



## **Minutes of the Board of Commissioners Meeting June 18, 2019**

### **MEETING CONVENED**

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners for MaineHousing convened on June 18, 2019 at the offices of MaineHousing, 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine. A notice of the meeting was published on June 7, 2019 in Central Maine newspapers.

Chair Lincoln Merrill called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The meeting convened with Commissioners Laurence Gross, Donna Talarico, Thomas Davis, Bonita Usher, State Treasurer Henry Beck, and Director Dan Brennan present. Commissioner Kevin Joseph was absent. There was a quorum present.

### **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE**

Guests and staff present for all or part of the meeting include: Sheryl Gregory, past Commissioner; Peter Merrill, Deputy Director; Tom Cary, Treasurer; Linda Uhl, Chief Counsel; Mark Wiesendanger, Director of Development; Daniel Drost, Director of Energy and Housing Services; Troy Fullmer, Manager of HEAP and Weatherization Services; Ruth Lawson-Stopps, Director of Homeless Initiatives; Karen Lawlor, Executive Administrator; Linda Grotton, Director of Audit and Compliance; Allison Gallagher, Director of the Housing Choice Voucher Department; Cara Courchesne, Communications Coordinator; Leah Bruns, Manager of Homeless Initiatives; and Gerrylynn Ricker, Paralegal and Note taker.

Chair Merrill introduced the new Board member, Bonita Usher.

### **ADOPT AGENDA**

Chair Merrill advised the Board Members that in addition to the items on the Agenda, a video will be shown of the progress at Edison Drive. *Commissioner Gross made a motion seconded by Commissioner Davis to adopt the June 18, 2019 agenda with that addition. The vote carried unanimously.*

### **APPROVE MINUTES OF MAY 21, 2019 MEETING**

*Commissioner Gross made a motion seconded by Commissioner Talarico to accept the May 21, 2019 minutes as written. The vote carried unanimously.*

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFLICTS**

Commissioner Gross advised the Board Members that he has received a lot of comments on the QAP from people he's met socially, mostly about the cost of construction. Chair Merrill stated his daughter purchased a home using our First Time Home Buyers program and that everything went smoothly.

### **CHAIR OF THE BOARD UPDATES**

None.

## **DIRECTOR UPDATES**

Director Brennan expressed appreciation for outgoing Board Member, Sherry Gregory. He said Ms. Gregory has served on our Board with class, dignity and grace. She has been a great mentor for Director Brennan over the years. Director Brennan presented Ms. Gregory with a plaque recognizing her seventeen years of service.

Director Brennan welcomed new Commissioner Bonita Usher.

Director Brennan showed the latest video of the progress on our new building at Edison Drive.

Director Brennan reported his activities and upcoming matters as follows:

- Met with Town of Chelsea officials to discuss their affordable housing issues.
- Attended ribbon cutting ceremonies at 62 Spring Street in Auburn and Hartley Block in downtown Lewiston. Representative Jared Golden attended the Hartley Block ceremony.
- Deputy Director Peter Merrill represented MaineHousing at a renovation/rehab of an existing property in Westbrook. Senator Collins also attended.
- MaineHousing All Staff Day was held on June 4<sup>th</sup>. The focus was perspectives and the new building.
- Attended Representative Golden's presentation on lead paint in Skowhegan. Our Lead and Housing Rehab Compliance Specialist, Kin Dydasco attended as well.
- Attended the National Low Income Housing Tax Credit Conference in San Francisco.
- Governor Mills signed the heat pump bill which is going to incent the installation of 100,000 heat pumps around the State. MaineHousing is participating and hopes to install 10,000 of those.
- Director Brennan has shared with the Board Members his vision plan for the next twelve months.
- Governor Mills signed the State budget and left our HOME fund intact. Deputy Director Peter Merrill was recognized for his efforts.
- The State Low Income Housing Tax Credit bill has been receiving nice reviews, however, it has not been signed yet. The 129<sup>th</sup> Legislature adjourns June 19, 2019.
- Senator King has introduced a bill to Congress to create a task force to study the effects on people who do not have stable housing and how that impacts other areas of their lives.
- MaineHousing's Clean-Up Day is Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Consolidated Plan public forums are underway. Today a forum is in Presque Isle. We have them scheduled for Bangor and Rockland.
- In July, Director Brennan will be going to the NCSHA Executive Director's Forum in Portland, Oregon as well as the Maine Affordable Public Housing Directors Forum in Fort Fairfield.

## **ADOPT CHAPTER 24 – HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RULE AND FY 2020 PROPOSED STATE PLAN**

Director of Energy and Housing Services, Daniel Drost reviewed the stakeholders' input and the comments that were received at the public hearings. Mr. Drost described the process in detail for new Commissioner Usher.

