



2013-2015 COMMISSIONERS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Deanna Wagner, Chair Rick Leco, Vice Chair

Wednesday, July 16, 2014

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina

In Deanna Wagner's absence, Rick Leco, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order, the roll was called and guests welcomed.

Action: Beverly Bristol moved and Earnest Burke seconded motion to approve meeting minutes of 3/2014. Motion Carried

Update

Henrietta Snipes, Commissioners' Track Chair, National Conference Planning Committee (NCPC)

Henrietta provided the committee with the following commissioners track sessions for the 2014 National Conference:

1. Master PHAS and SEMAP Indicators for Commissioners (with RAD component)
2. What's Under the Hood? Financial Diagnostics 101 for Your Agency
3. Non-Traditional Board Roles and Responsibilities
4. Strategic Planning and Management (Beyond 101)
5. **Commissioners Roundtable: in development; possible HR Focus; committee opted to provide: title, description and identify moderator/panelists. amended to:** The Art of Problem Solving, presenter/panelist Dorothy Carty-Daniel and Rick Leco. Session Host, Adrian Jones. This will focus on stress as it relates to Commissioners managing Executives and how to resolve issues as they occur.

Action: Dorothy Carty Daniel moved and Matt Pike seconded motion to place on October and March agendas discussion of topics for the development of the commissioners' track for the 2015 National Conference. Motion Carried

Remarks

Preston Prince, CME

Preston noted the importance of having thoughtful opportunities for Commissioners. He feels that the most important item for a commissioner is evaluating and providing guidance to an executive director. You have an important role within your housing authority and to NAHRO. Your role at NAHRO is to provide suggestions on how to have a stronger, more ethical leadership with professional development, internal/external partnerships and connectivity of h/cd with transportation, education, environment, nutrition, etc. Club 21 addressed the issue of race and class within the housing industry and urged members to watch the documentary film, Brick by Brick that examined racial discrimination in public housing in Yonkers, New York. The director will be present. President Prince also advised members of an opportunity for 25 volunteers to provide community service at a local area that provides meals. Transportation was provided.

Saul Ramirez, CEO

Saul discussed a plan to move Housing America forward. Rick Leco spearheaded an effort to bring Pawtucket Red Sox, a Boston Red Sox minor league baseball affiliate, to kids by providing a day at the ballpark for them. Now, four other agencies are looking for follow that model within their communities. This is a great way for an agency to highlight community work and also provide a platform for kids to follow their aspirations and dreams. We plan to make Housing America a door opener of conversation and a vehicle to allow you to give back to your communities and to open dialogue on the importance/relevance of what we do for those we serve. We will have a redesigned Housing America website and working to bring in resident leaders and commissioners and engage them in the dialogue in terms of success stories that are being videotaped and posted on the website. So in the advocacy work, as you serve as a representative of your communities, you will rely on NAHRO to provide you the tools to expand this Housing America effort. Please share your videos and stories with our public relations staff ([Emily Pasi](#) or [Sylvia Gimenez](#)) so we can place these stories on the NAHRO website.



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DISCUSSION

Bobbie Butler asked about the process for securing commissioners' track session for the National Conference. She wants to be sure that the majority if not all are selected and headed by commissioners. President Prince advised he will attending the NCPC meeting to take place during the summer conference and will reiterate that whenever possible, commissioner interaction should not be primarily for the commissioners' track.

Mr. Ramirez explained in the past, **track chairs** were picked up from each of the committees which still holds true. Each track chair was responsible for identifying sessions and speakers. It became more difficult to manage that process because the number of sessions has tripled over the last several years. Each individual was looking at least 10 sessions that they needed to create/plan, organize and identify speakers. About four years ago, that process was changed to a call for proposals presentation model that proves to be very popular. At the end of the National Conference and Exhibition, we extend a call for proposals via email/website which yields approximately 150 session proposals that include descriptions and designated speakers. Those sessions go to the NCPC that consists of approximately 20 people from different committees and staff is there to coordinate that effort. As we ask for commissioner input into appropriate sessions and their participation in those sessions, the same scenario occurred with the International Committee, now International Research and Global Exchange Committee. Normally, the conversation inviting folks to provide what type of sessions they would like to see usually happens at the October and March Conference meetings or in between those two conference via teleconference. He suggests that beginning in October, begin to discuss topics to move forward to the NCPC so before the call for presentations go out, the committee will have a list of topics you have deemed appropriate and the calls will be based on those topics.

