

**MANHATTAN HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
APARTMENT TOWERS COMMUNITY ROOM  
Manhattan, KS 66502  
July 18, 2007  
5:30 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Randy Stitt  
Ida Jane Leupold  
Gary Olds  
Torry Dickinson  
Bruce Snead

**Members Absent:** Eileen Meyer

**City Commission Liaison:** Bruce Snead

**Staff Present:** JoAnn Sutton, PHM, Executive Director  
Mandy Thomas, Assistant Executive Director  
Patrick O'Neil, Special Projects Manager  
Michael Wilhoite, Facilities Supervisor

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Randy called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**II. OPEN FORUM**

- a. New Comments or Concerns: There were no New Comments or Concerns
- b. Adjournment Time-7:30 p.m.: Adjournment time was set for 7:30 p.m.

**III. MINUTES**

Ida asked that a revision be made to the June 27, 2007 Regular Meeting minutes. The meeting was called to order by Ida, not by Randy as stated in the minutes. Bruce moved to approve the June 27, 2007 Regular Meeting minutes with the suggested corrections. Motion carried 5-0.

**IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- a. JoAnn gave a report on the results of the Independent Audit. Most of the audit items have been completed. Some additional information will be sent to the auditors for review. No findings were discovered during the audit. There will be some management recommendations, but no findings which will affect HUD assessment.
- b. JoAnn spoke with HUD field representative who has informally indicated that, based on 2006 reporting, the findings from the 2005 audit have been corrected and the Housing Authority will not be required to enter into a Corrective Action Plan for the Section 8 program, and the High Performer status from 2005 will also be retained. The Memorandum of Agreement

for Public Housing will consist of items which have either already been corrected or will be quickly corrected when the final Memorandum of Agreement is received.

- c. The Housing Authority has been asked by HUD to participate in the Subsidy and Grant Information System (SAGIS) pilot program. This is a new electronic program that will be used for submitting applications for funding and drawing down funds when they are approved. Staff will be implementing the program in the coming weeks. JoAnn gave a brief explanation of how current applications for funding and drawing of funds are completed.
- d. JoAnn presented Randy with a national NAHRO pin for being a member of National NAHRO as Board Chair.
- e. JoAnn stated she had discussed with the auditor a proposal from the June Regular Meeting to donate \$100.00 to the Dru Thomas Scholarship fund from the interest earned on the Special Reserve Account. The auditor indicated this would be acceptable. JoAnn has instructed staff to make the donation.
- f. The auditor also recommended to JoAnn that some of the funds from the Special Reserve Account be used to help offset funds previously utilized by the Section 8 Department from Public Housing funds.
- g. Carol Gould, Board member, has tendered her resignation from the Housing Authority Board. JoAnn has met with Jayme Morris-Hardeman about filling vacant Board seat. Ms. Morris-Hardeman has expressed interest in the position and will submit proper application to the City for review and consideration.
- h. JoAnn has spoken with several individuals and agencies in regard to discussion of consulting opportunity for the Housing Authority for development of tax credit units in Clinton, MO. HUD and the auditor both indicated this would be acceptable for the Housing Authority. JoAnn stated she was still in the process of gathering more information before any decision would be made.
- i. JoAnn will be out of the office on July 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, and also on August 6<sup>th</sup>. JoAnn may also be attending Southwest NAHRO New Officer training on August 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.
- j. Ida asked if residents were encouraged to participate in the Good Neighbor Task Force. JoAnn and Patrick gave a brief explanation. At this time, most of the Task Force work is focused around neighborhoods closer to campus and does not affect residents at Public Housing sites.
- k. Ida asked a question regarding the ROSS and FSS program. JoAnn stated that coordinator funds are received for both programs. Jason Smith is the current ROSS Coordinator and Billye Guliford is the current FSS Coordinator.
- l. Randy asked about the Gardens at Flint Hills waiting list. JoAnn explained that 47 of 48 qualified units were leased as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, and that there are 27 applications on file.

- m. Gary asked for an explanation of Section 8 Occupancy Report versus the number of units authorized to be leased up. JoAnn explained that HUD requires that the Housing Authority's lease up months for a year be based upon the number of units authorized multiplied by 12 months. Therefore, the Housing Authority can over lease for the rest of the year, based upon under leasing in some previous months. JoAnn stated that for 2006 the Housing Authority met the authorized number of months leased, and was under the amount of funding authorized by \$2,000.00. Gary suggested that utilizing these numbers for 2007 would be a good example of a benchmark to measure performance by.

