

MINUTES OF THE
SPECIAL MEETING/WORK SESSION
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA
HELD WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2006

The Oakland Housing Authority Board of Commissioners convened a Special Meeting / Work Session at the Peralta Room, Second Floor, OHA West District Office – 935 Union Street, Oakland, California on the above date. Chair Moses L. Mayne, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

I. Roll Call

Commissioners present were Joe L. Brown, Alfred Lee., Jacqueline M. Taylor, Ramon J. Terrazas and Chair Moses L. Mayne, Jr.

Commissioner Robert J. Pittman, Jr. was excused.

II. Modifications to the Agenda

Mr. Jon Gresley, Executive Director, asked for a modification of the Agenda for the presentation of an award. He received a letter with a Certificate of Appreciation from HUD about two weeks ago. Mr. Gresley read the letter. The award was for Ms. Meghan Riley, Homeownership Coordinator in Leased Housing's Special Programs. Chair Moses L. Mayne, Jr. presented the award to Ms. Riley. The Commissioners and staff congratulated Ms. Riley.

III. New Business

A. Consideration and approval of recommendation on selection of a vendor for Section 8 Waitlist Opening.

Mr. Jon Gresley emphasized the need to open the Section 8 wait list. He called upon Ms. Sharon H. Cossey, Deputy Executive Director to describe plan to reopen the Section 8 wait list. Ms. Cossey noted that staff had held two meetings with a large number of community-based organizations in December 2005. Twenty-four organizations have committed to the distribution of the applications, and fourteen organizations have agreed to be listed on the Authority's advertisements. Public service announcements were emailed and faxed to 17 television stations and 59 radio stations listed in the Media Access Guide for Non-Profit Organizations. Staff were designated to make public

service announcements in Spanish and Asian languages. Instructions were translated into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Tagalog. Ms. Cossey said the application would be on our website and people can apply online.

Mr. Gresley indicated that staff had used the small purchase procedures of the Procurement Policy in contacting three local vendors that provide data processing services. Of those vendors, only Diversified Data Management (DDM) could commit to deliver the services required within the Authority's timeframe. Staff anticipates receiving up to 30,000 applications and the projected total cost is \$81,000 for the services. Mr. Gresley recommended that the Board authorize the Executive Director to contract with Diversified Data Management.

Discussion followed. Commissioner Brown asked how long the Section 8 wait list would stay open. Ms. Cossey said it would be open for a week (January 23 to January 27, 2006) and another week during which people can submit their applications. Applications should be postmarked no later than February 3, 2006. Commissioner Taylor asked how many applications were anticipated to be received and if there was any prioritization of applicants. Ms. Cossey anticipates receiving about 30,000 applications. She said that under the Authority's Section 8 Administrative Plan people who live and work in Oakland, disabled and elderly, and veterans are given priority.

Mr. Gresley clarified that there is no preference for those who are considered in the lottery. Commissioner Taylor asked if there is any change in her position as a Commissioner if she applies for the Section 8 and then selected from the lottery. Mr. Gresley said there would not be any change. Ms. Jennifer Bell, General Counsel, agreed with Mr. Gresley. She said that it is the Mayor of Oakland who selects the residents of public housing and Section 8 to be Commissioners of the Board. Mr. Lee thought it was a HUD rule for a resident of public housing to be selected as Commissioner to the Board. Ms. Bell clarified that the Mayor of Oakland selects the residents of public housing, and public housing residents include Section 8 under the State law. Mr. Lee asked whether the process of choosing a lottery system and the preference it provides is a policy decision that the Board should make. Mr. Gresley noted that they are following the policies and procedures outlined in the Section 8 Administrative Plan. Mr. Lee would like to revisit the policies and procedures. Mr. Gresley said they will provide the Commissioners with a briefing of the Section 8 Administrative Plan. Mr. Lee asked if the application is bilingual. Ms. Roberson noted that the instructions are bilingual, but the application itself must be submitted in English. Mr. Lee asked for a draft of the instructions, specifically in Spanish and Chinese. Ms. Roberson will provide a copy to the

Commissioners via email. Mr. Lee asked how receptive have been the people of the agencies the Authority has contacted to helping to distribute the applications. Ms. Roberson said they have been very receptive, and staff has asked them to sign a Memorandum of Understanding. Mr. Lee asked which distribution sites are for the seniors. Ms. Patricia Ison, Director of Resident and Community Services Department said that the Center for Independent Living is one. Ms. Cossey said that the City's Health and Human Services people are willing to post the flyer at the senior centers throughout the city. Chair Mayne asked whether Diversified Data Management was the only responsible bidder. Ms. Cossey said there were three organizations who responded but that only one could perform the required tasks

Commissioner Taylor moved approval of the motion. Commissioner Terrazas seconded and the Board voted unanimous approval.

B. Briefing on staff process of MTW policy analysis and three proposed policy changes related to reform of OHA rent and subsidy calculations.

