

**MELROSE HOUSING AUTHORITY
910 MAIN STREET
MELROSE, MASSACHUSETTS 02176
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2025
7:30 PM**

RECEIVED

By City Clerks Office at 9:52 am, Aug 21, 2025

PUBLIC SESSION AGENDA

A regular meeting of the Melrose Authority was held on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, 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
Steven Douglas	Present
Dana LeWinter	Present
Charlie Harak	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 March 11, 2025, MHA Regular Board Meeting

The board of commissioners reviewed and discussed the March 11, 2025, MHA Regular board meeting minutes. Upon a motion by Commissioner Doreen Breland, duly seconded by Commissioner Charlie Harak, and unanimously approved, the board voted to approve the March 11, 2025, MHA Regular board meeting minutes. Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared the AYES have it.

3. Tenant Association and Public Comments:

Commissioner/Tenant Representative Doreen Breland handed out a list of concerns/observations for both buildings. For the McCarthy building there was concern about the vestibule lights (maintenance has already taken care of this issue), doors on each floor auto shut or close easily (maintenance will look into this issue), and a damaged screen in the screen house needs to be replaced (a work order will be entered for this). For the Steele building the community room bathroom stall locks need to be fixed (maintenance has already taken care of this issue), request of possibly getting a hot and cold bubbler for the community room (maintenance will look into this), and when Commissioner/Tenant Representative Doreen Breland was in the community room on 4/7/2025 she felt there was an odor of marijuana.

Martin Corona informed the board that at the last board meeting a request was made for additional chairs and an additional barrel, both have been purchased and added to the McCarthy community room. We have been approved by Action Inc. We are now waiting for a meeting to be scheduled, and they will assess our properties. The solar credits are currently at 89,500 in credits and these credits will grow until the fall because we will be using less due to the weather.

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

Elena Black from the Steele House Community Tenant Association, spoke about Helen Blinstrub's passing. Helen was a resident and former president of the Tenant Association. Some of Helen's students would like to provide plants for the garden area and plant them in memory of Helen. There was also discussion of problems with Automatic Laundry and their response to calls about broken machines. There was also a request for cameras in the laundry room. Automatic laundry will not provide cameras, this would be a Melrose Housing issue and will be researched.

Gail Gaudreau from the McCarthy Tenant Association spoke about the very dirty oven in the community room. Martin Corona informed the board that he was meeting with Mystic Valley Elder Services tomorrow and he will speak to them about the oven that they use for lunch. Gail spoke about the strong smell of cigarette smoke and cooking smells in the hallway on the third floor. Air fresheners will be placed in the hallways. Doreen Dillon, president of the McCarthy Tenant Association, told the board that many of the residents have expressed appreciation for the additional chairs. Barbara Burns is a new officer on the McCarthy Tenant Association board, and she will be looking into getting some furniture donated to the McCarthy building. Martin Corona connected the McCarthy board with the TAP program and through them they were able to schedule Irish singers for an entertaining evening and have now scheduled a paint night. The residents appreciate Martin helping them find ways to get people out of their units and socializing. Martin arranged for the Mystic River Watershed Association

to come work with the union. They are now planning in July to have music and a cookout behind the McCarthy building and possibly even arranging some landscaping to the area behind the building.

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

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

a. CHAMP Admission/Intake/Screening:

- Update on Applicant Processing (225 applicants)

We currently have 4 wait-lists open and are processing 225 applicants.

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

- Rent Collection Report (March 2025)
- Vacancy Report (March 2025)

Rent collection has improved for this month. Anyone currently with an outstanding balance has been issued a 14-day notice or is in the legal process.

Currently at the McCarthy we have 4 open units but we do have people ready to move into these units. At the Steele building we had 2 units open that have been leased.

c. Maintenance Department:

- March 2025 Work Order Report

Per the work order report, we had 148 work orders this month. Maintenance now has time to do vacancies and cleaning. Martin hopes to have an annual report for next month's board meeting showing the total number of work orders for last year.

- Capital Improvement Projects Update
(McCarthy Window Replacement Update)
(Steele Community Room Roof Repair)
(EOHLC #178128: Electric System Engineering Services Withdrawal Notice)

This Thursday proposals are due for the McCarthy window project. The Steele community room roof will be done in April when the roofing company is finished at 87 West Wyoming. For project #178128, the electrical contractor withdrew from the project due to lack of personnel. They will now have to look for a new contractor.