*Commissioner Gross made a motion on the Rule seconded by Treasurer Beck to repeal the existing Home Energy Assistance Program Rule, Chapter 24 of MaineHousing's rules, and replace it with the replacement Home Energy Assistance Program Rule as originally proposed and attached to the memo on adoption of the Home Energy Assistance Program Rule and Federal Fiscal Year 2020 State Plan from Chief Counsel to the Board of Commissioners dated June 12, 2019. The vote carried unanimously.*

*Commissioner Gross made a motion on the Plan seconded by Commissioner Davis to adopt the Federal Fiscal Year 2020 Home Energy Assistance Program State Plan as attached to the memo on adoption of the Home Energy Assistance Program Rule and Federal Fiscal Year 2020 State Plan from Chief Counsel to the Board of Commissioners dated June 12, 2019. The vote carried unanimously.*

### **ADOPT CHAPTER 16 – LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT PROGRAM**

Director of Development, Mark Wiesendanger introduced himself. He explained that comments were received until the close of business on May 31<sup>st</sup>. A summary of the comments and MaineHousing staff responses are at the end of the rule. The only changes we are making to the originally proposed rule are (1) deleting the incorporation of the new IRS regulation on monitoring since the regulation may change and we have until December 31, 2020 to implement it; and (2) corrected the application deadline to Thursday, July 11, 2019. Mr. Wiesendanger reviewed the comments. Total development costs, telemedicine, smaller rural projects, limits on tax credit dollars, waivers were topics discussed.

*Commissioner Gross made a motion seconded by Commissioner Talarico to repeal the existing Low Income Housing Tax Credit Rule, Chapter 16 of MaineHousing's rules, and replace it with the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Rule attached to the memorandum to the MaineHousing Board of Commissioners from Mark Wiesendanger and Linda Uhl dated June 13, 2019 on adoption of the 2020 Qualified Allocation Plan. The vote carried unanimously.*

### **HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER 5 YEAR PLAN**

Director of Housing Choice Voucher, Allison Gallagher introduced herself and explained briefly for Commissioner Usher that her department administers the section 8 and STEP programs. She explained that MaineHousing will submit the 2020 PHA 5-Year and Annual Plan for the Housing Choice Voucher program to HUD in October. We will hold a public hearing at the August 20, 2019 Board Meeting and ask the Board to vote on the Plan at the September meeting. We are currently in the process of collecting feedback from the Resident Advisory Board so that we can incorporate any changes or relevant feedback into the plan prior to presenting it to the public for comment on June 29<sup>th</sup>.

*Commissioner Gross made a motion seconded by Commissioner Talarico to amend MaineHousing's Administrative Plan for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program to: (1) include with the priority set aside available for homeless persons, STEP voucher holders who have successfully completed 18 months with the STEP program and without STEP assistance would be spending more than 30% of their family income on housing; and (2) change the subsidy standards to allocate separate bedrooms to adult family members who are not designated as a spouse or co-head of household and to children under 18 of the same gender who are 10 years apart in age. The vote carried unanimously.*

### **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

Chief Counsel, Linda Uhl introduced herself and explained that the Delegation of Authority is a delegation of MaineHousing Director, Dan Brennan's powers to staff members. It starts with the Commissioners because under our statute, the powers of MaineHousing are vested in the Commissioners. The Commissioners have delegated signing authority to the Director and the Director delegates signing authority to staff. The Delegation of Authority is updated when processes, positions, or titles change.

*Commissioner Gross made a motion seconded by Treasurer Beck to reaffirm the Commissioners' delegation of signing authority on behalf of MaineHousing to the Director to the extent not inconsistent with the law or with policies established by the Commissioners. The vote carried unanimously.*

## HOMELESS SOLUTIONS RULE PREVIEW

Director of Homeless Initiatives, Ruth Lawson-Stopps introduced herself and Manager of Homeless Initiatives, Leah Bruns. Ruth told the Board Members that she wanted to discuss proposed changes to MaineHousing's Homeless Solutions Rule. She stated she will be coming to the Board in August asking permission to commence rule-making followed by a public hearing at the September meeting with rule adoption at the October meeting. The proposed changes she is looking to make involve language updates and the funding allocation mechanism. Senior Director of Programs, Lauren Bustard, Ruth and Leah have met with shelter directors to discuss the funding formula.

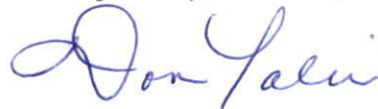
## DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Commissioner Gross asked about the Homeless Initiatives report under specifically the constituent calls. He questioned hospitals releasing people to a hotel for one night then they are on their own. Director of Homeless Initiatives, Ruth Lawson-Stopps plans on doing a deeper study into this and will bring a more extensive report to the Board when she is finished.

## ADJOURN

*Commissioner Gross made a motion seconded by Commissioner Davis to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 11:13 a.m. by unanimous vote of the Board.*

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donna Talarico". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Donna" being more prominent than the last name "Talarico".

Donna Talarico, Secretary