



2011-2013 COMMISSIONERS COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Alan Styles, Chair Deanna Wagner, Vice Chair

9:45 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Saturday, March 24, 2011

Renaissance Hotel—Meeting Room 12/13/14

Washington, DC



Moment of silence for the passing of Commissioners Committee member – Lenel Jackson, Irvington, NJ Housing Authority, March 6, 2012. Ms. Jackson joined the Board of Commissioners on November 2000. She served the Board's Chairperson and was a member of the Finance (chairperson), Procurement and Legal committees and served on NAHRO's Commissioners Committee during the 09-11 term.

SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

***Communication/Advocacy – J. William Quirk, Chair
Fred Wescott, Vice Chair***

Barb Cleland

Kevin Glynn

Thomas Jefferson

George Perez

Homer Thompson

Joan Waring Smith (recording secy)

Professional Development - Moses Mayne, Chair

Beverly Mathena, Vice Chair

Lonnie Boykins

Michael Lacey (recording secy)

Carol Nunley

Henrietta Snipes

Lamont Taylor

Legislative- Rick Leco, Chair

Catherine Luna, Vice Chair

Earnest Burke

Craig Griffith

Angela McCormick (recording secy)

Matt Pike

Carl Richie

Henry Williams

Karen Williams

Resident Issues – Bobbie Butler, Chair

Jean Banks

LaDora Lattimore

REMARKS

Steve Merritt, NERC Regional President and Chair, Housing America Task Force

Mr. Merritt briefed the committee on the Housing America poster contest efforts. He asked for assistance in taking this information back to the executive directors in hopes to encourage more housing authorities to take part in the poster contest. From the advocacy standpoint, this is a tool to activate our housing partners and galvanize our efforts because families and seniors vote; their voices need to be heard. Beginning in October, Housing America will launch a seniors quilting contest. The contest focus is on groups of senior residents to quilt what home means to them. During the afternoon session, J. William Quirk noted if there are commissioners who wish to become more involved in the Housing America efforts to contact him at the conclusion of the meeting. Karen Williams thinks a seniors quilting contest is a great opportunity as she, too, is a quilter.



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Betsey Martens, NAHRO President

President Martens thanked the members for their service to their respective boards and to NAHRO. She thanked Alan for his committee leadership and offered kudos to her board chair, Angela McCormick. As a former Commissioner, President Martens knows what commissioners face and the importance of their time and energy towards advocacy. In the hierarchy of power and influence, commissioners carry a lot of credibility and influence on the Hill. Ms. Martens encouraged the committee to use the strategic action plan and discuss how to activate, elevate and educate your advocacy efforts on the hill and in your communities. She noted every industry has bad apples so we need to elevate ethics in our industry.

Saul Ramirez, Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Ramirez noted that he began his career as a Texas City Council member who was exposed to housing and community action issues. As Mayor of Laredo, Texas, he had a real appreciation for what commissioners do and bring to the discussion of housing and community development. Mr. Ramirez noted you have been charged with a solemn task but now more than ever, as advocates, we need you to galvanize the troops. He also noted that the strategic action plan is a working document. If there are other items in the plan that you feel are applicable to you, please advise us.

CEO Ramirez advised that the housing terminology in Spanish for housing personnel, noted in the 09-11 term, will be based on the commissioner's handbook and needs to be translated into Spanish then reviewed for the terminology. There are very few Spanish speakers and readers. Language translation applications for mobile phones are hit and miss with about an 80% accuracy rate; however, we will be reviewing that angle for those who have a growing population of Spanish speaking residents.

Leg. Network/Advocacy Issues Update

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

Mr. Bohm began by noting for the new members that he and Cortney provide updates to the committee at each of the three committee meetings per year. Your advocacy efforts help to restore and maintain responsible public policies. Most of the work we do is focused on budget and appropriations. The Hill focus will be economy restoration, deficit reduction, and the attempts to sustain programs while cutting overall spending. Our programs are placed in the domestic discretionary expense category that covers a wide range of programs and governmental agencies and is one of the first places Congress goes to cut costs. This conversation will continue as we defend funding for the programs that help our low-moderate income citizens. John and Cortney will keep you up to date through the NAHRO Monitor and Direct News publications and Action Alerts when immediate action is warranted.