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

- March 2025 Report
- HUD TYT and Projected Shortfall
- HUD-HCV Shortfall Meeting on April 16, 2025
- FSS Update – (Program Participants & Establish New Bank Account)
- HUD Recently Released 2025 FMRs

Nothing in Section 8 has changed from last month. The HUD 2-year tool and projected shortfall paperwork is included in the board packet. We are projected at \$485,000 as a deficit using April numbers. At the end of this year, we could be at an \$800,000 deficit. Next week on April 16, 2025, we have a meeting with HUD regarding the shortfall. We have to have an action plan on how to deal with this shortfall. We will use our Section 8 Administrative Plan as a guide on how to proceed. FSS is the Family Self Sufficiency program. We have a grant, and our goal is to have 25 people on the FSS program. Melrose has 8 participants, and we partner with Wakefield, and they have 3 participants. We need to establish a new bank account for those that leave the program and forfeit their funds. HUD has released the 2025 FMRs. We adopted the 2024 FMRs and we are keeping them until the April 16, 2025, meeting.

e. Financial Administrator's report:

- Approval of Disbursements- February 2025
- Review of Disbursements- March 2025

Commissioner Charlie Harak moved to approve the cash disbursements in February in total amount of \$1,629,320.29, seconded by Commissioner Doreen Breland. Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared the AYES have it.

f. All Other Matters that May Be Presented:

- MassHealth Education @ Steele and McCarthy
- Mass Senior Action Council Presented @ Steele
- MHA Resident Meeting (Steele & McCarthy) Held on March 26, 2025

5. New Business

- Steele Bench Dedication to H.B., Former SHCTA President

Commissioner Charlie Harak moved to approve the bench dedication, seconded by Commissioner Doreen Breland.

- New MHA Logo

Commissioner Dana LeWinter moved to approve the new MHA Logo, seconded by Commissioner Doreen Breland.

- Write-Offs/Collection Losses for 2024

Commissioner Charlie Harak moved to approve the write-offs/collection losses for 2024, seconded by Commissioner Dana LeWinter.

- Automatic Laundry Contract Approval

The contract includes all new machines, and the price will go up \$.25. Automatic Laundry came to the Steele building and gave a presentation and addressed the tenant's concerns. Commissioner Charlie Harak moved to approve the Automatic Laundry Contract with direction to the Executive Director to make sure the contract guarantees superior customer service and prompt response, seconded by Commissioner Dana LeWinter.

- Smart Doorbell Policy (Shared with Tenant Associations)

The new Smart Doorbell Policy was created by KP Law. The biggest issue with smart doorbells is the audio. This policy was shared with both tenant associations, and they approved the policy. Commissioner Dana LeWinter made a motion to accept the Smart Doorbell Policy, seconded by Commissioner Charlie Harak.

- EOHLIC PMR in May 2025

We have a Performance Management Review in May of 2025. The Auditors will be here May 1 and May 2, 2025.

- Cleaning Contract and Landscaping Contract Discussion

The Fuzzy Fiber contract has expired and Tony Colella, landscaper, will only be used twice a year. Maintenance is willing to do the cleaning with possibly having a contractor come in a couple times a year as needed for a deep clean. Our goal is to see what our capacity is internally before using a contractor.

- T.J., Steele Resident, 100th Birthday on 4/29/2025

We have a resident at the Steele building who will be turning 100 on April 29, 2025. MHA will work with the Steele community on a celebration and Martin Corona will reach out to the Mayor of Melrose to get a certificate. We also have a resident who will be turning 101 in May.

Chairperson Ellen Connolly recently had some discussions about tenants having disagreements. A point of emphasis should be marked in bold letters in the Memorandum Of Understanding about respect and personal interactions between all residents, between members of the tenant associations and residents, between board members, staff and anyone that comes into our buildings about the level of personal interaction and respect for each other's opinions. Chairperson Ellen Connolly suggested maybe bringing in Mass Union to emphasize this and have a training session on how to go about respecting each individual's rights and interactions between people. Martin Corona is still working on the draft MOU. Martin Corona and Tracy Breeden will be meeting with Mystic Valley Elder Services on April 9, 2025, and we hope to provide some workshops regarding civility, respect and some bullying and harassment.

6. 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 8:50 pm. Chairperson Ellen Connolly declared the AYES have it.

Commissioner Steven Douglas announced this would be his last board meeting. He is retiring.

**The next MHA Regular Public Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. at 910 Main Street, Melrose, MA. 02176*