



## **Minutes of the Board of Commissioners Meeting May 21, 2019**

### **MEETING CONVENED**

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners for MaineHousing convened on May 21, 2019 at the offices of MaineHousing, 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine. A notice of the meeting was published on May 10, 2019 in Central Maine newspapers.

Chair Lincoln Merrill called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The meeting convened with Commissioners Sheryl Gregory, Kevin P. Joseph, Laurence Gross, Donna Talarico, Thomas Davis, and Director Dan Brennan present. State Treasurer, Henry Beck, attended by telephone due to a conflict. There were no other persons at his location. There was a quorum present.

### **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE**

Guests and staff present for all or part of the meeting include: Peter Merrill, Deputy Director; Lauren Bustard, Senior Director of Programs; Denise Lord, Senior Director of Communications and Planning; Tom Cary, Treasurer; Linda Uhl, Chief Counsel; Mark Wiesendanger, Director of Development; Bill Glover, Manager of Lending; Daniel Drost, Director of Energy and Housing Services; Troy Fullmer, Manager of HEAP and Weatherization Services; Kyme Ferenc, Manager of Housing Services; Ruth Lawson-Stopps, Director of Homeless Initiatives; Karen Lawlor, Executive Administrator; Linda Grotton, Director of Audit and Compliance; Jane Whitley, Director of Human Resources and Facilities; Kelly Purington, Junior Underwriter; Christopher DeMerchant, Multi-family Underwriter; Steven McDermott, Multi-family Underwriter; Allison Gallagher, Director of Housing Choice Voucher; Jamie Johnson, Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Manager; Cara Courchesne, Communications Coordinator; Clyde Barr, Policy Analyst; Don McGilvery, Construction Services Manager; Eric Porior, weatherization contractor; Judy Frost and Bill Crandall, Western Maine Community Action Program; Chris Hastedt, Maine Equal Justice Partners; Brent Staples, Waldo Community Action Partners; Lynn Lugdon, Penquis Community Action Program; Jamie Py, Maine Energy Marketers Association; Sarah Crowley, Dead River; Mark Green, Executive Director, Downeast Community Partners; Michelle York, Maritime Energy; Bridget Doxsee, Efficiency Maine Trust; Linda Ryan and Tammy Bernier, Augusta Fuel; Sherrin Vale, Northern New England Housing Investment Fund; Nancy Smith, GrowSmart Maine; Chris Sirois and John Horton, H & S Reny Property Management, Inc., and Gerrylynn Ricker, Paralegal and Note taker.

### **ADOPT AGENDA**

Director Dan Brennan advised the Board Members that in addition to the items on the Agenda, Peter Merrill would be giving a legislative update. *Commissioner Joseph made a motion seconded by Commissioner Gross to adopt the May 21, 2019 agenda with that addition. The vote carried unanimously.*

### **APPROVE MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2019 MEETING**

*Commissioner Gross made a motion seconded by Commissioner Joseph to accept the April 16, 2019 minutes as written. The vote carried unanimously.*

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFLICTS**

Commissioner Joseph stated that he would abstain from any discussions or votes concerning the HEAP rule because of his business relationship with Edward Fabian of Fabian Oil.

## **CHAIR OF THE BOARD UPDATES**

Brian Sites of Volunteers of America has been trying to get in touch with Chair Merrill but they have not connected yet.

## **DIRECTOR UPDATES**

Director Brennan reported his activities and upcoming matters as follows:

- The Governor's office is working with Efficiency Maine Trust on a heat pump initiative (LD #1766). The State's goal is to install 100,000 heat pumps over a five year period and they are asking MaineHousing to be responsible for 10,000 over a five year period for low-income Mainers.
- Attended the Maine Association of Public Housing Directors quarterly meeting in Brewer. Toured the Ellen Leach Home tax credit project MaineHousing started in the late 90's.
- Was on Maine Calling, a radio program on MPBN.
- Spoke at the Maine Real Estate Managers annual conference.
- Met with the Department of Corrections Commissioner Randall Liberty to discuss housing for prisoners being released.
- Met with two Deputy Commissioners of the Department of Health and Human Services, Sara Gagne-Holmes and Bethany Hamm. MaineHousing has many interactions with DHHS.
- Maine Affordable Housing Coalition had their meeting at the State House.
- The Statewide Homeless Council met with the Department of Corrections. The Governor has appointed a new chair to the Statewide Homeless Council, Stephanie Primm.
- Attending legislative meetings with Deputy Director Peter Merrill.
- Still waiting to hear from the Governor's office on Board appointments.
- Having an All Staff Day on June 4<sup>th</sup>. Commissioners are welcome to attend.
- Also on June 4<sup>th</sup> is a ribbon cutting ceremony at Fox School in South Paris. Director of Development Mark Wiesendanger will attend on behalf of Director Brennan. Commissioners are welcome to attend.
- Celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, on August 15<sup>th</sup> we will have a BBQ for staff.
- Doing great work with the University of Maine at Augusta School of Architecture program, which was featured in a great article in Central Maine Newspapers and will be on display at our annual housing conference on October 1<sup>st</sup> at the Augusta Civic Center.
- Beginning in June and throughout the summer we will hold meetings throughout the State on our consolidated plan.
- Submitted to HUD our third attempt for a Youth Homeless Demonstration Program grant.
- We are under-utilized in our Housing Choice Voucher program due to people having a hard time finding housing once they are issued a voucher and with federal budget adjustments, more money has come to us which is a good thing but it makes our ratio look worse. Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program, Allison Gallagher, is working on this.
- Working with our partners on our ESHAP program.
- Publishing our HUD Point in Time survey soon.
- Our performance based contract administration received a clean audit from HUD. That is 18 years in a row. HUD has extended our contract 18 months.
- Will attend the 62 Spring Street, Auburn open house on Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Will make an appearance at the Hartley Block, Lewiston open house on Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup>.



