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Department: Board of Commissioners

Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 5:30pm
970 Baxter Blvd, 3rd Floor, Portland, ME 04103

Attendees: Shirley Peterson, Chair; Tim Wells, Vice-Chair; Kristin Blum, Commissioner; Sam Heck, Commissioner; Monique Mutumwinka, Commissioner

Commissioners Absent: Diane Herrmann, Commissioner; Joan White, Commissioner

Staff and Public: Leah Bruns, Interim Executive Director; Jay Waterman, Director of Real Estate Development; Teyonda Hall, Director of Resident Services; Doane Dorchester, Office Manager; Cora Lanclos, Director of Property Management; Clyde Barr, Director of Vouchers; Greg Putnam, Asset Manager; Michelle Dunham, Property Manager

1.) Roll Call / Declaration of a Quorum

Shirley Peterson called the meeting to order at 5:31pm, took a roll call, and declared a quorum.

2.) Staff Introduction: Greg Putnam

Greg Putnam introduced himself and provided some information related to his background.

3.) Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

4.) Consent Agenda:

- a. Motion to Approve Minutes from December 4, 2025 meeting
- b. Motion to Approve Minutes from December 13, 2025 meeting
- c. Motion to Approve Minutes from December 15, 2025 meeting

Monique Mutumwinka made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded. No further discussion. The motion passed; 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

5.) Executive Director Report

Leah Bruns presented the Interim Executive Director report from the packet while also highlighting efforts of staff during the transition period

a. 5 Year Plan Tracking

The matrix in the packet will be included each month so board can see how we are working towards those goals. Things that are new for the month will be in red.

b. Demographics

The demographics for residents and participants are in the packet. LIHTC and Vouchers have an overlap in data because some of the people in our Tax Credit properties have Vouchers.

c. Security & Parking Review Memo

A few board members have asked that Parking and Security be reviewed. The packet includes a memo related to a preliminary review of both topics. Information was also displayed in a matrix format. Staff are trying to understand the biggest concerns and work toward addressing them and providing updates to the board.

- Does the tow company ask staff before towing
 - o Not usually. Towing happens at odd hours so the company is told to look for parking permits on the vehicles.
- How many parking spots per unit
 - o In general, 1 to 1. Units with larger bedroom counts (4, 5, 6) may request 1 additional spot if available.

d. Department Reports

Leah Bruns introduced Cora Lanclos to review her memo for Property Management.

- Is the collection rate a % of the total money that should be collected or a % of the units that pay rent
 - o It is a % of the total money due.
- What is the national benchmark for collection?
 - o 95%
- Are you monitoring aging?
 - o Yes
- What are common lease violations?
 - o Housekeeping and guest policy. Usually refer to Resident Services for assistance when it relates to housekeeping and late payment of rent.
- Review the language used in evictions letters and packets, it is not human
 - o A lawyer is involved in generating eviction paperwork and it must meet certain requirements (VAWA, RA, etc.) so staff are not permitted to adjust much of it. Evictions should never be a surprise as PM and RSC should have started conversations and provided notices prior to this packet; packet includes a document related to language services so staff often call an interpreter to review documents with those who cannot read English. RAB is looking at the overall language in letters to try and soften and simplify; maybe add a cover letter to evictions along with a table of contents; Cora will review with legal counsel.
- Does the sheriff distribute eviction notices?
 - o Property Managers are constables and can serve their own notices. 3 in person attempts and then the document is posted on the door and a copy is sent via certified mail.

Leah noted the memo in the packet provided by Jason Beseda regarding the Maintenance Department.

Leah introduced Clyde Barr for him to review his memo related to Voucher Programs. It's not listed in the memo but we were awarded 8 more FYI Vouchers but we have not gotten the funding yet so they have not been dispersed.

- How many were on the wait list?
 - o We had 8 on the waiting list. We now have 35 FYI Vouchers and we are allowed up to 50 total.

