MaineHousing
Maine State Housing Authority

Minutes of the Board of Commissioners Meeting
September 23, 2014

MEETING CONVENED

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners for MaineHousing convened on September 23, 2014 at the offices of MaineHousing, 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine. Chairman Peter Anastos called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Commissioners Lincoln Merrill, Donna Talarico, Kevin P. Joseph, Sheryl Gregory, Adam Bradstreet, John Marsh, Deputy Treasurer Kristi Carlow sitting in for Neria Douglass, and Director John Gallagher were in attendance. There was a quorum present.

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

Guests and staff present included: Peter Merrill, Deputy Director; Margaret Bean, Deputy Director; Tom Cary, Treasurer; Linda Uhl, Chief Counsel; Jodie Stevens, Counsel; Denise Lord, Director of Housing Choice Vouchers; Michael Baran, Director of Energy and Housing Services; Linda Grotton, Internal Audit Manager; Dan Brennan, Director of Development; Richard Taylor, Communications and Research Manager; Jane Whitley, Human Resources Manager; Deb Turcotte, Public Information Manager; Jody Rollins, Office Administrator; and Karen Vigue, EHS Programs Assistant and note taker.

ADOPT AGENDA

Commissioner Marsh made a motion seconded by Commissioner Gregory to accept the agenda. The vote carried 7 – 0.

COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFLICTS

Commissioner Marsh disclosed that Bath Savings Bank is working on a loan to a possible recipient (Yarmouth Senior Housing Circle 2) of low income housing tax credits. Commissioner Gregory received a call from a consumer about a problem and reported that it was resolved.

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 19, 2014 MEETING

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes as written. The vote carried 7 – 0.

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD UPDATES

Chair Anastos shared that there has been no movement with Preble Street Resource Center apartment project for people who are homeless. John Gallagher explained that the private sector developers have backed away from the original location and are looking at a property on Morris Avenue. John agreed to reach out to Charlie Griswold to ask for a status on the project and ask what needs to happen to move the project forward.

DIRECTOR UPDATES

Director Gallagher provided updates on the following:

- *Facilities for Electronic Heath Care Delivery* – John reported that MaineHousing is working with health care providers to identify facilities where hospitals and health care providers can electronically deliver health care, especially for seniors and special needs clients. John noted the importance of adequate space and internet infrastructure in projects for the delivery of electronic-based health care.

- *Future of Housing in Maine* – John met with Charlie Colgan to talk about future housing needs in Maine, noting that housing migration and income issues all tie together. John noted that with

the market shrinking and the demographics changing, MaineHousing has to rethink how it delivers programs. John will continue his work with Charlie.

- *First-time Homebuyer Training* – John met with NeighborWorks to discuss first-time homebuyer training. John reported that NeighborWorks is a good partner for MaineHousing, and that they have national grant funds available for client education. John shared the concern that there is a perceived disadvantage to lenders that require homebuyers to participate in the training.

  The Commissioners discussed the pros and cons of training for first time homebuyers. John Gallagher noted that (1) foreclosures are reduced for individuals who have participated in homeownership education; and (2) the MaineHousing Board has previously expressed support for training first-time homebuyers and could entertain finding the funding necessary to implement a training program if there is strong enough interest from the public. In addition, John asked the board to think about how and if MaineHousing should offer its own mortgage insurance program.

- *ECOS* – An ECOS demonstration by John Joseph for MaineHousing board members and Community Action Agency (CAAs) representatives was occurring after the board meeting.

- *Homeless Issues* –John is scheduled to meet with Dennis Marble and Mark Swan to talk about homeless issues.

- *Bond Issue* – John notified the board that a recent report inaccurately indicated that MaineHousing was consulted regarding the proposed $65 million bond issue. John is scheduled to meet with Speaker Eaves to discuss the matter.

- *Public Housing Agencies* – John was scheduled to meet with public housing agencies in Ellsworth on September 26th to talk about state-wide section 8 programs.

- *Program Review* – MaineHousing staff is looking at how programs are working this year and what changes need to take place, including effectiveness and costs.

- *All Staff Meeting* – An all-day staff meeting was scheduled for October 7th to talk about resource allocation, fair housing training, MaineHousing's strategic plan and to reinforce recent communication training.

COMMENCE RULEMAKING ON WEATHERIZATION STATE PLAN

Chief Counsel Linda Uhl opened the hearing and welcomed the public. She introduced the Commissioners and key staff of MaineHousing. She reviewed public meeting dates and published notifications of hearings. She noted that the purpose of the hearing is for public comment, which would be accepted through Monday, October 6 at 5:00 p.m. and that summaries of the comments and MaineHousing's responses would be available to the public.

Director of Energy and Housing Services Michael Baran reviewed the proposed Weatherization State Plan stating that MaineHousing will continue to administer the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program in partnership with the Community Action Agencies. Mike highlighted the changes in the plan:

- Sub-grantees will receive an additional administrative allocation to offset some of the costs associated with the mandated training for quality control inspectors, energy auditors, crew, and installers.

- MaineHousing will be implementing new standard work specifications this year,

mandated by DOE, as part of our quality work plan. The per-unit average is estimated to be just under $7,000 for this year, including units computed on a multi-family building of five units or greater. MaineHousing estimates that DOE funds will weatherize about 268 homes during 2014 program year.

Members of the public who provided comment during the hearing included Rick McCarthy on behalf of the Maine Community Action Association, and William Crandall on behalf of Western Maine Community Action Agency.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN AND PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY (PHA) 5 YEAR PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

Chief Counsel Linda Uhl opened the hearing and welcomed the public. She introduced the Commissioners and key staff of MaineHousing. She reviewed public meeting dates and published notifications of hearings. She noted that the comment period ends when the hearing ends.

Director of Housing Choice Voucher Programs Denise Lord provided an overview of the proposed 5 year plan and administrative plan, noting that the proposed changes were discussed at the last month's board meeting. Denise reiterated that the administrative plan contains the regulations, the requirements by which we administer the housing choice voucher program. The five-year public housing authority plan is required by HUD as an administrator of the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Maine Housing is required to submit an annual plan, and every five years a five-year plan. Both plans are available on Maine Housing's website.

Denise noted there was a 45-day public-comment period on the proposed plans and that no public comments were submitted.

Commissioner Merrill made a motion seconded by Commissioner Bradstreet to adopt the Housing Choice Voucher PHA 5 Year Plan and Administrative Plan. The vote carried 7 – 0.

OTHER

ECOS – John shared MaineHousing plans to change from a whole house model to a prioritization method in the administration of weatherization programs, which will decrease the administrative burden on the CAAs. Mike Baran interjected that while MaineHousing has expended millions of dollars on the current ECOS software program, it has never worked to the satisfaction of the CAAs. He said that it is time to take a thorough look at our current delivery model and that in addition, DOE will need to approve the use of any program MaineHousing uses to deliver its weatherization programs.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Joseph made a motion seconded by Commissioner Bradstreet to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Donna Talarico