



Minutes of the Board of Commissioners Meeting September 17, 2019

MEETING CONVENED

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners for MaineHousing convened on September 17, 2019 at the offices of MaineHousing, 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine. Notice of the meeting was published on September 6, 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, Kevin Joseph, Donna Talarico, Thomas Davis, State Treasurer Henry Beck, and Director Dan Brennan present. Commissioner Bonita Usher was absent. There was a quorum present.

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

Guests and staff present for all or part of the meeting include: Linda Uhl, Chief Counsel; Peter Merrill, Deputy Director; Daniel Drost, Director of Energy and Housing Services; Kyme Ferenc, Manager of Housing Services; Linda Grotton, Director of Audit and Compliance; Allison Gallagher, Director of Housing Choice Vouchers; Jane Whitley, Director of Human Resources and Facilities; Craig Reynolds, Director of Homeownership; Cara Courchesne, Communications Coordinator; Leah Bruns, Manager of Homeless Initiatives; Lauren Bustard, Senior Director of Programs; Laurie Murray, Director of Homeless Initiatives; Frank D'Alessandro, Michael Kebede, and Oriana Farnham from the Maine Equal Justice Partners; Joshua D'Alessio, Penobscot Community Health Care; Bridget Doxsee, Efficiency Maine Trust; Brenda Sylvester, Community Housing of Maine, Inc.; and Gerrylynn Ricker, Paralegal and Note taker.

ADOPT AGENDA

Commissioner Joseph made a motion seconded by Commissioner Gross to adopt the September 17, 2019 agenda. The vote carried unanimously.

APPROVE MINUTES OF AUGUST 20, 2019 MEETING

Chair Merrill noted the spelling of Alan Peoples was incorrect on page one of the August 20, 2019 minutes. *Commissioner Joseph made a motion seconded by Commissioner Davis to accept the August 20, 2019 minutes with the correct spelling of Mr. Peoples' name. The vote carried unanimously.*

COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFLICTS

None

CHAIR OF THE BOARD UPDATES

None.

DIRECTOR UPDATES

Director Brennan reported issues, his activities and upcoming matters as follows:

- Introduced new Director of Homeless Initiatives, Laurie Murray.
- Thanked outgoing Manager of Homeless Initiatives, Leah Bruns, who is leaving to take a position at the Portland Housing Authority.
- Mentioned tragic accident that happened in Farmington. There were a few homes destroyed and several homes damaged. Dan reached out to Bill Crandall at Western Maine Community Action Program to offer our support.
- Continued work with Gordon Smith at DHHS regarding recovery residences.
- Participating in Governor's Strategic Planning for Economic Development Plan due in November.
- Edison Drive update – minor set-back with the amount of bricks that need to be replaced; signage has been chosen.
- Visited Community Concepts and Lewiston Housing Authority. Met with the new Lewiston Housing Authority Executive Director, Chris Kilmore. HUD awarded three Choice Neighborhood housing grants, one to Los Angeles, one to Philadelphia and one to Lewiston. Lewiston will be seeking \$30,000,000 from that grant to revitalize the tree streets area.
- Going to be working with the Governor's climate council with Don McGilvery. There is an event on September 26th.
- Met with Kelsey Brown, the new State Director of HUD.
- Preparations are well underway for our affordable housing conference on Tuesday, October 1st. We currently have over 400 people attending.
- Interviewed by Channel 7 news with Chris Bicknell from New Beginnings regarding the youth homeless demonstration grant.
- Attended the grand re-opening of Northfield Green in Portland, a 200 unit section 8 project.
- We have another clean-up day on Thursday, September 19th. Not only are we trying to move less stuff to the new building, but we are also trying to lean processes.
- Will be attending the ground breaking at Furman Block in Portland.
- Bath Housing is celebrating its 50th anniversary on October 3rd.
- Meeting with the housing directors in Bar Harbor on October 10th.
- We will be issuing an RFP for \$14,500,000 for multi-family senior housing from the housing bond the Governor signed in February.
- We are in our budget and resource allocation season. The draft operational budget will come to the Board in November for approval in December.
- We have successfully converted our home energy assistance program software and are currently taking applications.
- We have received seventeen internal applicants for the second round of our leadership development program.
- Our 9% applications are due September 26th.