Kristin Blum had previously asked for a follow up to the letter from HUD related to budgeting and shortfalls; Clyde touched upon this in his memo. Emergency Housing Vouchers will be rolling in to HCV's by July; we're waiting to roll them in because there is still money in the EHV budget that we want to spend down first to maximize our budget authority. Leah noted that Clyde is typically more risk averse than she was when she had the position; while overspending worked to our benefit under Leah's tenure it likely would not be beneficial now.

- Can HUD pull back vouchers?
 - o The TPV vouchers for Franklin Towers were authorized as part of SAC approval and cannot be pulled back.
- 2 Year Tool?

- This is a tool through HUD that allows us to predict future expense and income. If board would like access to review check with Clyde.

Leah noted Cindy's Human Resources Department Memo. The information provided is likely to be updated after the 13th when there is an HR Committee Meeting.

- New hire evaluations?
 - Staff are looking to create evaluations at the 30, 90, and 160 day mark to ensure goals are being met before the 6 month probation period ends for some employees.
 - All staff are currently in the process of doing their first company wide annual evaluation.

6.) Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee Report: Kristin Blum

Kristin Blum reviewed the financial information provided in the packet related to the meeting on December 23rd with Tim and Shirley present. PHA is \$800k below budget with a net loss; Ana said that this has a lot to do with timing because income was booked in December so we'll see when we review the December reports. Overall things look good and are trending positively. Staff notified the committee about internal changes to some of the previously approved LIHTC budgets.

- Did staff find an answer as to why the Debt Service costs to Front Street East changed?
 - Staff present would feel more comfortable with Ana presenting the answer at the next Finance Committee meeting.

b. Search Committee Update: Shirley Peterson

Shirley Peterson reviewed information from previous Search Committee Meetings. The most recent meeting took place on Monday of this week. At that meeting the board approved authorizing the Board Chair to offer and negotiate a contract with the successful candidate as discussed in Executive Session. An update will go out to staff once that is completed.

- Why has this process taken so long? Previous ED search took 60 days.
 - This is an important decision and the board is making sure to follow a thorough process which included multiple interviews including an onsite visit as well as reference checks, background checks, and now contract negotiations. The holidays also created some delay.
 - The hiring process could not start until after the previous ED had departed.
 - The last offer was to an internal candidate.

c. Human Resources Committee Update: Diane Herrmann

Shirley Peterson noted that there was no December HR Committee meeting scheduled so there is nothing to report from last month. There is a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 13th at 5pm.

- How come the HR Committee meeting was not listed at the bottom of the agenda with other meetings?
 - The meeting was scheduled after the board packet was finalized. As long as meetings are scheduled in advance they will be listed.
 - Moving forward, Doane will include all board members in outlook calendar invites to all committee meetings.
- Why has there not been a recurring schedule for HR Committee meetings?
 - Now that the ED search is almost complete they will work to solidify a schedule.

7.) Communications

a. Resident Services Update: Teyonda Hall

Teyonda reviewed the information provided in the packet. The job description for the ROSS Coordinator is being reviewed before posting later this month; this is a grant funded position which has funding through May 2027 from a 3 year grant. Some of the feedback provided by residents was included in this update; some of the issues related to Franklin Towers should be alleviated with upcoming renovations. Residents were very happy to have been asked for feedback and it was important to them that the information would be going to the board. The information will also be going out in the March Newsletter from Resident Services along with our upcoming steps to tackle some of their feedback.

