

**MINUTES**  
**MADISON HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
**May 16, 2023, REGULAR MEETING**

Chairperson Jeffrey Smith called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM. The following Commissioners answered as present:

Commissioners Lois Bhatt, Mark Chiarolanza, Mark McBride, and Jeffrey Smith

Commissioners Diane Driscoll, Caridad Reyes and Mary Sue Salko were absent.

Also present were Tanya Van Order, Executive Director, Karen O’Keeffe, Deputy Director, and John Hoover, Council Liaison. Terrence Corriston, attorney, participated by phone.

Ms. Van Order read the NJ Open Public Meetings Act Notice: Both adequate and electronic notice of this meeting has been provided by the Secretary of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Madison by preparing an Annual Notice dated January 17, 2023, setting forth the date, time, and place of this meeting. Said notice was filed with the Clerk of the Borough of Madison, forwarded to newspapers of local circulation and to the persons requesting it, posted to the Authority’s official bulletin board on January 17, 2023, and posted to the Madison Housing Authority website.

**Approval of the Minutes**

Commissioners Bhatt and McBride moved and seconded approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 18, 2023. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

**Council Liaison Report**

Borough Council liaison, John Hoover, delivered the following report:

The Borough is pursuing \$4.4 million dollars in supplemental funding from the N.J. Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) for the Walnut Street affordable housing development. A Declaration of Intent is anticipated at the NJHMFA June 15 Board meeting followed by a firm commitment on July 27 allowing demolition and construction to start this summer.

Judge Hansbury has ordered all parties involved in the Drew University Litigation to participate in a mandatory mediation process chaired by Special Master Joseph Burgis. First session is May 24 from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building.

The Giralda Open Space Management Association is currently reviewing a proposal to convert the partially occupied Giralda #1 commercial office building into residential units.

The Masons listed the historic Masonic Lodge building on Main Street for a sale price of \$2.5 million dollars. They have received three (3) purchase offers which are being reviewed.

**Report of Chairperson**

Chairperson Smith stated that Mayor Bob Conley will administer the oath of office to the Commissioners at the next Board meeting on June 20, 2023.

## **Report of Executive Director**

Ms. Van Order reviewed the quarterly budget-to-actual reports for the RAD and HCV programs through FYE 3/31/23 and Operating/R&R Bank Balance reports (included in the Board package). She noted that, while these are not the final numbers, the report accurately reflects an approximate excess income over expenses of \$270,000, for the fiscal year. The HCV program report also reflects an excess of income over expenses. Ms. Van Order explained that HCV program funding is restricted to Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) and HUD monitors our reserve and will deduct this in their calculation of future HAP funding increments. The goal for this program is to expend the full amount funded. The Board package also includes the quarterly Cash Balance Report through 3/31/23.

Ms. Van Order reported that attorney Steve Azzolini emailed expects to complete the application for the Belmont Avenue subdivision and site plan approval in the next few weeks. The project engineer, Andrew Clarke, is finalizing requirements of the zoning data chart with the Borough Assistant Engineer Dennis Harrington. The application will go before the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Ms. Van Order updated the Board on the results of the third Loantaka Way AC Project bid. Two bidders came in with very high numbers with the low bidder 140% higher than the previous low bidder in 2021. Our original cost estimate for this project was \$160,000, revised post pandemic to \$260,000. Ms. Van Order reached out to the low bidder, who bid nearly \$600,000, to discuss the factors that caused the bid number to be so much higher than the low bid of two years ago. They stated that the prevailing wage requirement is the major factor in this job. We have \$195,000 in CDBG grants for this project and have budgeted an additional \$60,000 - \$80,000 for the project. Ms. Van Order is discussing how to proceed with Morris County Community Development. We may go out to bid for a fourth time or develop a new, scaled back scope of work.

Ms. Van Order reported that she and Ms. O’Keeffe met with Faust Engineering and our HVAC vendor Teknikon to review the senior building rooftop air handling unit system evaluation report (provided to the Board last month). This system provides heating and cooling to the hallways and is becoming antiquated as previously reported. Our current system has been well maintained throughout the years, giving us additional time to put together our project financing, estimated at \$650,000. Ms. Van Order noted that we can apply for \$400,000 in county HOME funds in 2024 and we would have 3-4 years to increase our R&R to complete the financing needed. In the interim, we will seek input from a structural engineer to evaluate the load capacity of the building to better assess our options for replacement equipment.

Ms. Van Order reported that we will begin sidewalk repair for all seven sites this summer. We budgeted \$100,000 to address sidewalks in our current budget cycle. We received a quote for \$22,000 from Always Safe Sidewalks to address tripping hazards, cracks and expansion joint repairs. This vendor has a contract with Educational Services Commission of New Jersey (ESCNJ) which is one of the purchasing cooperatives that we joined last year. We will still need to address areas that require concrete replacement, such as badly cracked or deteriorated portions of sidewalks.

Lastly, Ms. Van Order stated that we are grateful to the Borough for including MHA as an eligible governmental entity in the solar energy ordinance it recently passed to facilitate solar projects within the Borough in line with its Climate Action Plan. This new ordinance allows government entities to implement “remote net metering” allowing solar power generated on one site to be credited to another location as needed. Additionally, we have been approached by Ecogy Energy regarding an opportunity to participate in a no-cost community program grant funded through the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This grant targets programs that fill gaps in access to charging or alternative fueling

infrastructure and may be an opportunity to provide Level 2 Chargers or Level 3 DC Fast Chargers on our sites. After a preliminary conversation with Ecogy Energy, Ms. Van Order requests that Chairperson Smith and Commissioner McBride participate in a follow up conversation with Ecogy Energy to further evaluate this opportunity. Ms. Van Order noted that there is a lot of federal funding specific to EV charging stations being targeted to the population we serve. While there is no upfront cost to us and we get a percentage of future revenue sharing, we want to make sure that any infrastructure improvements we make will be meaningful to our residents and be aligned with the evolving trends in EV technology.