Matt Pike suggested that the Commissioners track should contain two commissions with a two-year staggered terms allowing the senior representative to pass on important info to the junior rep. He suggest one year is just enough time to understand the process and make the selection.

Saul felt that is a great idea, however, the challenge is each commissioner cannot guarantee they will be appointed in the timeframe mentioned. Two-thirds of the committee is appointed by the region, so depending upon whom the region selects will dictate whether you are re-appointed or not. Similarly, the president appoints one-third, again there is no guarantee a commissioner who currently serves will serve during the next term and the president serves one, two year term. Saul suggests at the beginning of a term, for the next crop of commissioners, identify the two individuals that would be your representatives on the NCPC so both individuals can participate throughout the two-year process. He says there are two ways to submit proposals:

1. Prepare your own proposal during the call for proposals period;
2. Have topics ready prior to the call for proposal so submitters can see the session topics of interest and tailor their submissions to meet those topics.

Dorothy advised during her tenure as Vice President for the Commissioners Committee, the Board approved a resolution from the committee that the commissioners' track for the national conference would be planned/prepared by them and they did so for several years until the change. She also asked Saul to provide his assessment of the new HUD Secretary and wondered will we have a more favorable relationship with Secretary Castro.

Saul advised he is aware of what is noted in the archives, however during his tenure, he has worked to improve the process. Nothing has changed in terms of commissioner input/interaction regarding these sessions. The track is still run by the chair who serves as the final arbitrator regarding the slate of track sessions. The reality was that to organize and assemble 10 sessions per track, find topics, speakers became extremely time consuming that the task was not being completed on a timely basis and was preventing us from creating an agenda early enough for folks who were thinking of coming to the conference to see the listing.



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Over the last several years, more agencies have told us that they cannot register people to come to the conference if they don't know what the full agenda is in order to justify the travel expense. Now, a week after the summer conference has concluded, you will see promotional material for the National Conference and Exhibition in Baltimore with the sessions included. Great work was done back then and it is our goal to make the sessions even better for everyone.

Mr. Ramirez focused on the question pertaining to Secretary Castro. He feels Mr. Castro is a wonderful person. Saul advises Secretary Castro's father grew up in public housing so he is sensitive and aware of the needs of those we serve. Saul spoke to him the week prior to the summer conference and it is his opinion that he is going to be a different secretary than his predecessor. He advised Secretary Castro that while NAHRO and HUD may disagree on certain areas, NAHRO is here to provide support to the Secretary where our interest align. Former Secretary Donovan is now in charge of the budget at OMB who oversees the governmental budget. He may not allow the new secretary to do what he feels he needs to do.

Jean Banks felt more resident programs need to be available to them from NAHRO.

Saul advised the challenge that we face is residents have splintered off into organizations that promote themselves as national organizations for residents. It is more difficult for us because there is a lot of politics involved among those national resident groups. The role that we can play with the residents is for us to create a model of delivery for residents that is regional, not national because most residents, with the exception of those who go to the smaller organizations, who can't afford to travel long distances and stay for long periods of time. We are in the planning stages of creating a regionalized national NAHRO event for residents only. To ask residents to join us at conferences is more challenging due to the splintering among groups that has occurred and because many residents can't travel cross country for multiple days and incur the cost involved. The goal is to make it affordable, relevant and logistically easy to reach by making the event regional. Except for resident commissioners who get their expenses paid by their agencies, a lot of residents make a big sacrifice and we recognize that as such. We have learned from feedback we received is that a lot of the splintered national resident organizations leave residents unsatisfied with their offerings and the residents come back to NAHRO. Henrietta noted that there are mechanisms in place that afford us the opportunity to provide opinions and comments on sessions include the types of sessions we seek.