- What issues exist with fobs?
 - o Fobs are turned off when we're notified that they are lost or when tenants leave the building. But sometimes tenants will give their fob to other people who come and go when they should not be. Residents often know who belongs and who doesn't but security cannot catch unauthorized guests as easily. We could run reports to gather fob usage data but the provided information is vast and cumbersome.
 - o There are multiple fob systems across our properties and some are obsolete and can't be updated. IT, Development, and Property Management are working together to review options that can be used across sites and integrate with camera system and uses best practices in the industry.
 - o Current policy for residents is not to confront someone that comes into building who doesn't belong; it could create an unsafe situation. Instead, notify security or staff or call the police for assistance.
- Security Contract
 - o Currently pay \$250 annually for 1 person to stay at desk 40 hours a week and 1 person to float to a few sites 40 hours a week.
 - o During last RFP 3 companies pulled out because insurance providers said they would drop the company if they worked at a Housing Authority.
 - o Looking into staffing models which would put staff person on site; similar to Park Danforth.
- A few years ago we heard feedback from residents at Franklin Towers specifically around pest; that topic is not mentioned here.
 - o In the past few years we went from 1 vendor to 3-4 vendors which provided us more options and more individualized treatment for each site's needs. We're also doing quarterly pest inspections for all units. This saw a drop from 50% of units to 25% of units having pest issues.
 - o BA and 58 Boyd have had educational sessions for residents on pests and pest control.
- Laundry?
 - o Tenants pay for laundry.
 - o Franklin Towers will get new machines during renovations.
 - o Riverton Park will have 2 laundry rooms in the new building.
- After last meetings discussion around trash a board member saw an immediate improvement.
 - o Staff noted that they had to learn that some problems related to cultural differences which required different solutions and education.

b. Development Update: Jay Waterman

Jay Waterman presented the report provided in the packet. Franklin Towers will likely close in August or September of 2026. There are regular conversion meetings with multiple staff across departments that are reviewing all elements of the conversion. We're looking at the optimum number of vacancies in order to do a 28 month project instead of a 34 month project; we may need a total of 50 vacancies at the start of the project to do that and it will be a lot of coordination but it would shorten the renovation by 6 months. The design is about to wrap up.

COMB Phase 2 has an RFP out for contractors and we've gotten some solid responses. Front Street 3 is starting to see work on site; the trees started to come down today. We have 6 purchase and sale agreements. Sagamore Village closed on 12/31; the design team and contractor will mobilize to the site in March. 47-49 Boyd is now empty and we're starting to turn off and remove water and gas next week to prepare for demolition. The finance committee had a discussion about a potential project on Congress St; negotiations look hopeful. The Study Center in Bayside as well as 3 surrounding buildings will be torn down make room for the Community Center. Board has asked that this item be added to the development report for the future.

Staff are also looking at 14 Baxter for potential building with efficiency, 1 and 2 bedroom units with an elderly/disabled preferences (which would best fit the needs of current waitlist) and there is the potential for an application to be submitted to Maine Housing in the fall. It may also include office space but that portion would not be tax credit eligible space; staff are reviewing anticipated rent costs for current space over time as part of discussion. Leah Bruns also noted that 117 Anderson might be a great space for offices long term.

8.) Resolutions of the Board of Commissioners

a. Resolution #3303 to change the 5 Year Plan

b. Resolution #3304 to change the Admin Plan

Clyde Barr presented the memo related to the resolutions provided in the packet. By adding EHV language to the Admin Plan it allows us to absorb EHV's and turn them into HCV's. The second change in the Admin Plan was a suggestion by HUD. We requested a waiver by HUD to not enter a AHAP for PBV's with COMB Block until after construction/demolition had occurred. Changing this language in Admin Plan would mean we no longer need to ask for a waiver to do that.

Cora explained that the change related to the 5 Year Plan would allow us to use Capital Funds on the Bayside Community Center.

Tim Wells made a motion for Resolution #3303 to change the 5 Year Plan as noted. Monique Mutumwinka seconded the motion. No further discussion. The motion passed; 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

Sam Heck made a motion for Resolution #3304 to change the Admin Plan as noted. The motion was seconded.

- Does this change in language remove the requirement for us to have an AHAP.
 - o No. It allows us to complete the AHAP after demolition

The motion passed; 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

9.) Adjourn

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:38pm.