie Harak moved to approve Manette Donovan's contract change that is in the board packet. Commissioner Dana LeWinter seconded. Chairperson Ellen Connolly stated the AYES have it.

- November 2024, report

- FSS Grant Submission-

We are still waiting for approval of the FSS Grant Submission. We are hoping for 2025 to set some goals for this program. This funding is for the coordinator. It funds the position.

- HCV Shortfall Request Approved

The Shortfall Request was approved and should be coming in late December. We are not leasing any new applicants for this year. We hope to be issuing vouchers in January 2025. We have approximately 26 vouchers that we need to issue. We will be sending out new letters requesting information to start the screening process.

- Researching HCV Program Opportunities

There are a couple of NOFAs that are being looked at. One is the Foster Youth to Independence Program and the other is the Family Reunification Program. These are open and we may be able to apply. These are out of HUD. These both pertain to specialized populations. The Foster Youth to Independence Program is for 18 to 24 year old individuals who have aged out of foster care and are homeless. They could get an HCV for up to 3 years with supportive services. The Family Reunification Program is for families working to be reunited with their children.

Martin Corona looked at the 28 Greenwood project. Met with City Planner and the contractor separately. This looks to be an interesting project and may be an opportunity for us. We might have to wait a little bit. The Housing Innovation Fund through EOHLC preapplication deadline is on Thursday. The developer is looking to partner with someone. The whole point in this is to develop a relationship and in-roads in the city. We have 17 units that could possibly be put into a 40B and save the state money for capital improvements on the 8 developments. Martin Corona is just looking into developing a public/private partnership. Chairperson Ellen Connolly is concerned about this project and the possible water/flooding issues that might occur at the Steele building due to the development of this land. The city was requiring a water study be done and the board has not seen a completed study.

f. *Financial Administrator's report:*

- Approval of Disbursements- October 2024

Commissioner Charlie Harak moved to approve October disbursements in the total amount of $664,664.09, seconded by Commissioner Dana LeWinter. Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared the AYES have it.

- Review of Disbursements- November 2024

The Baystate Wildlife charge will be adjusted and moved to the Corporation. This issue was at Hurd Street. The mixing valve was replaced at the McCarthy building. It was billed on 12/3/2024 and done on 11/22/2024 and we have had no hot water issues at the McCarthy building since the replacement.

g. *All Other Matters that May Be Presented:*

- Re-installation of Defibrillators and Training on Use of Them
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Based on recommendations by residents we are working on reinstalling the defibrillators and getting training on how to use them.

- Completed Trainings (PMR, SEMAP, HCV Termination, VAWA, etc.)

The staff have completed training in PMR, SEMAP, HCV termination, VAWA and CHAMP during this month.

- MBI Broadband Initiative

Got an email regarding the MBI Broadband Initiative and we should be getting an answer within 2 weeks. This is to install all the CAT 6 wires and internet in every individual apartment. The money for this is coming from the Mass Broad Band Institute. They are administering these funds.

- WIFI installed in Community Rooms
-

WIFI has been installed in the community rooms at both buildings.

- Inaugural Newsletter set for January 1, 2025

We are also set to send out our inaugural newsletter for January 1, 2025. We are in the process of taking pictures and putting all the information in to keep the tenants informed of all we are offering. We are looking to open up a resident portal through PHA Web for residents to pay their rent, put in work orders, and update their own contact information. We are looking to partner with SDM foundation for computer training for residents.

6. **Report of Committees:** (Nothing to Report)

7. **Unfinished Business:**

- Approval of Energy Rate Contract

Received an email from Al Fraser and the rates did increase slightly from last month. Currently right now 12 months is at a rate of .11684 - 24 months is at a rate of .12011. When we met last month on November 12, 2024 it was at .11375. It has increased over the last 24 months. Our contract runs out December 31, 2024. Board approval is needed for another 24 months. Commissioner Charlie Harak asked what is the meaning of kilowatt hour numbers. Martin Corona has not received an answer yet. Commissioner Charlie Harak stated he cannot vote for approval until he knows the meaning of the kilowatt hour numbers. Commissioner Dana LeWinter suggested a special virtual meeting regarding this issue. Martin Corona will follow up and get the answer.

Martin Corona supplied this answer on December 11, 2024 to Commissioner Charlie Harak's question:
The Contract Volumes will be used for determining early termination damages under this Contract. Buyer is not otherwise obligated to accept/consume the Contract Volumes on a monthly or annual basis.

8. **New Business**

- Certify/Approve EOHLC Quarter-End Report-9/30/2024

We are required to do affirmative action goals. We have met our goals. We have submitted our Fair Housing Marketing Plan and this has all been approved.

Next is the wage match system for state-aided housing. Tracy Breeden is new and does not have access to this. The board needs to vote in order to submit her name. Commissioner Charlie Harak moved to give Tracy Breeden access to the wage match system. All in favor, the AYES have it.

On December 9, 2024 Bank of America sent our office notification to update our credit card information. Jim Holt is still listed. Melrose Housing Authority needs to update the contact information. Board signatures are needed to add Kathleen Marx and Martin Corona.

9. **Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Charlie Harak duly seconded by Commissioner Dana LeWinter and unanimously approved, the Board voted to adjourn the MHA Regular Public Board Meeting at 8:25pm. Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared the AYES have it.

**The next MHA Regular Public Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.*