Mr. Gresley describes the way in which the Authority is developing MTW policy proposals in order to improve the quality of the program and to streamline procedures to reduce costs. He called upon Mr. David Lipsetz, Senior Policy Analyst of the Executive Office for a briefing on the overall process. Mr. Lipsetz talked about the internal operations of policy issues. He indicated that last year, staff brought to the Board a few preliminary proposals for consideration. The Board then asked staff to frame the issues in a more comprehensive manner. He said that the Authority was enrolled by HUD in the Moving to Work (MTW) program on March 31, 2004, for a period of seven years, until 2011. Mr. Lipsetz indicated that the Authority has made significant changes under MTW. He drew the attention of the Commissioners to the first of handouts attached to the Board memo, which gives a description of MTW on page 1 and MTW demonstration on page 2.

Mr. Lipsetz noted that in February 2005, Mr. Gresley began a series of bi-weekly meetings. He said at that time Mr. Gresley made a decision to meet with senior management personnel and handed them a charter that outlined the objectives he wanted to pursue. Mr. Lipsetz passed out a handout to the Commissioners entitled "Project Scope" and briefly summarized it. It encompasses several items, one in which is the prioritization of the projects and deliverables. The second handout passed out is titled "Issues and Opportunities – Prioritization." Mr. Lipsetz provided an explanation of the handout. The third handout is called "Task Group Worksheet:"

Mr. Lipsetz turned the meeting over to Mr. Joseph Villarreal, Director of

Leased Housing, for his presentation on the policy changes now being proposed under MTW. Mr. Villarreal first discussed the income re-examinations for elderly and disabled clients on fixed incomes. The Authority staff currently conducts an annual income re-examination every year for all households. The proposed policy is to conduct income re-examinations for elderly and disabled clients on fixed incomes every three years with automatic adjustment tied to Social Security increases in the other years.

There was discussion during the course of the presentation. Commissioner Taylor's questions pertain to income re-examination and the HUD forms to be completed. Commissioner Lee asked whether the program is only for Section 8. He also asked about staff reorganization in Leased Housing. Mr. Villarreal responded the change would be in both Public Housing and Section 8 and briefly commented on the reorganization. Mr. Lee asked if clients would have two representatives – one for income verification and another for property inspection. Mr. Villarreal said that the primary contact for a client would be the one for all their income issues. The primary contact for house repairs would be the inspector. Mr. Lee asked what the projected workload for the inspector would be with respect to the number of units they inspect. Mr. Villarreal said for regular inspection on Section 8, it would be about 11 or 12 units a day. Mr. Lee asked how the inspector inspects the livability and hazards. Mr. Villarreal noted that they have a contract inspector right now who inspects 15 units a day. Mr. Lee believes that it was overwhelming for an inspector to do 11 or 12 units a day. Mr. Villarreal indicated that they are going to bring in an outside contractor who will be doing quality control inspections for the Authority.

Mr. Lee continued asking if there are representatives who represent the landlords like the representatives for the tenants. Mr. Villarreal said they have been working with the landlords regarding Housing Quality Standards (HQS). Commissioner Taylor would like to know if both Section 8 and public housing tenants are involved on these fixed incomes and income re-examination. Mr. Villarreal said yes. Commissioner Terrazas also echoed his concern about the quality of inspection. He asked if staff has looked into automating the communication process between the tenants and the representatives. Ms. Cossey noted that staff are moving towards handheld inspections. Commissioner Taylor asked if there is a possibility of automatic deposits for clients' rents. Ms. Cossey said yes. She added that they have started doing automatic payments to landlords last year.

Mr. Villarreal discussed the second proposed policy change, the Initial Income Verification Timeline. The current policy for income verifications is valid for 60 days before initial voucher issuance. The proposed policy calls for 120 days before initial voucher issuance. The 120-day limit would give a balance

between the need to ensure accurate income information and the desire to grant Eligibility and Section 8 lease-up staff more control over their workflow. Mr. Villarreal continued by discussing the third policy change --- Use of Document Review for Income Verification. He said that under the existing policy, it takes a lot of time for staff to do income verification, and there is inaccuracy in the process. Under the proposed policy, the Authority would allow the use of pay stubs, bank statements and other forms of document review as the primary means of verifying income and assets. Mr. Villarreal discussed the different resources that the Authority has access to for income verification. He said that Leased Housing staff members have been working with the OHA Police Department in identifying and stopping fraud.

Discussion followed. Commissioner Terrazas asked about the accuracy of the State's income information. Mr. Villarreal said it is accurate. Commissioner Terrazas asked if clients use methods to under-report their income, and does the Authority have any mechanism to check them. Mr. Villarreal said that the way staff register owners is to get all the databases from the title companies for new units. He noted that some people get more than one social security number. Mr. Carel Duplessis, Director of Police Department, agreed with Mr. Villarreal, saying that some people have multiple names, multiple social security numbers, and they falsify in different ways. Some also have access to their verification sheets from their employers. He said the Police Department has many ways of accessing databases to verify tenants' information.

