

MELROSE HOUSING AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 14, 2025

PUBLIC SESSION

A regular meeting of the Melrose Authority was held on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, in the community room of the Julian Steele building at 1 Nason Drive, Melrose, Massachusetts 02176 at 7:30pm.

1. Roll Call

Ellen Connolly	Present
Dana LeWinter	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 December 10, 2024, MHA Regular Board Meeting

The Board of Commissioners reviewed and discussed the December 10, 2024, MHA Regular board meeting minutes. Upon a motion by Commissioner Dana LeWinter, duly seconded by Commissioner Doreen Breland, and unanimously approved, the board voted to approve the December 10, 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 stated some of the issues she was going to speak about had already been discussed/resolved with Martin Corona. First someone was ringing her bell in the early morning hours, and she was frightened and felt unsafe. She has never felt unsafe before. She is wondering if there is a video system that could be used in the front lobby. The heat in the lunchroom at the McCarthy building is an issue. She was informed that this is being worked on. There was a question on salting and pre-treating the parking lots. This is currently being done by Maintenance. Some residents are electronically challenged and concerned they won't be able to access new information. Reassurance was given that updates will still be given in written form along with the new ability to access information on-line using the new tenant portal. Bathroom door locks in the handicapped stall in the community room need to be looked at. A work order was entered for this. Martin Corona spoke about some of these issues, explaining the newsletter will be used to get information to the tenants and the residents themselves are our best line of defense when it comes to someone trying to enter the building. Don't buzz just anyone in.

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

Leo Pagliaro, Steele House Tenant Association president, stated he is working in partnership with Martin Corona and the housing authority on the concerns of the residents. The heat in the community room is also an issue at the Steele building. Covers on the A/C's have helped. Another issue is two benches under the building were removed last year and never replaced. The remaining two benches are in disrepair. Tenants would like this area to look more presentable. Tenants feel it is taking too long to have the washing machines serviced. Tenants are also not following the rules regarding washing machine use. The rules in the laundry room are only in English and that will be addressed immediately. Patty Nardone was introduced as the newly elected secretary for the Steele Tenant Association. Martin Corona stated many of these concerns are on the agenda this evening. Martin assured the tenants that the Housing Authority notices these issues and we are listening to the tenants and currently working on all of these concerns.

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 Doreen Breland.

4. 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 100 applicants in anticipation of some openings.

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

- Rent Collection Report (December 2024)

The rent collection in the month of December is always difficult, especially for the family units. We are in the legal process with two tenants in the elderly/disabled program.

- Vacancy Report (December 2024)

One unit is off-line in the Steele building. We are doing a flushing program for the drains in both buildings, and we are hoping this fixes the plumbing issue with this unit. There are currently two offline units at the McCarthy building. 969 Main Street, 2nd floor is a vacant family unit. The state is putting a lot of money into this project.

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

d. Maintenance Department

- December 2024 Work Order Report

There are 257 work orders on the December Work Order Report which is a combination of emergency/urgent/routine work orders. We are on top of the emergency work orders. We have had a cold snap, and this has resulted in some heat calls. We have addressed every work order.

- Lebanon Street bathroom renovation has been completed.
- East Wyoming Street-bathroom renovation will start in January 2025 – This project is under \$10,000.
- Scheduled flushing of drains at both McCarthy and Steele is scheduled for January 2025

There have been a lot of calls at the McCarthy building regarding slow drains and clogs. Due to this we have scheduled the jet flushing of the main drains at both buildings.

- Painted MVES RSC office at McCarthy.
- Obtaining quotes for Steele Community room water infiltration repair

We have a water infiltration issue here at the Steele building. It has been going on for several years. We are obtaining quotes to deal with this issue.

Commissioner Dana LeWinter was very impressed with our snow removal. She was walking through the area after the recent snowstorm and noticed our property was in much better condition than the surrounding properties.

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

- December 2024 report - We are not issuing any new vouchers at this time.
- FSS grant submission – Our FSS grant submission was approved.
- HCV shortfall update – The shortfall is still in effect.
- Approval of FY 2025 FMRs for MSAs outside of Boston/Cambridge

Commissioner Dana LeWinter made a motion to adopt the FY 2025 FMRs for the Section 8 HCV program effective January 1, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Steven Douglas. Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared the AYES have it.

f. Financial Administrator's report:

- Approval of Disbursements – November 2024

Commissioner Dana LeWinter moved to approve the November disbursements in the total amount of \$405,934.25, seconded by Commissioner Doreen Breland. The cash disbursements for November are accepted.

- Review of Disbursements – December 2024

Chairperson Ellen Connolly asked if we are still paying AES. Marting Coroner stated we are paying a portion to AES as they are our solar provider, and we also pay a portion to National Grid. Both tenant associations got their approved budget payments. Leo Pagliarulo, Steele Tenant Association president, is approved to start representing the family units. There are 17 family units at \$25 per unit. The association wants to include them in the events at the Steele House. They will be eligible to vote and also to run for office.

g. All Other Matters that May be Presented:

- Training for Defibrillators

Patrick Walsh is reaching out to a fire fighter recommended by MVES to do defibrillator training. Once we have the date, we will notify the tenants. Commissioner Doreen Breland scheduled a Narcan training for residents on February 12, 2025.

- Completed Staff Trainings

The staff completed training for winter guidance and HCV utilization.

- MBI Broadband Retrofit Grant

We have been preliminarily approved, hopefully we can move on to the next step.

- Submission of 2025 Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program

Background testing is going on now measuring our security. Martin Corona will be meeting next week to go over their findings.

- Inaugural Newsletter deliver January 7, 2025

We are very excited about the newsletter. Hopefully the tenants' association will contribute to the newsletter. All the feedback was very positive.

- PHA-Web Portal

The resident PHA-Web Portal enrollment letter was delivered on 1/10/2025. Residents now have the ability to look at their accounts. They can continue to call the office but now they have the ability to put in their own work orders and submit paperwork.

- MVES RSC at McCarthy Community

Unfortunately, the gentleman who was offered the job has withdrawn his acceptance. MVES is still looking to fill this position.

- Laundry room proposal

The current contract with Automatic Laundry is up. We are waiting for a proposal from Automatic Laundry and MAC Grays. We will compare the proposals. We are going to clarify the services due to complaints about the vents and to possibly make the dryers higher so it will be easier for the tenants to retrieve their clothes.

5. New Business

- Marcum, Auditor, requests for the next BOC meeting to be held on February 25, 2025

6. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Commissioner Dana LeWinter duly seconded by Commissioner Doreen Breland and unanimously approved, the board voted to adjourn the MHA Regular Public Board meeting at 8:15pm. Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared the AYES have it.