

**MANHATTAN HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
APARTMENT TOWERS COMMUNITY ROOM
Manhattan, KS 66502
January 28, 2009
5:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Eileen Meyer
Jim Sherow
Jan Galitzer
Phil Anderson

Members Absent: Randy Stitt
Ida Jane Leupold
Doug Kraemer

City Commission Liaison: Jim Sherow

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

- I. **CALL TO ORDER**
Eileen called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.
- II. **OPEN FORUM**
 - a. New Comments or Concerns: There were no new comments or concerns.
 - b. Adjournment Time: Adjournment time was set for 7:30 p.m.
- III. **MINUTES**
Jan moved to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2008 and December 17, 2008 Regular Meetings as presented. Phil seconded. Motion carried 4-0.
- IV. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT**
 - a. JoAnn reported that she had attended the Southwest Regional Council NAHRO winter committee meetings in Albuquerque, New Mexico. One of the main topics of discussion was the proposed stimulus bill legislation that is proposed to allocate up to \$5 billion to the Capital Fund program. The proposal would award \$4 billion based on the current funding formula and \$1 billion on a competitive basis for energy conservation activities. Jim asked if the Housing Authority had any "shovel ready" projects that could be completed through these funds. JoAnn answered that projects already planned would include HVAC and water heater replacement at Pottawatomie Ct. and Hudson Circle. Other projects could include

replacement of windows at Carlson Plaza and Apartment Towers and possible replacement of the boiler systems at these two developments. Phil asked how much the Housing Authority could possibly receive. JoAnn responded that it was too early in the process to make any estimate, as the bill had not gone through Congress and would likely go through many changes before passage. JoAnn stated that she will also be attending the National NAHRO Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. in March along with one other member from Kansas NAHRO. Jim stated that he would be attending a conference in Washington, D.C. in March also and that if JoAnn provided a list of Housing Authority priorities he would present these to the state's congressional delegation.

- b. JoAnn reported that there had recently been incidents of drug related arrests at two Housing Authority properties. Community meetings will be scheduled for residents of both sites to discuss the incidents and ways to prevent future issues, such as neighborhood watches. JoAnn stated that residents who are arrested on such charges will be terminated from housing, but do have a right to appeal the termination. However, the Housing Authority is not required to provide an appeal process if the resident is considered a threat to staff or commissioners or to other residents.
- c. JoAnn reported that there was a growing concern in the community about bedbug infestations. One public housing unit has been found to have bedbugs and will be treated by the Housing Authority's pest control company. The residents of the unit will be required to spend one night in a hotel during the treatment. Phil asked if infestations are the result of hygiene issues in the unit. JoAnn answered that according to those she had talked to and research on the internet, poor housekeeping is not necessarily an indicator for possible infestation, as the bugs can be brought in from outside items such as clothing, bedding and even new mattresses that are infested with bedbugs when they are purchased.
- d. JoAnn reported that there had been a carbon monoxide leak found in one public housing unit, causing the resident to have to be relocated to a hotel for one night while repairs were made. Michael explained that there had been some back spill from the furnace in the unit but that proper repairs had been made.
- e. JoAnn updated the Board on personnel interviews. Interviews for the position of Housing Inspector have been completed and an offer will be made for the position. Maintenance Worker II interviews are ongoing. Phil asked if salary was an issue in filling the Maintenance Worker II position and how that starting salary could be increased. JoAnn responded that she did believe the salary was an issue and that staff was currently reviewing salaries paid at local complexes for comparison.
- f. Jim asked how the budget was looking at this time. JoAnn answered that at this time the budget looked positive, but that all funds were dedicated so that any unexpected costs may change this outlook.
- g. Phil asked about the results of the REAC inspections. Michael answered that the Housing Authority had received an overall score of 91 out of a possible 100, and that the usual score averages around 94 out of 100. Phil asked what issues were found during the inspection. JoAnn stated there was

one health and safety issue for a cracked outlet cover plate. Other items that can be noted are cracks in sidewalks and other minor deficiencies that are not considered health and safety issues. Eileen asked how much notice was given before the REAC inspections were done. JoAnn answered that this year there was three to four weeks notice given, but that most years the notice is two to three months.

V. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

- a. JoAnn reported to the Board that Randy Stitt, Board Chair, would have another commitment on Wednesday nights for the next five months, and asked the Board if there would be a consensus to temporarily move the date of regular board meetings from the third Wednesday of each month to the third Monday of each month through June of 2009. It was the consensus of the Board to do so beginning with the February regular meeting.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There were no Old Business items on the Meeting Agenda.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Revised Utility Allowances (Public Housing and Section 8)—Resolution Nos. 012809-A and 012809-B: JoAnn informed the Board that she was chairing a subcommittee for Southwest NAHRO that is studying utility allowances and minimum rents which are set by federal regulation and greatly affect housing authorities' revenue. The subcommittee is currently surveying housing authorities in the Southwest Region to determine what course of action to take in making recommendations to the Southwest NAHRO Housing Committee regarding changes that could be sought in the way utility allowances are paid or to the maximum amount that housing authorities can set their minimum rents at so that housing authorities do not have to pay utility reimbursements to residents. If accepted, the recommendation would be taken to the membership of Southwest NAHRO, and if passed it is given to the National Housing Committee. If approved by this committee, it would be sent to National NAHRO's Board of Governors, and with their approval could be proposed for possible legislation. Jim asked what the purpose of having the utility allowance was. JoAnn answered that the utility allowance was designed to help offset the cost of utilities for Public Housing residents and Section 8 participants. Jan asked what action was taken if residents or program participants could not pay utility bills. JoAnn replied that if utilities were shut off it would result in a lease violation or program violation and if not corrected could result in termination of lease or rental assistance. Federal regulations require that housing authorities must complete a full utility allowance survey every two years. The results from the company initially contracted to complete the survey were far higher than the current utility allowances. A second company was contracted to complete a second survey to ensure results would be consistent. JoAnn stated that these results were also far higher than the current utility allowances and so the two survey results were averaged to reach the final proposed utility allowance schedule. JoAnn

explained that the larger utility allowances will have a significant impact on rental income, since this amount is deducted from the tenant's rent. JoAnn stated she had spoken with HUD to inform them of the change and that the decrease in rental income would significantly effect the 2009 Budget which was submitted to HUD. HUD's response was that a budget revision will have to be done if the budget is affected by more than 5%, which JoAnn believes it will be. Other significant differences from past utility allowance schedules include the Section 8 utility allowances including different schedules for differing unit types, rather than one schedule for all unit types, and an allowance for monthly service fees which had not been previously included. Jan moved to approve Resolution Nos. 012809-A and 012809-B, adopting the revised Public Housing and Section 8 Utility Allowances. Phil seconded. Eileen asked if there was any further discussion. Jim asked if a budget revision would be completed. JoAnn answered that a budget revision would be done. All residents will be notified of the changes and there will be a 30 day period for comments. After this period, all Public Housing residents and Section 8 participants will have rent adjustments processed to reflect the new utility allowance for their unit. There were no further comments or discussion. Eileen called for a roll call vote. Roll call vote carried 4-0.

- b. 2009 Goal Setting-Discussion: JoAnn explained that at this time each year the Board begins discussion of goals for the Housing Authority, the Executive Director, staff and Board of Commissioners. The Board discussed several possible goals for 2009, including: review of salaries for all positions, speakers for energy conservation for tenants and the Housing Authority, energy study, reviewing past energy study results and accomplishments since the study, exploring alternative heating sources for when boilers must be replaced, window replacement, increasing community awareness and neighborhood watches, and continuing efforts at increasing communities awareness of Housing Authority programs. JoAnn asked the Board to continue thinking of possible goals and to present them at the February regular meeting for further discussion.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Randy Stitt, Board Chair