Cortney Watson, Manager, Congressional Relations & Advocacy

Ms. Watson welcomed the opportunity to encourage your participation in NAHRO's advocacy efforts. She is pleased with the response to participate, even under these tough circumstances, and thanked those who have stepped up to participate or who have increased their participation. She reminded the committee of NAHRO's advocacy tools



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available. NAHRO's Advocacy center on the website, your letters and calls/emails to Congress and your visits with congressional staff and members of Congress really make a difference. She advised Appropriation season has begun and thoughts turn to FY 2013. The overall funding level is set for all discretionary programs through the 302A Budget Resolution. Once the funding level is decided, it is divided up among the subcommittees. Our subcommittee is Transportation and HUD (THUD). Cortney reminded committee that when you go on your Hill visits, be sure to push for more funding to the HUD budget. She asked that members mention the joint sign on letter with NAHRO and others asking for an increase in appropriations for our subcommittee. There were 1700 signatures, including over 200 national organizations, endorsing this request. Cortney provided additional advocacy sessions that would be of interest to members.

Question: Rick Leco noted the legislative subcommittee wants to know what they can do to enhance participation in a more formalized way in the congressional district contact program and what tools would best serve you in your job on the Hill?

John advised although the Congressional District Contact program, (CDC) goal has been to have at least one voluntary contact person from every congressional district, we can always have more. So the hope is that more commissioners will volunteer to serve as a congressional district contacts either through John/Cortney or through your regional/chapter channels. Another suggestion would be to implement an advocacy plan consisting of tools used throughout the year to prepare your agency for dialogue that leads to responsible public policy. The hope is that boards and commissioners will go back to their agencies and adopt a framework for ongoing legislative advocacy, if only informally, that can definitely be utilized at the local level. We do not ask anyone to lobby. We are asking you to educate and inform decision makers about better public policy through your advocacy efforts. Use the legislative calendar and determine how and who to contact, agency spokesperson to assist you in establishing the framework.

Cortney concurred and extended an invitation to anyone who is interested or knows a commissioner who is interested in serving on the legislative network to contact President Martens as all Legnet appointments are made by her. She also encouraged additional CDC support and advises states that currently require support are: Florida, New York, parts of California. Please contact Cortney to be added to the CDC list. Cortney advises NAHRO contacts, Regional/Chapter presidents and encouraged them to recruit more volunteers for the CDC program through their networks. Perhaps more Monitor coverage will help.

Cortney also noted that the current Legnet Chair, Chris Pegg is focusing on how to create a stronger connection between National NAHRO, and the regions/chapters. To this end, Ms. Pegg will reach out to the regions/chapters in regards to what their Legnet protocol is and how they communicate.



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COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATION

Homer Thompson

SWRC is having difficulty getting commissioners to attend meetings due to budget constraints. To get commissioners to attend, Homer advises SWRC holds certifications either pre or post-conference and gives them a break on registration which seems to help alleviate the budgetary burden.

Rick Leco

Massachusetts – Chelsea HA had a problem with the Executive Director and the commissioners that resulted in the Governor replacing all of the commissioners and for the HA to go into receivership. Further, the Governor is considering taking 240 housing authorities in the commonwealth and regionalizing them into 10 and authorizing non-profits to run them. Rick feels the goal is to eliminate local housing authorities. Also in the line-item budget, language has been added to end stipends to board members. At the last NERC meeting, language passed that asked Congress to set aside 50 million of non-public housing funds that housing authorities can apply for up to \$20,000 for off line units needing renovation work to place them back on line. The housing priority would be for veterans. He hopes to use that language when he meets with his congressional delegation during the conference. Rick asks if anyone is interested in the language to perhaps garner hill sponsorship, to contact him.

REGIONAL REPORTS

NERC – Regional conference, Newport, RI. Their professional development committee ensured that the commissioner's track was very interesting.

MARC – Regional conference, May 22-24, Ocean City, MD

SERC - Executive conference, Asheville, NC. Discussions focused on low attendance due to budgetary concerns. They are working to identify ways to draw attendees. Re-identify their strategic action plan. SERC's Commissioners committee is attempting to find ways to enhance communication and legislative advocacy. Regional Conference, June 24-27, New Orleans, LA.

SWRC – Regional conference, June 17-21, Kansas City, KS. Committee meeting in January, Norman, OK; they are emphasizing commissioner training. They are also ensuring that their commissioner of the year abide by the criteria set by national NAHRO.

NCRC – Regional Conference along with the Illinois Chapter, April 25-27, Peoria, IL.