**V. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

- a. Gary asked how often Baehr Place lawns are mowed. JoAnn stated the contractor is required to mow as needed. Randy asked who the contractor was. Michael stated that Complete Outdoors was the current lawn contractor. Gary said he had noticed some damage had been done to the bottom of the fence at Baehr Place. JoAnn will speak with the contractor about being more careful not to damage fencing. Gary stated he had also noticed a vehicle parked illegally at Baehr Place for several hours. JoAnn stated that if she is sent an e-mail regarding illegal parking she will be able to investigate it.
- b. Torry asked for an explanation as to the scope of the Housing Authority's self-sufficiency programs and if they could include non-Public Housing or Section 8 residents. Torry stated there was a new minority small business program she had seen advertised and asked if the Housing Authority had previously worked in conjunction with non Housing Authority self-sufficiency programs. JoAnn informed the Board that the Housing Authority's self-sufficiency programs are grant funded through HUD and are not able to be offered to non Public Housing or Section 8 Residents. The Housing Authority has not seen a high level of interest in entrepreneurial and small business type programs when they have been offered. Torry asked that the Housing Authority attempt to find more information on the minority small business program and determine if it could be utilized by Housing Authority residents. JoAnn stated staff would look into the program and report back to the Board.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. An update on The Gardens was given. Kansas Equity Fund conducted a site visit. There were no concerns in regards to management of the property. There were some concerns with construction. The irrigation system is not working and there are also some plumbing issues which were noted. A concern was also raised by staff addressed to KEF regarding the deadbolt locks which cannot be opened from the outside of the unit. KEF will contact the contractor regarding this concern and may require that these be removed. Gary asked if there were any concerns other than plumbing, such as electrical or appliance issues. JoAnn stated

that one A/C unit had broken down but was fixed in a timely manner. There have not been other electrical issues and all appliance issues have been due to installation errors, such as not removing plugs from dishwashers.

- b. An update of the Flint Hills Place redevelopment was given. Larry Maxwell at HUD informed staff that the environmental review has been completed and approved. JoAnn stated that the major outstanding issue is the PILOT status for the tax credit units. JoAnn has been working with the City to reach an agreement on the issue. There had been some confusion concerning the ownership of the units and which units PILOT was being requested for. JoAnn stated she believed the issues causing the confusion had been clarified and that a resolution to the issue should be reached soon. Bruce stated that the transfer of ownership to MAHP may trigger a tax bill, but that this issue would be dealt with if it arises. JoAnn also informed the Board that a discussion will need to take place in the future concerning the end of the Compliance Period, at which time the property ownership will revert back to the Housing Authority. JoAnn explained that the Housing Authority would also assume any debt owed by the property (ie debt service). The Housing Authority will be required to seek the City's approval to borrow money for debt service, as the ability to borrow was restricted by the City during the Housing Authority/City separation. JoAnn stated that proposed federal regulations may also allow the Housing Authority the ability to utilize operating subsidy for debt service if enacted. Gary suggested that the issue may need to be brought to the City sooner than the end of the Compliance Period in case the Housing Authority wanted to purchase property for affordable housing before that time. After more discussion, it was agreed upon to have further discussion at a future date when more information was available to base a decision on.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Violence Against Women Act Policy-Resolution No. 071807-A: JoAnn gave a brief explanation of the need to adopt a policy due to the passage of the Violence Against Women Act. The Housing Authority has sent notification to Section 8 participants, landlords and applicants to inform them of the new law. Notification will be sent to Public Housing residents upon passage of the resolution. Randy asked if the policy required victims to pay for damages to property. JoAnn stated that victims would be able to recuperate costs through the court process, at which time the abuser will be placed on probation until expenses are repaid. The Housing Authority will be lenient in regards to victim's ability to pay by accepting re-pay agreements and awaiting court procedures. Current policy provides that victims will not be charged for a lock change if requested by victim, but other damages incurred are charged. Gary asked if this posed a threat to

