MaineHousing
Maine State Housing Authority

Minutes of the Board of Commissioners Meeting
August 4, 2015

MEETING CONVENED
A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners for MaineHousing convened on August 4, 2015 at the offices of MaineHousing, 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine.

Chairman Peter Anastos called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with Director Gallagher, Commissioners Lincoln Merrill, Sheryl Gregory, Donna Talarico, Terry Hayes, and Kevin P. Joseph in attendance. Commissioners Adam Bradstreet and John Marsh were absent. There was a quorum present.

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE
Guests and staff present for all or part of the meeting include: Dennis Marble, Bangor Area Homeless Shelter; Rowena Griffin, Bangor Area Homeless Shelter; Dawn Stiles, City of Portland; Wes Phinney, Statewide Homeless Council; John Bradley, Preble Street Resource Center; Francine Stark, Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence; Marianne, Milestone; Tom Natelie, Milestone; Bob Fowler, Milestone; Ann Giggey, Hope House; Josh D'Alessio, Hope House; Linda Uhl, Chief Counsel; Peter Merrill, Deputy Director; Margaret Bean, Deputy Director; Cindy Namer, Director of Homeless Initiatives; Megan Spencer, Homeless Information Resource Coordinator; Jane Whitley, Human Resources Manager; Linda Grotton, Internal Audit Manager; Craig Reynolds, Director of Homeownership; Kathy Kinch, Manager of LIHEAP and Financial Reporting; Denise Lord, Director of Communications; Tom Cary, Treasurer; Deb Turcotte, Public Information Manager; Paula Paladino, Manager of Homeless Initiatives; and Jody Rollins, Office Administrator and note taker.

ADOPT AGENDA
Commissioner Joseph made a motion seconded by Commissioner Talarico to adopt the agenda. The vote carried 5 – 0.

COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFLICTS
Director Gallagher reported receiving a communication on July 30th from DHHS approving the Weatherization waiver.

Chair Anastos reported communicating with Fred Forsley regarding project development.

Commissioner Gregory plans to meet with a gentleman regarding a tiny home concept for people who are homeless or Veterans. She will share the information.

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 28, 2015 MEETING
Commissioner Gregory made a motion seconded by Commissioner Talarico to accept the minutes as written. The vote carried 5 – 0.

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD UPDATES

Board Chairman Anastos had the following updates:

- Attended a Building Committee Meeting on August 3 and noted that the lease expires in 2019 and it is not too soon to be working on this. He suggested having someone determine the square footage we currently use at MaineHousing for purposes of efficiency and needed space.
- Attended a meeting with the Governor regarding JAI Associates efforts to expand their work to other states.

DIRECTOR UPDATES

Director Gallagher had the following updates:

- Attended a building committee meeting in preparation for MaineHousing's lease expiring in 2019. Peter Merrill chairs the committee.
- Noted two handouts: An article by Tom Cary published in the Northern New England Housing Investment Fund Newsletter entitled *"Why we do what we do"* regarding refinancing and MaineHousing's 2014 Annual Report.
- Facilitated a meeting with Southern Maine Community College and property management experts to continue developing a property management course.
- Attended River Landing Open House in Topsham and the Cony Flatiron Open House in Augusta.
- Attended the Federal Home Loan Bank Advisory Board meeting in Providence, RI, which included an interesting tour of downtown revitalization with upstairs/downstairs developments.
- Attended the annual National Council of State Housing Agency Executive Directors Workshop in Santa Fe, NM. He received good insight from Utah who has 0 homeless population because of their creative approaches with tax policies and CRA's which pump lots of money into housing and homeless initiatives.
- Interviews are being scheduled with radio stations to promote Homeownership. The first will be on 97.9 WJBQ radio's morning talk show when he will discuss FIRST HOME and homebuyer education.
- Meeting scheduled with the Governor, DECD, and Efficiency Maine Trust to discuss the energy programs that each agency delivers.
- Attended the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition Meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING ON HOMELESS RULE

Chief Counsel Linda Uhl opened the public hearing on the Homeless Rule and introduced the Commissioners and key staff. She stated that the purpose of the hearing was to receive public comment concerning the Rule. Director of Homeless Initiatives Cindy Namer described the public process which began in 2014 with meetings to discuss the amendments. Three concept papers were published in the spring with subsequent meetings held. The feedback and comments received were incorporated into the draft Rule being proposed. Public comments will be summarized and responses prepared for the public and the Attorney General's office.

The following members of the public provided testimony (a full transcript is attached): John Bradley, Preble Street Resource Center; Wes Phinney, Chairman of the Governor's Homeless Council; Dennis Marble, Bangor Area Homeless Shelter; and Joshua D'Alessio, Hope House Bangor.

APPROVAL OF REPEAL AND REPLACEMENT OF HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RULE (HEAP)

Kathy Kinch, Manager of LIHEAP and Financial Reporting in the Energy and Housing Services Department presented follow-up to the public hearing of June 30th and the public comment period,

which was open until July 10th. The Community Action Agencies suggested adding more flexibility in the priority listing. As a result of the comments received, staff proposed one minor change.
Commissioner Hayes made a motion seconded by Commissioner Gregory to Repeal the existing Home Energy Assistance Program Rule, Chapter 25 of MaineHousing's rules, and replace it with a new Home Energy Assistance Program Rule in the form originally proposed with the modifications that the language described in the households who are second in priority for Weatherization services be changed to households with the highest energy burden, and that All other Eligible Households be moved to d. The motion carried 5 – 0.

APPROVAL TO ADOPT FFY 2016 HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP) STATE PLAN

Commissioner Hayes made a motion seconded by Commissioner Talarico to adopt the proposed FFY 2016 Home Energy Assistance Program State Plan with the modifications that the language described in the households who are second in priority for Weatherization services be changed to households with the highest energy burden, and that all other Eligible Households be moved to d. The motion carried 5 – 0.

INTRODUCE HCV ANNUAL PLAN AND REVISED FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY ACTION PLAN

Director of the Housing Choice Voucher Department Lauren Bustard reviewed changes to the Annual Plan and noted that none were substantive. The biggest change is in the family self-sufficiency program, which is a voluntary program created to help Housing Choice Voucher clients gain employment that will lead to financial self-sufficiency. Lauren and FSS Coordinator Laurie Glidden described the program and highlighted the major changes. There are currently 18 voucher holders in the program with 3 graduating. There will be a public hearing on September 15th to hear public comment and adopt the Annual Plan.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

Lauren Bustard and Counsel John Bobrowiecki updated the Commissioners regarding Medical Marijuana in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. There has not been much change with neither an influx of people nor a termination based on any situation in the past 3 years. They recommended an indefinite moratorium to allow additional time to receive guidance from HUD, or until a situation arises that will require us to re-look at the policy.
Commissioner Gregory made a motion seconded by Commissioner Hayes that the moratorium be re-instated indefinitely until there are developments from HUD or new considerations from MaineHousing inspectors. Commissioners Talarico, Hayes, Gregory, and Joseph voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Merrill opposed. The motion carried 4 – 1.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Joseph made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chair Anastos adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Talarico, Secretary