John Bohm, Senior Director, Congressional Relations, Public Affairs & Field Operations

John advised there was a fundamental push made for the past several years is to ensure that a responsibly funded spending bill moved in Congress so that your agencies can receive dollars that you need to get the job done locally. The budget crisis, a dysfunctional government, government intervention and partisanship are factors that are fundamentally unravelling the delivery system. We are at the stage where the amount of money needed to serve our residents has been diminished so the capacity and ability to meet local needs has been affected.

One year ago, Congress passed a budget agreement that would be two years long, normally budget resolutions are annualized. The things they needed to do to pass the budget resolution this year, didn't have to be done. They could go to the appropriations spending process and get that done. We thought we might actually have appropriation bills done on time by October 1. The HUD spending bill, part of the package with two other bills, has been taken off the "to do" list due to internal problems in Senate over how to process amendments to the bill.

Today, in the Senate bill, the difference between the House and the Senate bills is rather significant in terms for funding for your programs. The better numbers were on the Senate side but we can't get that bill moving which means on October 1, your executive director and your staff will tell you that you will be funded with last year's money which may be inadequate and decisions will have to be made on how to administer your programs with fewer dollars. Low-income families are being victimized by our inability to get the job done.



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As a commissioner, how do you keep the system in tact to meet local needs? One way is with the assistance and support of well-informed constituency of residents. NAHRO needs your help to determine how to responsibly reach out to residents and engage them in this discussion nationwide. We need to channel some of the immediate impact on residents where dollars are being reduced i.e. as a resident they may ask, how does that affect my unit, will I continue to receive support through the Section 8 program, why didn't I get a new roof, etc. Stories of mismanaged funds, outrageous salaries, misuse of agency transportation, etc. really undermine the integrity of the industry.

NAHRO has devoted a lot of time and energy to create an advocacy platform that contains many components:

- The on-line advocacy center is a tool at your disposal. Residents can send the letter to their representative/senator if they choose. They do not have to be a member to access the advocacy center.
- We have created a network of volunteers, the Congressional District Contacts (CDCs). Commissioners can volunteer to become a CDC. As a CDC, you will receive regular updates from John. When we need you to reach out to your member of Congress, as a CDC, you have volunteered to make a phone call, send a letter or message to inform them and get them on the right page.
- An advocacy tool kit has been created to assist you. NAHRO has done commissioners training in advocacy and will be happy to continue that training. NAHRO has developed educational programs to help you understand what we mean when we say advocacy. NAHRO holds webinars to prepare folks for the August congressional recess which means your members of Congress will go home for one month providing you an opportunity to reach out to them.

Establish a plan with your housing authority on when and how to make appointments and meet with these representatives when they're on recess. We have to show them that we are responsible stewards of the dollars allocated to the housing authority. Make sure that you have a meeting with your ED/staff to create an advocacy plan. Define what advocacy is, what we need to do to effectively tell our story, to educate and inform decision makers, when should we work to get on our congressperson's calendar for a visit, who is the press contact person, are we going to have an event and when, etc.

You may contact Tess Hembree, Field Coordinator – thembree@nahro.org or John Bohm for additional assistance – jbohm@nahro.org

DISCUSSION

Dorothy suggested members invite their congressman and state senators to the housing authority. Do not invite them on the year they are looking to be elected. Reach out to them, show them your complexes and see how well maintained the properties are and make the experience personal. Have them meet some of the residents which makes all of this more tangible and real. Rick agrees and suggests that housing authorities who are approaching an anniversary milestone/dedication or renaming of a property or properties, encourage them to attend an anniversary celebration.