other residents if future incidents occur. JoAnn stated that the abuser can be banned from the property and terminated from the lease if the abuser was a household member. A victim can also be terminated if the victim allows the perpetrator to violate a Protection from Abuse (PFA) order. A victim can be terminated for other violations of the lease. Torry asked if HUD policy stated the victim would pay for lock change. JoAnn replied that HUD policy stated the Housing Authority *may* require the victim to pay for damages. Housing Authority practice has been to absorb the cost of the lock change, but that the new policy is changed because the victim has the ability to recoup the costs in court. JoAnn said she believed this change in policy may encourage victims to follow through on court proceedings. Torry asked what modifications had been made to the sample policy which was used in formulating the proposed policy. JoAnn stated she had revised the format of the policy to fit with other Housing Authority policies. Randy asked how many instances of lock changes due to domestic violence occurred annually. JoAnn responded that 2-3 occur per year. Randy stated that the policy seemed to place too much emphasis on the court process which does not always work. Gary asked what impact would be had on Section 8 landlords. JoAnn stated that landlords would be affected by the change in that they would not be able to evict a resident due to domestic violence. However, a victim could still be terminated for other lease violations. Torry asked if any member of staff would work with victims to go through court process. JoAnn stated that they would be referred to the Crisis Center and that the court system also has a victim's rights advocate to assist with the legal process. Gary moved to approve Resolution No. 071807-A, adopting the Violence Against Women Act Policy. Bruce seconded. Randy asked if there was any further discussion. Ida stated she believed the policy may force residents to make better choices about letting an abuser back onto Housing Authority property knowing the potential consequences. There were no further comments or discussion. Randy called for a roll call vote. Roll call vote carried 5-0.

- b. Schedule Annual Tour and Site Meetings: JoAnn asked for Board input for potential dates for Annual Tour and Site Meetings. Randy suggested that Annual Tour be kept in September due to weather conditions. After some discussion, it was decided to hold the Annual Tour in September on the regular meeting date of the third Wednesday, with the September Regular Meeting following at the Flint Hills Place community room. The October meeting will be held at Carlson Plaza and the November meeting will be held at Pottawatomie Court Site Office. Bruce suggested that the November meeting date be rescheduled to accommodate the Thanksgiving Holiday. It was the consensus of the Board to re-schedule the November Regular Meeting for the second Wednesday in November.
- c. Annual Cost of Living Adjustment and Merit Increases-Discussion: A request was made by the Board to place this item on the Agenda. JoAnn gave a brief run down of some information included in the Board packets.

Gary stated that he would like to have more information on COLA for other not for profit and non-profit agencies that were not housing authorities. Gary would also like to see the Housing Authority move away from COLA and more towards a merit-only system. Randy stated he was not sure if an increase could be justified for all employees when there could be a difference between the performances of individual employees. Gary asked if COLA's were always awarded at the state level. Bruce replied that they were not. Bruce stated that he believed it was important for a manager to have the incentive of providing merit increases to motivate employees. Bruce suggested that there could be a budgeted percentage increase that could be provided at the manager's discretion and that a COLA could be awarded for a "satisfactory" performance and a merit increase for above "satisfactory". Randy stated he believed a COLA may be taken for granted and encourage a lax attitude among employees rather than providing an incentive for high performance. JoAnn stated she does not prepare performance reviews for those who report to a supervisor other than herself, but does see all reviews after they are completed by supervisors and recommends changes as needed. JoAnn also stated that the COLA is provided to enable employees to be able to keep up with costs of living, which affects all employees. The Board will also have to have future discussions regarding the accrual of sick and vacation time, which will be a reduction of benefits for employees. JoAnn does not want to lose quality employees due to a reduction of benefits and COLA. Bruce stated that COLA may not keep up with actual costs of living due to high cost increases in certain areas, such as health care. Torry stated that she believed a COLA was a necessity and that even that would not keep up with actual costs. Torry would like to have a basic COLA in addition to a merit increase, although the 4% maximum merit increase could be reduced. Randy asked if the COLA is included in the budget prepared by staff. JoAnn answered that the projected increases in wages are included when the proposed annual budget is prepared. Gary asked where the funds for salary increase come from. JoAnn replied that they come from various revenue streams. Torry remarked that non-profit agencies tend to have a more equal pay scale than a private employer and that one of the ways to balance this is to offer COLA as well as merit increases. Bruce stated that the Board relies upon the Executive Director for information and assessment of employees, and that a for profit entity will have different priorities than a non-profit, which must focus on sustaining services as opposed to growth. JoAnn said that the topic of COLA will be discussed among staff at the Annual Retreat and may provide some more insight for the Board. Torry asked if the Board could receive a copy of staff salaries to have a better understanding of pay scale. JoAnn responded that she would provide an e-mail with staff salaries.

#### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Randy Stitt, Board Chair