MPRC – Regional Conference, June 20-22, Cody, WY.



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PSWRC – Regional Conference, May 20-22, Monterey, CA. Moses Mayne is regional conference track chair. Northern Cal/Nevada Chapter conference held in Napa, CA. Conference was well attended. Although chapter numbers were reduced, Moses noted high attendance for commissioners. Attempts are being made to encourage more commissioners to attend conferences by contacting the Board Chairs.

PNWRC – Regional Conference, April 28-May 2, Portland, OR. Commissioners training will be held May 1 and 2. Beverly Mathena mentions that their HA bought a school for \$1 and planned to convert the building into housing for retired seniors was approved by HUD. Ten homes will be housed within that space. The gym will remain and the kitchen is being remodeled by the HA. The property will also earn revenue by renting that area out for parties, weddings, etc. Another school 40 miles away may be available for conversion as well.

RESOLUTIONS FOR BOG CONSIDERATION

#1 Legislative Network Appointees

The Commissioners Committee recommend that one commissioner from each region be appointed to the LEGNET.

Action: Rick Leco moved, Earnest Burke second. **Motion Carries/ approved by BOG**

#2 Strategic Action Plan

The Commissioners Committee endorses the Strategic Action Plan as a blueprint to establish the committee's goals/objectives.

Action: Homer Thompson Moved, Fred Wescott second. **Motion Carries/ approved by BOG**

#3 Commissioners Fundamental Training- Commissioners Committee/PD Committee*

It is the recommendation of the Commissioners Committee that the Board of Governors direct the Chairs of the Commissioners Committee and Professional Development Committee to work together to accomplish the items set forth below with input from each committee, and final approval by the BOG at the 2012 Summer Conference to be implemented by January, 2013.

- 1.) Offer Train the Trainers courses to the Commissioners at ALL NAHRO conferences with the purpose of increasing the available pool of Certified Commissioners who can lead training courses for Commissioners; limited to the Commissioners Fundamental Course only;
- 2.) Commissioners lead the training for the Commissioners Fundamental Seminar Courses only with the purpose of addressing the concerns of Commissioners who are puzzled why an Executive Director is training them on how to be a Commissioner. Commissioners would prefer to have a fellow Commissioner train them;



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3.) Commissioners can lead the Commissioners Fundamental training course in all states where the training is offered to address the concerns that a Commissioner from one state is prohibited from conducting training in another state; and

4.) Remove financial barriers from the fee schedule to allow Commissioner Trainers to conduct training nationwide.

Action: Kevin Glynn moved, Moses Mayne second. **Motion Carries/ Placed on BOG Discussion Agenda and Tabled.**

* BOG voted to table the resolution which was not considered for approval or rejection. The consensus was that discussion should begin with the two committees noted in the resolution prior to any board action. To this end, Chair, Alan Styles will discuss the motion items with Professional Development Chair, Deborah Wilson via teleconference prior to the meeting in San Francisco. He will report to the full committee on outcome.

SUBCOMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNICATION/ADVOCACY – J. WILLIAM QUIRK

Attendance: Bill Quirk, Fred Wescott, *Joan Waring Smith (recording secy)*, Barb Cleland, Kevin Glynn, Thomas Jefferson, George Perez, Homer Thompson

- Commissioners Corner article topic suggestions:
 1. why the [Ambassador Program](#) is important
 2. Why train the trainer should be revisited
 3. The subcommittee encourages committee members to submit your success stories to them for the Commissioner's Corner.

- Kevin Glynn will author a Commissioners Corner article.

LEGISLATIVE – RICK LECO

Attendance: Rick Leco, Catherine Luna, Earnest Burke, Craig Griffith, Angela McCormick (*recording secy*), Matt Pike, Carl Richie, Henry Williams, Karen Williams

- Institutionalize network between National NAHRO, regions and chapters.



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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – MOSES MAYNE

Attendance: Moses Mayne, Beverly Mathena, Lonnie Boykins, Michael Lacey (recording secy), Carol Nunley, Henrietta Snipes, Lamont Taylor

- Update on previous action provided to new members
- Update on curriculum development for commissioners (resident/non-resident)

Discussion

- Encouraging Commissioners to come to conferences for training and ways for commissioners to receive training by commissioners.
- Continue with monthly subcommittee teleconferences.

Moses Mayne asked that NAHRO staff determine whether an updated list of commissioners by region and commissioner conference attendees can be provided to the Professional Development Subcommittee.