State Treasurer Beck told Director Brennan that he may join him at Hartley Block.

- Will be travelling to San Francisco in June to the annual tax credit conference.
- We are on pace to put 400 new affordable tax credit units on line this year. Next year the projection is around 500.

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

Chief Counsel Linda Uhl explained that we would hold a hearing on the repeal and the replacement of our Home Energy Assistance Program Rule concurrently with a hearing on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services LIHEAP fiscal year 2020 State Plan. Chief Counsel Uhl introduced the Commissioners and staff representing MaineHousing. Notice of the hearings was published on our website on May 1, 2019; sent to interested parties on May 2, 2019; and published in newspapers statewide on May 7, 2019. The comment period for both the Rule and the State Plan expires Friday, May 31, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.

Chief Counsel Uhl opened the hearing at 9:31 A.M. Ms. Uhl asked the Director of Energy and Housing Services Daniel Drost to describe to the Board the stakeholder process. Mark Green of the Maine Community Action Association, Bill Crandall of Western Maine Community Action, Lynn Lugdon of Penquis Community Action Program, Chris Hastedt of Maine Equal Justice Partners, and Jamie Py of Maine Energy Marketers Association testified. The public hearings closed at 10:05 A.M.

## **CHAPTER 16 – LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT PROGRAM PUBLIC HEARING**

Chief Counsel Linda Uhl opened the public hearing on the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Rule at 10:07 a.m. Attorney Uhl introduced the Commissioners and staff representing MaineHousing. Notice of the hearing was sent to interested parties on May 2, 2019 and published in newspapers statewide and on our website on May 1, 2019. The comment period ends on Friday, May 31, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. Nancy Smith, Executive Director of GrowSmart Maine, and Sherrin Vail of Northern New England Housing Investment Fund and Maine Real Estate Management Association testified. The public hearing closed at 10:21 a.m.

## **STABILITY THROUGH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM (STEP) PRESENTATION**

Housing Choice Voucher Director Allison Gallagher introduced herself and Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Manager, Jamie Johnson. One of the major differences between the STEP program and the Housing Choice Voucher program is the STEP program is termed at 24 months. It's a rapid re-housing program for homeless individuals and families. The program is geared towards a population of folks who are homeless due to a specific event that they might be able to work through. Each participant is allowed up to 24 months of rental assistance subject to review and compliance with the program. A one-time utility deposit is available to assist participants in obtaining utility services for their units, a security deposit is available, and a landlord repair program is offered to landlords who have failed HQS items. The STEP program currently serves around 125 families statewide.

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Deputy Director Peter Merrill presented information regarding the State's budget. There are basically four MaineHousing items in the budget. We get \$50,000 a year to administer the home modification tax credit to make homes accessible; \$4,300,000 a year for Part E Bond re-payments; \$2,500,000 a year to support homeless shelters; and the HOME Fund which is our share of the transfer tax. The Governor's budget proposes to take \$2,500,000 per year from the HOME Fund. Since the year 2000, the State has taken \$83,000,000 from our share of the HOME Fund which could have gone to affordable housing. Deputy Director Merrill advised the Board members we would net around \$15,800,000 for 2019.

Other bills Mr. Merrill is working on are a new State Low Income Housing Tax Credit; our annual authority from the state to sell bonds; recovery residences to help with the opioid problem; restricting remote participation by Board members (we are grandfathered); a state bank proposal, which comes up every Legislature and was killed very quickly this year; a state rental assistance program for people with substance abuse and mental health problems; a Housing First bond; surplus property (we have a right of first refusal on most state property); foreclosures (six bills); creation of an aging czar and commission, which Director Brennan will serve on; and three studies that MaineHousing is being asked to do including a number of meetings of interested parties on barriers to individuals with criminal histories getting housing.

#### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Commissioner Davis asked for an explanation of what MaineHousing's Language Assistance Plan is that is referenced on page 8 of the HEAP Rule. Director Brennan and Chief Counsel Uhl defined it. Commissioner Davis also asked about the Nonprofit Set-Aside. Commissioner Davis also referenced the HEAP Production Statistics chart on page 180 of the Board packet. Commissioner Gross told the Board members about a conference call he was on regarding nursing home closures and repurposing those properties.

#### **ADJOURN**

*Commissioner Gregory made a motion seconded by Commissioner Talarico to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 11:36 a.m. by unanimous vote of the Board.*

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Talarico, Secretary