

BHA BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

Special Meeting

Zoom Meeting

July 10, 2023

ATTENDANCE-

Board of Commissioners in Attendance- Charles Laverty, Gloria Leipzig, Cassandra Page, Sarah Bilodeau, Anne Mahon

***Note- Anne Mahon arrived at 5:21PM,*

***Note- Cassandra Page left at 5:37PM, returned 6:08PM*

Cambridge Housing Authority Staff in Attendance- Raymond Morales, Kevin Braga, Karrie Canavan, Susan Cohen, Maura Barry-Garland, Matt Zajac, Sara Vogel

***Note- Sue Cohen left 5:37PM*

***Note- Kevin Baraga left at 6:00PM*

Tenant Association Members in Attendance- Sally Sennott, Lynn Martin

Also in Attendance- housing authority residents and members of the public

Meeting was called to order by Board of Chair, Charles Laverty III at 5:09PM

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: July 25, 2023

TIME: 2:01 PM

OLD BUSINESS

Board/Tenant Member Seat Update/Guidelines- Susan Cohen

Charles Laverty- Cassandra Page's term will be up in Spring 2024, and Susan Cohen is here to resolve any ambiguity around DHCD's new Tenant Board Member election process:

Sue Cohen- 2021 Legislation established a dedicated LHA Tenant Board Seat, which was designed to transition the first available seat into a tenant-board member appointment. However, the Belmont Housing Authority met the purposes of the legislature by already having a tenant board member elected via town process and filed a waiver during their term. Once their term ends, that seat will transition to the tenant seat, which is assigned via appointment. The Belmont Select Board will be required to notify the Tenant Association 90 days in advance of the vacancy, and the Tenant Association will submit 2-5 nominations to the Belmont Select Board who selects the nominee. If no names are submitted, the Select Board will elect an eligible tenant. Alternatively, if no one is qualified to serve as the tenant board member, a waiver will be filed, and the Select Board will elect someone for a one-year term.

Charles Laverty, question about the governing body appointing the tenant board member.

Sue Cohen, response- the Belmont Selectboard would be responsible for the appointment.

Cassandra Page, question regarding the separate process for tenant appointment.

Sue Cohen, response- it seems DHCD was trying to create a transitional process to better secure a tenant position on the Board, which, though common, was not required prior to this legislature. However, the number of residents serving on the Board is not limited, and residents can run via the town election process for another Board seat.

Gloria Leipzig, request for Ray to write a letter to the Town and the Selectboard ensuring they are aware of the process and timeline for notifying the Tenant Association.

Sarah Bilodeau, concern regarding the Select Board making the final determination and question on how tenants can ensure their chosen representative is appointed.

Sue Cohen, response- Whether the Selectboard must accept a single-nomination submission appears ambiguous, and it seems like the Tenant Association can protect itself by submitting the minimum two names. If one candidate is preferred over the other, there don't appear to be any regulations that would prohibit the association from making that preference known or exercising any other political rights to make those preferences known.

Anne Mahon, question about using a newsletter or voting platform for the Tenant Association nominations.

**Discussion ensued*

Charles Laverty & Gloria Leipzig requested that Ray Morales submit a letter to the town's Board of Selectmen notifying them of the BHA's intent to adhere to the new guidelines and will submit a list of candidates to the town upon receiving their notice,

NEW BUSINESS

Sherman Gardens Subcommittee Repot- Anne Mahon

Charles Laverty, comment- the SG Subcommittee is reaching out to potential legal aids to help evaluate the CHA/BHA Agreement
Matt Zajac- CHA is not currently engaged with the firms on the provided list but is familiar with them from past events. These firms seemed reputable and would offer the Board opportunities to conduct an interview process. The Board is welcome to search for other counsel, and the CHA can generate a second list if the first one is not sufficient.

Anne Mahon- Cassandra Page and Anne Mahon sent the scope of service to the provided firms and some alternative legal aids and are in the process of scheduling interviews with the 2 firms that replied. The subcommittee asks if the Chair/Vice Chair could be available to support the interview process.

Gloria Leipzig, request for the firms to provide their related experience, estimated timeline, availability, and fees, which should provide sufficient information for the Board to make a determination.

***Discussion ensued about new client/engagement letter and interview requirements*

Other Items Unanticipated By the Chair- No Comment

TENANT ASSOCIATION- Lynn Martin & Sally Sennott

Sally Sennott, comment on the importance of the legal aid interview process in selecting a firm.

PUBLIC COMMENT-

Tommy Olson, comment on Cassandra Page's input on the subcommittee

Charles Lavery and Anne Mahon, response- Cassandra Page is a subcommittee member and active in the legal aid search process. The subcommittee will present their findings and the Board will deliberate before selecting a legal representative.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL-

1. May Regular Meeting Minutes (05/18/23)- Motion to approve with proposed edit(s) as below
Anne Mahon motioned to approve; Gloria Leipzig seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Charles Lavery, "I", Gloria Leipzig, "I", Anne Mahon, "I", Sarah Bilodeau, "I", Cassandra Page- *not present*. In Favor (4), Against (0), Abstention (0)- *motion passed*
*Gloria Leipzig, proposed edits- modify to "request for CPA Funds", change to "Margaret Moran"
2. June Regular Meeting Minutes (06/22/23)- Motion to approve with proposed edit(s) as below
Gloria Leipzig motioned to approve; Sarah Bilodeau seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Charles Lavery, "I" Gloria Leipzig, "I", Anne Mahon, "abstain", Sarah Bilodeau, "I", Cassandra Page- *not present*. In Favor (3), Against (0), Abstention (1)- *motion passed*
*Proposed edit- Sarah Bilodeau attended the 6/22/2023 meeting, late arrival
3. Authorization for the Board Chair to execute a 3-year contract extension with the Cambridge Housing Authority for Management Services
Anne Mahon motioned to approve; Gloria Leipzig seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Charles Lavery, "I" Gloria Leipzig, "I", Anne Mahon, "I", Sarah Bilodeau, "I", Cassandra Page, "I". In Favor (5), Against (0), Abstention (0)- *motion passed*
Charles Lavery, comment- CHA came in on an emergency basis during a difficult time with the pandemic, short-staffing, etc. and did a great job shepherding the BHA through that time and managing the recent staffing changes. The recommendation as Chair is to enter into a contract with CHA to extend the management services.
*Discussion ensued

CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING:

Regular July Board Meeting scheduled 07/20/2023

ADJOURNMENT

Anne Mahon motioned to adjourn; Cassandra Page seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Charles Lavery, "I" Gloria Leipzig, "I", Anne Mahon, "I", Sarah Bilodeau, "I", Cassandra Page, "I". In Favor (5), Against (0), Abstention (0)- *motion passed*

Meeting Adjourned 6:18PM