### **Report of Deputy Director**

Ms. O’Keeffe reported that 55 of 56 family units and 76 of 79 senior units are currently leased. Three new leases will be signed as of 6/1/23.

Annual HQS inspections at MHA family sites have been completed. The senior building will be completed by May 19, 2023. An independent HQS inspector from Morris County Housing Authority is conducting the inspections.

Ms. O’Keeffe reported that MHA is in the process of purging the RAD and Section 8 waitlists to ensure those on the lists are still interested in MHA housing and/or Section 8 voucher. Letters have been sent to all households on the waitlists asking them to update their information either on the applicant portal or on paper if they do not have access to the portal. Applicants have until June 30, 2023, to update their application, or they will be purged from the waitlist. Once the current waitlists are updated, the staff will assess when new waitlists can be reopened.

In April a letter was mailed to all RAD family households and Section 8 households asking for those interested in creating a Resident Advisory Board (RAB) to contact MHA by a specific date. MHA received twelve timely responses, and the first RAB meeting is scheduled for June 7<sup>th</sup> in the Committee Room of the Hartley Dodge building.

Commissioner McBride facilitated a meeting between MHA and the Madison Area YMCA on April 21st. Discussions included ideas on streamlining the income verification process for MHA residents who may be interested in joining the Y and qualify for financial assistance with membership. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:00 a.m. Commissioners are welcome to attend a tour of the YMCA facility at that time.

Two students who live in MHA owned housing submitted applications for NJNAHRO scholarships.

Ms. O’Keeffe reported that Rental Assistance Program Manager, Jessica Kirchenbauer, successfully coordinated community service and resource organizations to assist a disabled veteran and a disabled homeless person in receiving financial assistance that enabled them to move into their rental units. The initial costs to rent a unit, which can include security deposit, realtor fees and first month’s rent are often prohibitively high and result in a significant barrier to entry into housing.

### **Committee Reports**

No reports.

## **Public Comment**

No public comment.

## **Old Business**

**MTW Amendment to the Annual Plan Questions:** Ms. Van Order responded to questions posed by Board members via email:

1. Clarify why one waiver activity references increasing the PBV and another referenced eliminating the selection process.
  - a. *One MTW waiver would allow MHA to project-based more than 30% (current percentage as approved by HUD) of its housing choice vouchers. Project basing more vouchers could be useful in supporting local development of affordable homes, advancing the MTW goal of Choice Mobility.*
  - b. *The waiver that eliminates the selection process for HCV PBV refers to if/when the MHA wishes to use HCV PBV in units it has developed and owns/controls. With this waiver, MHA would be able to eliminate the selection process involving issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP), evaluating RFP responses based on a predefined criteria, selecting submission(s), approving selection by Board resolution, submitting to HUD for review and final approval of Board selection.*
2. The “opt-out” savings account activity sounds like tenants must opt-in. Please explain.
  - a. *“Opt-out” refers to the requirement in the MTW 4<sup>th</sup> cohort notice that participants in the Asset Building Savings Account study be randomly selected. All randomly selected participants may “opt out” by notifying MHA that they do not wish to participate or by simply not taking the action necessary to permit MHA to set up the savings account for them.*
3. Can we ask our bank to provide a savings account option for our participants that does not charge minimum balance fees or other fees that would reduce the impact of the Asset Building Savings account tenant experience?
  - a. *We have been in conversation with our banking partner to request that participants in the Asset Building Opt-Out Savings Account program be offered a banking product that has no minimum balance or deposit requirement and is not connected to any other banking product/service that results in fees, such as overdraft protection. The bank we anticipate working with is willing to create a unique banking program that maximizes the goals of our Asset Building Opt-Out Savings Account program, while eliminating all common banking fees such as minimum balance requirement, overdraft protection and monthly fees, etc.*
4. Will management do a periodic cost/benefit analysis that includes staff time for the waiver activities it implements and the required Asset Building Opt-Out Savings Plan activity?
  - a. *Yes, a periodic cost/benefit analysis will be conducted. HUD also requires an Impact Study, which the Board received. This study evaluates impact in terms of both cost and administrative burden.*
5. Comment received from Board member that the program, overall, would appear to be most beneficial to residents and the MHA provided that there is not undue administrative burden.

## **New Business**

None.

**Correspondence**

Letter of Support: Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program  
County College of Morris Certificate for Elaine Martino, Excel Intermediate

**Resolutions**

23-16-5-1 Resolution Authorizing the Payment of Invoices.

The resolution was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Move by Commissioner Chiarolanza  
seconded by Commissioner McBride

23-16-5-2 Resolution Approving Writing Off Outstanding Tenant Accounts Receivables

Unanimously approved by voice vote. Move by J. Smith/second by M. Chiarolanza

23-16-5-3 Resolution Rejecting Bids for Air Conditioning Installation Project at 30 Loantaka Way

Unanimously approved by voice vote. Move by J. Smith/second by L. Bhatt

**Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Smith moved for adjournment at 5:52 P.M.

**Next meeting: June 20, 2023, at 4:30 PM in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Committee Room of the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building at 50 Kings Road, Madison, NJ.**

Respectfully submitted,

Karen O’Keeffe  
Deputy Director