



National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials

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MINUTES STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING August 27, 2021

The Steering Committee meeting was called to order by President Shaw at 11:02 AM EDT. Mr. Wellard conducted a roll call, and Mr. Pike verified a quorum for the meeting was achieved.

Ms. Shaw offered opening comments. She stated that NAHRO should proceed to cancel the in-person component of the 2021 National Conference for a number of health and safety reasons. Ms. Shaw referred to the recent Phoenix site visit by Director of Conferences Jill Randles, and the many cancelled sessions at the recent Carolinas conference.

Mr. Prince offered his full support for the cancellation of the National Conference and was in support of the virtual event. Mr. Vasiliou expressed his 100% support for this decision and noted philosophic differences of some with vaccination and mask requirements.

Ms. Randles shared her findings from her site visit to Phoenix last week. The activity in and around the downtown area and convention center was significantly down. She shared 2021 National Conference facts: 200 paid attendees presently this far out vs. typically 700 for previous in-person conferences, 26 vs 70 exhibitors, with five cancelling this week. Ms. Randles noted that conference sponsors downscaling their commitments, with Yardi significantly decreasing their sponsorship. She noted conference speakers were cancelling or requiring to present virtually at the convention center. Ms. Randles stated her concern for the quality of the content and program, and NAHRO's reputation for a subpar in-person experience.

Mr. Wellard noted in aggregate, NAHRO's cancellation penalty exposure to National Conference contacts was about \$669,000. He briefed the committee on the August 26 meeting with Ms. Shaw, Mr. Martin, Mr. Gerber, Ms. Randles and him with NAHRO legal counsel J. R. Scherr of Morgan Lewis to provide legal advice on the National Conference contracts with the Phoenix Convention Center, Hyatt, and Sheraton/Marriott. Mr. Scherr advised NAHRO to invoke the impossibility or force majeure clauses for the Hyatt and Sheraton contacts. This evocation would be based on the unavailability with the convention center contracts due to the rise in the Delta variant of COVID-19, travel bans from HUD, state and local government agencies, and housing authorities and redevelopment officials, and new CDC guidance.

President: **Sunny Shaw**, CME, C-PHM; Senior Vice President: **Patricia S. Wells**, CME; VP-Housing: **Lisa Ann Garcia**, CME, CMVO; VP-Member Services: **Denita Johnson**; VP-Budget and Administration: **Clif Martin**, CME, CMPO, SPHM, PHM; VP-Commissioners: **Karina Mason Rorris**, NCC; VP-Community Revitalization and Development: **Stacy L. Spann**; VP-Professional Development: **Sally Stang**, CMVO, CRPBV; VP-International Research and Global Exchange: **Alan Zais**, SPHM, PHM; Interim Chief Executive Officer: **Michael Gerber**

Mr. Gerber shared information about National Conference and its cancellation of the in-person component. He noted that Ms. Randles, Mr. Wellard, and he briefed the Budget & Administration Committee on July 28 and August 25 on the conference contracts, exposure to cancellation fees, and risks to continue with the in-person conference. Mr. Gerber noted feedback from members, commissioners and other stakeholders on travel bans, safety and health concerns that prohibit attendance. He noted the long standing NAHRO relationships with Hyatt, Sheraton/Marriott and the convention center. Mr. Gerber concluded with the request for the Steering Committee to approve the cancellation of the in-person conference, and transition to an all-virtual conference.

Ms. Shaw stated there was a clear path to cancellation with the work of the B & A Committee and advice from counsel.

Mr. Richie asked about the Morgan Lewis experience. Mr. Gerber and Mr. Wellard provided background information and previous positive firm experience with the March 2020 cancellation of the 2020 Washington Conference. Mr. Richie noted the past Chicago conference and possibility to move our Phoenix contract to future years and suggested that Sylvia Bowen research prior meeting minutes for any helpful information to share with Ms. Randles. Ms. Shaw stated Morgan Lewis recommended that strategy, and Mr. Martin clarified in the meeting chat that this would not be offered in the first round of negotiations. Mr. Herrington stated that Arkansas just cancelled their September conference and agreed with the decision to cancel the in-person National Conference.

Mr. Vasiliou asked about the impossibility clauses in the contract. Mr. Gerber stated that Morgan Lewis reviewed and guided staff and leadership on these points.

MOTION: Mr. Guy motioned to move away from the 2021 National Conference in-person event, and to pivot to an all-virtual event due to the rise in COVID-19 and the Delta variant, increased travel bans from HUD, state and local governments, and housing agencies, and new CDC guidance, and to minimize the financial penalties. Mr. Prince seconded the motion.

A period of discussion occurred. Mr. Rodriguez agreed with the cancellation of the in-person conference, noting preserving NAHRO's reputation and the wellness of the members was most important. Ms. Wells noted the significant research and work done by Ms. Randles, Mr. Wellard and Mr. Gerber, and the review of the B & A Committee to ensure this good decision. In the meeting chat, Ms. Garcia noted that this was a wise decision.

The MOTION was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Mr. Vasiliou commented that a clear message be shared with the regions about the transition of power since the National Conference was now virtual. Mr. Richie agreed.

Mr. Gerber thanked the Steering Committee for the support in this decision.

Mr. Gerber summarized the August 26 Supreme Court's ruling on the reversal of the August 3 CDC stay on the eviction moratorium. Mr. Banna stated the ruling meant the CDC did not have statutory authority to place the stay, and the stay was now lifted and not extended to October 3. Mr. Banna shared a draft statement with the committee on this decision. Ms. Wells and Mr. Vasiliou provided comments on the court's decision.

Ms. Wells MOTIONED to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Richie seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:08 PM EDT.

In attendance:

Officers: Sunny Shaw, Patricia Wells, Lisa Ann Garcia, Denita Johnson, Clif Martin, Karina Mason Rorris, Stacy L. Spann, Sally Stang, and Alan Zais. **Past Presidents:** Carl Richie, Steve Merritt and Preston Prince. **Chairs-Other Leadership Groups:** Elizabeth Glenn, Richard Herrington, Andy Rodriguez, Mark Thiele, and Cynde Smith. **Regional Presidents:** Anthony Vasiliou, John Mahon, and George Guy. **Staff:** Mike Gerber, Georgi Banna, Katy Cueto, Jill Randles, Chuck Wellard.

Excused Absence: Jennifer Keogh, Senghor Manns, Peter Lifari, and Mark Taylor.

Absent: Tonya Mabry, Barbara Kauss, and Cupid Alexander.