

§4723. Appointment, qualifications, tenure and meetings of commissioners and directors

1. Municipality. The following provisions apply to municipal housing authorities.

A. Each authority shall appoint 7 commissioners. No commissioner may be appointed until the authority is authorized to function as provided in section 4721. In the case of a city having a mayor-council form of government, the mayor shall appoint the commissioners with the advice and consent of the council. In the case of a city having a manager-council form of government, the council shall appoint the commissioners. In the case of a town, the municipal officers shall appoint the commissioners.

Any person who resides within the authority's boundaries or area, and who is otherwise eligible for appointment under this chapter, may be appointed as a commissioner of the authority. This section does not prevent a commissioner from concurrently serving as a commissioner on a renewal authority established by any city with a population of 20,000 or more.

The commissioners who are initially appointed under this section serve for terms of one, 2, 3, 4 and 5 years, respectively, from the date of their appointment. Thereafter, the commissioners are appointed for terms of 5 years, except that all vacancies must be filled for the unexpired terms. All subsequent appointments and appointments to fill a vacancy must be made as provided in this subsection.

(1) In a municipality with housing that is subsidized or assisted by programs of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, at least 2 of the commissioners must be residents of that housing. When tenant associations exist in the housing, the appointing authority shall give priority consideration to nominations made by the associations. The first commissioner appointed to an authority, who is a resident of subsidized or assisted housing, serves for a 4-year term from the date of appointment. Thereafter, the commissioner must be appointed as provided in this subsection.

(2) A certificate of the appointment or reappointment of any commissioner must be filed with the authority. This certificate is conclusive evidence of the due and proper appointment of the commissioner. [PL 1993, c. 218, §1 (AMD).]

B. A commissioner shall receive no compensation for services but is entitled to any necessary expenses, including travel expenses, incurred in the discharge of duties. Each commissioner shall hold office until a successor has been appointed and has qualified. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

C. Each authority shall elect a chair and vice-chair from among the commissioners. An authority may employ a secretary, who is executive director, and technical experts and any other officers, agents and employees that it requires and shall determine their qualifications, duties and compensation. An authority may employ its own counsel and legal staff. It may delegate to its agents or employees any powers or duties that it considers proper. [PL 2011, c. 560, §1 (AMD).]

D. The powers of an authority are vested in its commissioners. Meetings of the commissioners may be held anywhere within the area of operation of the authority or within any additional area where the authority is authorized to undertake a project. Four commissioners constitute a quorum of an authority for the purpose of conducting its business, exercising its powers and for all other purposes, notwithstanding the existence of any vacancies. The authority may take action upon the vote of a majority of the commissioners present, unless its bylaws require a larger number. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

[PL 2011, c. 560, §1 (AMD).]

2. State. The following provisions apply to the state housing authority.

A. [PL 1993, c. 359, Pt. D, §2 (RP).]

B. The Maine State Housing Authority, as authorized by Title 5, chapter 379, must have 10 commissioners, 8 of whom must be appointed by the Governor, subject to review by the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters and to confirmation by the Legislature. The 9th commissioner is the Treasurer of State, who serves as an ex officio voting member. The Treasurer of State may designate the Deputy Treasurer of State to serve in place of the Treasurer of State. The 10th commissioner is the director of the Maine State Housing Authority, who serves as an ex officio nonvoting member. The Governor, in making appointments or reappointments to fill vacancies for commissioners under this paragraph, shall ensure that commissioners of the Maine State Housing Authority meet the requirements outlined in paragraph B-1. The powers of the Maine State Housing Authority are vested in the commissioners. The commissioners may delegate such powers and duties to the director of the Maine State Housing Authority as they determine appropriate.

The Governor shall appoint the chair of the commissioners from among the 8 gubernatorial appointments. The chair serves as a nonvoting member, except that the chair may vote only when the chair's vote will affect the result. The commissioners shall elect a vice-chair of the commissioners from among their number.