Subcommittee Reports (See attached)



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Regional Reports

Regional VP	Region	Regional Conf./ Date	Highlights
Bill Quirk for Kevin Glynn	NERC	Cape Cod, MA June 16-18	The region is concerned about attendance. Last year, at the mid-winter conference, training was offered which seemed to help a bit so the trend will continue in subsequent conferences. Next Mid-Winter Conf. – February, 2015, Mohegan Sun, Connecticut Housing America events: The Pawtucket Red Socks event and a cookout, approximately \$7,500 was raised. Proceeds were used to send adults and kids to the ballgame. In 2015, it is hoped to provide a \$1,000 scholarship and tie it into Housing America with \$500 prizes for 1 st and 2 nd place for the regional poster contest.
Dorothy Carty Daniel	MARC		Dover, DE April 29-May 2
Fred Wescott	NCRC	Des Moines, IA/ April 30-May 2	Over 40 vendors and 230 participants at the conference. Fred was awarded the 2014 recipient of the Alvira B, Long Memorial Award - honoring a current commissioner who has demonstrated excellence in advocating for, and developing, the financial, political, and community support necessary to ensure the continuation and expansion of housing or community development programs.
Thomas Jefferson for Joan W. Smith	MPRC	Deadwood, SD/ June 16-18	Conducted a commissioners training – two commissioners have completed certification requirements and will apply for certification credentials. Discussing how to work with the media to tell their stories. June 20 was proclaimed Sherry Scudder Day by the South Dakota Governor. Ms. Scudder is retiring after 43+ years in the industry and is a longtime NAHRO and MPRC Member.
George Perez	PNRC	Portland, OR, April 28	The region is in search of a new RSO. Annual Conference will be held in Seattle, 2015
Art Kurrasch	PSWRC	San Francisco, CA May 4-6	Thanks to Jori Solomon, the region's new RSO, the conference brought in some funds. Great participation during the conference. How to speak to the media was one of the sessions of great interest and very timely. San Diego, June, 2015 – Gary Gramling will be track chair.
Johnny Johnson	SERC	Orlando, FL June 15-18	Planning SERC 75th Anniv., Louisville, KY, June, 2015 Conference focus – advocacy and training in all track areas. Awarded certificates of attendance to all commissioners which increased number of participants at their training session.



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			Next meeting - Annual workshop, September, Charleston, SC
Willie Anderson for Earnest Burke	SWRC	Tulsa, OK / June 23-26	Focused on training opportunities, particularly in train the trainer so that local opportunities are available for sessions. Discussed the importance of advocacy. Seeking greater participation. Commissioners' corner will be on the regional website.

COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATION

Beverly Bristol advised her city councilman made disparaging remarks about public housing. She went to a meeting with a Powerpoint presentation of the properties and some of the families who live in those properties touting the positive image of public housing. She brought some residents with her along with the Executive Director of the housing authority. She advised the Mayor admitted that in fact, housing was important. She advised Portland offered a deal which culminated in breaking ground on a 62-unit property. Perceptions have to be changed about public housing and those who live there.

Dorothy urged members to have advocates speak to the disabled and elderly about how to protect themselves from scams. Henrietta thanked those who responded to her request for answers to security questions.

Action: Motion to adjourn, moved by Homer Thompson, seconded by Thomas Jefferson. Motion Carried

Attendance: Rick Leco, Barbara Allen, Willie Anderson, Jean Banks, Philip Bernal, Beverly Bristol, Earnest Burke, Bobbie Butler, Dorothy Carty Daniel, Gary Gramling, Yolanda Hotman, Thomas Jefferson, Johnny Johnson, Adrian Jones, Kyna Koch, Art Kurrasch, Michael Lacey, Carol Nunley, George Perez, Jr., Matt Pike, Bill Quirk, Henrietta Snipes, Deborah Thiele, Homer Thompson, Fred Wescott and Henry Williams.

Absent: Lonnie Boykins, Barb Cleland, Kevin Glynn, Carolyn Jenkins, Ed Kaczka, Catherine Luna, Carl Richie, Lamont Taylor, Deanna Wagner, Joan Waring Smith, and Cynthia White-Overton.