CHAPTER 24 – HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RULE PUBLIC HEARING

Chief Counsel Linda Uhl opened the hearing on the repeal and replacement of our Home Energy Assistance Program Rule at 9:30 A.M.. Chief Counsel Uhl introduced the Commissioners and staff representing MaineHousing. Notice of the hearing was published on our website on August 21, 2019; sent to interested parties on August 22, 2019; and published in newspapers statewide on August 28, 2019. The comment period expires Friday, September 27, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.

Michael Kebede of Maine Equal Justice Partners testified. The public hearing adjourned at 9:40 A.M.

ASYLUM SEEKERS UPDATE

Director Brennan gave an update with regard to the asylum seekers. We worked with the City of Portland throughout the summer months to find alternative housing solutions for the people who arrived at the Portland Expo. We have provided assistance to sixteen families in Bath, Brunswick and Scarborough using funds provided us by the Governor. We continue to work with the City of Portland and the working team that Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew put together at DHHS. We're working with the staff at Good Will Hinckley for some available units. We meet again with Commissioner Lambrew and her team this week.

CHAPTER 19 – HOMELESS SOLUTIONS RULE PUBLIC HEARING

Chief Counsel Linda Uhl opened the public hearing on the Homeless Solutions Rule at 9:45. Attorney Uhl introduced the Commissioners and staff representing MaineHousing. Notice of the hearing was posted on our website on August 21, 2019; sent to interested parties on August 21, 2019 and published in newspapers statewide and on our website on August 28, 2019. The comment period ends on Friday, September 27, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. Senior Director of Programs Lauren Bustard described the stakeholder's process. Frank D'Alessandro, of Maine Equal Justice Partners and Joshua D'Alessio of Penobscot Community Health Care testified. The public hearing closed at 10:01 A.M.

ADOPT HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER FIVE YEAR AND ANNUAL PHA PLAN

Director of Housing Choice Vouchers, Allison Gallagher, told the Board members that HCV received no further comments on the plans at the hearing or during the comment period. As an agency, we have been meeting with community partners regarding the Consolidated Plan. Alison reviewed the comments received from those meetings to make certain that we are incorporating in the HCV plans what the communities are looking for in our Consolidated Plan.

Commissioner Gross made a motion seconded by Commissioner Beck to approve the PHA 5-year and Annual Plan as proposed and to authorize, Chair Lincoln Merrill, to sign the PHA Certifications of Compliance with the PHA Plan and Related Regulations including Required Civil Rights Certifications. The vote carried unanimously.

MAINEHOUSING COMMUNICATION PLAN

Cara Courchesne, Communications Coordinator, reviewed with the Board her role in the Communications and Planning Department. She manages MaineHousing's internal and external communications. Cara reviewed the strategic plan to increase MaineHousing's media engagement with an objective of informing the public and partners about housing issues and promote solutions and MaineHousing's role using effective frames which include writing and publishing op-eds/contributor pieces; posting on social media platforms; and writing and sending monthly MaineHousing newsletters. Other areas Cara explained her department is focusing on are:

- Developing and implementing effective message frames around housing solutions using accessible language;
- Promoting MaineHousing's programs and efforts;
- Marketing the First Home Loan program;
- Support community aging in place awareness and marketing;
- Support the Development Department's outreach efforts;
- Support and develop MaineHousing's general digital and print collateral;
- Support HCV Department with outreach to landlords and general public; and
- Support Homeownership Department with outreach efforts.

YOUTH HOMELESS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

Senior Director of Programs, Lauren Bustard gave an overview of the Youth Homeless

Demonstration Program. HUD has awarded Maine a two-year \$3.35 million dollar grant to end and prevent youth homelessness. The population to be served by this program is youth experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied and pregnant or parenting youth, where no member of the household is older than 24. New Beginnings, a provider in Lewiston, has been designated as the lead agency for the grant. Since Maine has been identified as a rural community, there will be an emphasis on improved and/or increased access to services for youth experiencing homelessness in rural communities.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Gross made a motion seconded by Commissioner Joseph to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m. by unanimous vote of the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donna Talarico", written in a cursive style.

Donna Talarico, Secretary