NPDS JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING – MOSES MAYNE

- Discussed updating the curriculum for commissioners (resident/non-resident) to ensure relevancy and accuracy;
- Develop the resident issues course and how commissioners can assist other commissioners
- Updated list of commissioners to be forwarded to regions/chapter and state commissioners committees.

Mr. Mayne advised that the NPDS Subcommittee believes the updated list could be retrieved from Member Services.

Note:

1. Currently Commissioners are contacted through their email address. If that email address is shared with someone else or the housing authority, this process becomes problematic. We encourage all members to provide a unique email address so we can accurately capture data from each member.
2. All correspondence to regions and chapters from the Commissioners Committee or Subcommittees should be sent by the committee's liaison, LaTonya Rajah. Material can be sent for distribution to Regional chapter and state association service officers asking them to forward correspondence to their respective commissioners. The goal is to have these commissioners contact their colleagues and non-member commissioners in hopes of enhancing communication between commissioners and offering professional development opportunities through NAHRO.



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RESIDENT ISSUES – BOBBIE BUTLER

Attendance: Bobbie Butler, Chair (Grand Rapids HA), Jean Banks (Maryland Housing Commission), Marlene Hurd, Guest (Oakland Housing Authority).

- *Voter Registration:* Committee discussed voter registration for residents. It was decided to ask their directors to develop a Voters Registration Program.
- *Advocating for Uniform Term Limits for All Commissioners:* NAHRO's Strategic Action Plan, Objective 4 and tasks are as follows:

Explore feasibility of NAHRO advocating for identical term lengths for resident and non-resident commissioners.

Task #1: The committee should send a resolution to the BOG for approval in support of equal treatment for all commissioners with regards to term limits.

Task #2: Publish the resolution in the Journal of Housing and Community Development Magazine with a short article explaining why we support equal treatment for all commissioners with regards to term limits and the value of resident commissioners.

For task #2, Resident Issues chair wanted to conduct a survey to gather data on commissioner's appointment process, term limits and whether commissioners feel a change is warranted. In the committee report out, Carl Richie suggested that chair contact the State Service Officers; ask their assistance in contacting appointing officials and ask them whether term limits should be changed. Chair opted to contact the Service Officers and ask for their assistance.

1. Perhaps after the data is gathered, determine whether a survey is warranted. If so, formulate the survey and incorporate all information (survey and appointing officials data) along with suggested term limit language into a resolution for BOG approval of the article.
2. If BOG approval is granted, data along with BOG approval would be used to create the article. Then the Communication/ Advocacy Subcommittee can coordinate with NAHRO JOHCD Editor, Sylvia Gimenez to facilitate article completion. Committee can discuss any additional action to be taken if necessary.

Chair also asks the full committee to contact her or Chair Styles if anyone wishes to serve on her committee as she has very few members seated.



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Note:

1. The discussion of endorsing equal term limits for all commissioners and crafting general language for those who wish to change their term limit language was never brought to the Board of Governors. It was discussed during the commissioners committee [meeting in St. Louis, October, 2011](#) (pages 1 and 2) and noted to be carried forward to the 11-13 term. In January, 2012, this item was discussed at the Leadership Summit which led to its inclusion in the Strategic Action Plan that was adopted by the Board, March, 2012.
2. The BOG approved the Strategic Action plan, March, 2012 that includes the language of equal support for all commissioners with regards to term lengths.

Having no additional business, the meeting was adjourned.

Attendance:

Alan Styles, Jean Banks, Lonnie Boykins, Earnest Burke, Bobbie Butler, Barb Cleland, Kevin Glynn, Craig Griffith, Thomas Jefferson, Michael Lacey, LaDora Lattimore, Rick Leco, Catherine Luna, Beverly Mathena, Moses Mayne, Angela McCormick, Carol Nunley, George Perez, Matthew Pike, Bill Quirk, Carl Richie, Henrietta Snipes, Lamont Taylor, Homer Thompson, Joan Waring Smith, Fred Wescott, Henry Williams and Karen Williams.

Absent: Carleen Cumberbatch, Gary Gramling, Arthur Kurrasch, Mike Norton, Deanna Wagner, Bernadette Winston

Guests: Carl McFadden, Lake City Housing Authority, Lake City, SC; Rita Rosebaun, Northborough Housing Authority, Northborough, MA; Steve Merritt, NERC Regional President

See you in San Francisco – Summer Conference!