The discussion continued. Commissioner Taylor asked for the number of fraud cases the Police Department processes and if tenants are still eligible to continue in the program. Mr. Duplessis said that last year the police investigated about 78 cases of fraud and prosecuted about 55. Mr. Villarreal said it depends, but usually clients are removed from the program. Mr. Gresley said staff has to evaluate each case. Commissioner Terrazas asked if the Authority has a program to deter fraud cases. Mr. Villarreal said we streamline the process and make sure not to encourage people to do it. He said that the main thing we do is income verification. Commissioner Terrazas asked what the Authority does to raise the level of awareness of new applicants. Mr. Villarreal said that staff briefs people when they first come to the program. Chair Mayne asked if staff uses IRS for income verification. Mr. Villarreal said yes. Clients must sign a release to allow staff to verify their income. Mr. Villarreal said that staff will give a presentation to the Resident Advisory Board (RAB). Ms. Ison said it would go to the RAB in early March 2006.

IV. Recognition of people wishing to address the Commission.

The first speaker was Ms. Louise Kreifel representing the Shattuck NCPC. Ms. Kreifel

complained about a family living at a public housing unit situated at 594 63rd Street. She would like the residents to be moved out of the apartment. They create noise, play loud music, throw trash in her backyard, and have been dealing with drugs. She said that an incident that happened recently was the shooting of the daughter. Chair Mayne asked Mr. Duplessis to check into the matter.

The second speaker was Mr. Don Link from representing the Shattuck NCPC. Mr. Link also reported the same family. He said the problem was about a young man who went to jail after beating up his girlfriend. The man has been seen with a gun, has been picked up by police and has given the public housing address as his address when there was a restraining order keeping him away from the property. Mr. Link said there has been drug dealing and people have been in and out of the parking lot. Chair Mayne said that since this complaint is not on the agenda, it would not be addressed but he would ask staff to take care of the matter.

The third speaker was Ms. Beverly Colston-Timm who lives at Peralta Villa. Ms. Colston-Tim reported problems with the security gate at a parking lot at Peralta Villa. She said the security gate has been broken for eight or nine months now. The first time it was broken it was repaired. She said the gate has electrical problems and is not working, and she was told that the gate would not be repaired. That poses a problem for her as a single and older person. She talked about the youngsters in the area who are in a gang. Those youngsters have beat up people as part of their initiation, and she talked about her friend who was beat up by those youngsters. Ms. Colston-Tim would like to have the security gate at the Peralta Villa site to be repaired. Mr. Gresley has asked Mr. Barry Nann, Interim Director of Facilities Management to check into the problem of the gate. Commissioner Taylor said that the gate at the Peralta Villa may be the same as the one at Tassafaronga, and asked if there is an effective way of gating a community so that it would not be vandalized. Mr. Gresley said it was a different situation and provided an explanation.

V. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Gresley said that the Annual Report has been mailed out to the Commissioners. Mr. Gresley said that all senior staff met with all of the housing managers regarding the property checklist to be filled out for every one of the Authority's properties by next Friday for things such as graffiti, broken fences, problem with garbage, retaining wall problems, fencing problems, etc. The Authority is going to accelerate the improvements of those properties found to have problems.

Mr. Gresley said that Coliseum Gardens Phase 1-A will open later this month.

Mr. Gresley also reported about some grants. The Authority received a State Department of Toxic Substance Control grant for \$70,000 for the Tassafaronga Site.

The Authority also received \$263,000 for Family Self-Sufficiency, one for Public Housing and one for Section 8. Mr. Gresley also reported about the Neighborhood Networks grant for \$296,000 that would benefit the Lion Creek HOPE VI. Mr. Gresley also said that the Authority is a recipient of the \$80,000 grant from the Department of Justice. Ms. Ison provided additional information on the \$80,000 grant. Mr. Gresley also talked about the a pending grant for Tassafaronga, a \$3 million application at the City of Oakland.

Commissioner Terrazas posed a question on the parking problem on the Authority's parking lots. He asked if there is a need for a parking citation technician to issue tickets in order to generate revenue. Mr. Gresley indicated he would explore the idea with Chief Duplessis.

VI. Adjournment to a Closed Session.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm. to a Closed Session.

Closed Session

The Oakland Housing Authority Board of Commissioners convened in Closed Session at the Peralta Room, Second Floor, OHA West District Office – 935 Union Street, Oakland, California on the above date. Chair Moses L. Mayne, Jr. called the meeting to order at 8:55 p.m. regarding the following:

- Evaluation of the performance of the Executive Director of the Oakland Housing Authority pursuant to California Government Code §54957.6.

Attendance

Commissioners present were Joe L. Brown, Alfred Lee, Jacqueline M. Taylor, Ramon J. Terrazas and Chair Moses L. Mayne, Jr. Commissioner Robert J. Pittman, Jr. was excused.

The Closed Session was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Chair

Secretary