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**LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE
MATT PIKE, CO-CHAIR (Presiding)**

Attendance:

Yolanda Hotman, Thomas Jefferson, Henry Williams, Kyna Koch, Fred Wescott, Johnny Johnson, Phil Bernal, Art Kurrasch, Barbara Allen, Gary Gramling, Willie Anderson, Michael Lacey, Adrian Jones, Beverly Bristol, Homer Thompson, Bill Quirk, Bobbie Butler, and Earnest Burke.

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1. Beverly Mathena shared with the group the success in the RAD conversion of public housing stock by the Northeast Housing Authority, Le Grande, Oregon.
 2. Update regarding Mass. State issue regarding regionalization. Much collaboration and coordination between agencies. Key. Involved resident commissioners, who are gubernatorial appointees. Outreach and advocacy is most important in moving forward on an issue like this. CEO, residents, public officials all need to be involved to support movement. A real grass roots efforts. Glad to say that local governance remains in place.
 3. Commissioners' Strategic Plan. Want to continue conversation regarding programs and concepts. There were many comments about legislative advocacy.
 4. Rick Leco, Committee vice chair, noted how important it is to communicate the impact the PHAs have on the community, for example business impact, subsidy plus HAP plus capital fund dollars. Even in a small agency. Another impact on the community is the PHA payroll. "Fact sheets" including stats about number of vouchers, numbers of properties, number of households, children, seniors, etc., plus the annual payroll are a useful tool.
 5. Homework – Matthew Pike reminded all to submit their "best practices" ideas for NAHRO to LaTonya.

Yolanda Hotman
Recording Secretary



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**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
DOROTHY CARTY DANIEL, CO-CHAIR (Presiding)**

Attendance: Henrietta Snipes, Dorothy Carty Daniel

Joint meeting with the Professional Development NPDS subcommittee was as follows:

Sharon Sherrill and Tina Sullivan provided an update on becoming a NAHRO Faculty member.

- Interested parties visit the NAHRO Professional Development webpage for an [application](#) and to submit your resume, bio and three references.
- Submitted applications are reviewed by the Professional Development- Quality and Assurance Subcommittee
- Desired qualifications are:
 1. Complete expertise in field, example: if applying to training Tax Credit Course, applicant must know the complete process and have actually participated in the process as the developer, attorney, etc.
- Once reviewed and if chose, the applicant is trained extensively by firm hired to provide training for NAHRO);
- Upon satisfactory completion of training, Professional Development will determine if applicant is ready to become a Faculty member;
- Faculty members must abide by NAHRO rules of conduct, are continuously reviewed by Professional Development. With the aid of end of session surveys and other forms of communication.
- Complaints will be taken seriously and the Faculty members and complainants are interviewed.
- Once fully investigated by Professional Development Department head and NAHRO staff, corrective action will be taken.

Additional items:

Professional Development maintains a pool of highly qualified trainers. There are times when substitutes are needed. In 2008, PD revamped and set higher standards for faculty.



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VOLUNTEER LIST FOR JOHN/TESS - CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CONTACT (CDC) LIST - 3/2014

NAME	CONTACT	STATE	Cong. District. - Sen/Rep
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Willie Anderson	wsawrites@hotmail.com	TX	Cornyn
Philip Bernal	titobernal@aol.com	UT	
Earnest Burke	Burke.agency@gmail.com	TX	Cornyn
Bobbie Butler	bbutler@grhousing.org	MI	
Dorothy Carty Daniel	732-442-4875	NJ	
Barbara Cleland	bcleland@aumhc.org	CO	
Yolanda Hotman	Y_hotman@yahoo.com	TX	Castro
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Cynthia White-Overton	cindywhiteverton@verizon.net	RI	Langevin
Henry Williams	comprehensiveins@bellsouth.net	SC	Clyburn

VOLUNTEER LIST FOR MEMBER SERVICES - COMMISSIONER MENTORS - 3/2014

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