Following reasonable notice to each commissioner, 5 commissioners of the Maine State Housing Authority constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting its business, exercising its powers and for all other purposes, notwithstanding the existence of any vacancies. Action may be taken by the commissioners upon a vote of a majority of the commissioners present, unless otherwise specified in law or required by the Maine State Housing Authority's bylaws.

The Maine State Housing Authority may meet by telephonic, video, electronic or other similar means of communication with less than a quorum assembled physically at the location of a public proceeding identified in the notice required by Title 1, section 406 only if:

- (1) Each commissioner can hear all other commissioners, speak to all other commissioners and, to the extent reasonably practicable, see all other commissioners by videoconferencing or other similar means of communication during the public proceeding, and members of the public attending the public proceeding at the location identified in the notice required by Title 1, section 406 are able to hear and, to the extent reasonably practicable, see all commissioners participating from other locations by videoconferencing or other similar means of communication;
- (2) Each commissioner who is not physically present at the location of the public proceeding and who is participating through telephonic, video, electronic or other similar means of communication identifies all persons present at the location from which the commissioner is participating;
- (3) A commissioner who participates while not physically present at the location of the public proceeding identified in the notice required by Title 1, section 406 does so only when the commissioner's attendance is not reasonably practical. The reason that the commissioner's attendance is not reasonably practical must be stated in the minutes of the meeting; and
- (4) Each commissioner who is not physically present at the location of the public proceeding and who is participating through telephonic, video, electronic or other similar means of communication has received prior to the public proceeding all documents and materials discussed at the public proceeding, with substantially the same content as those presented at the public proceeding. Documents or other materials made available at the public proceeding may be transmitted to the commissioner not physically present during the public proceeding if

the transmission technology is available. Failure to comply with this subparagraph does not invalidate an action taken by the Maine State Housing Authority at the public proceeding. [PL 2021, c. 657, §13 (AMD).]

B-1. The Governor, in making appointments or reappointments to fill vacancies for commissioners under paragraph B, shall ensure that commissioners of the Maine State Housing Authority include the following:

- (1) A commissioner who represents tenants, who is an advocate for tenants' rights or who resides in housing subsidized by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development or the Maine State Housing Authority;
- (2) A commissioner who has knowledge and expertise in civil rights or in affirmatively advancing fair housing policy;
- (3) A commissioner who represents residents with disabilities or aging residents;
- (4) A commissioner with expertise in energy efficiency issues regarding residential structures; and
- (5) Four members who have:
 - (a) Experience or expertise in any of the following: housing development and rehabilitation; supporting unhoused populations; improving labor standards; economic and community development; transportation; municipal land use planning; the building trades; the real estate market; or banking and finance; and
 - (b) An interest in and commitment to increasing the availability and affordability of housing opportunities for the people of the State.

The Governor shall make a good faith effort to ensure that, to the extent possible, the commissioners of the Maine State Housing Authority closely reflect the geographic, gender and racial diversity of the State. [PL 2021, c. 657, §14 (NEW).]

C. The Maine State Housing Authority must have a director, who must be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the office. The Governor shall appoint the director of the Maine State Housing Authority, subject to review by the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters and to confirmation by the Legislature.

(1) The director is the chief administrative officer of the Maine State Housing Authority. The commissioners shall establish the rate and amount of compensation of the director. The commissioners are responsible for the performance review and termination of the director. Any decision to terminate the director must be made by an affirmative vote of at least 5 commissioners.

(3) The director of the Maine State Housing Authority shall supervise the administrative affairs and technical activities of the Maine State Housing Authority in accordance with the rules and policies established by the commissioners. The director of the Maine State Housing Authority may act in all personnel matters and may employ technical or legal experts and any other officers, agents and employees that the director requires, and shall determine their qualifications, duties and compensation. The director may delegate to the employees and agents any powers and duties that the director considers proper. [PL 2021, c. 657, §15 (AMD).]

D. Any person who, at the time of appointment, is a resident of the State, may serve as a commissioner, except that the director need not be a resident of the State before being appointed.

(1) Each commissioner, except for the director and the Treasurer of State, serves a 4-year term beginning with the expiration of the term of that person's predecessor, except that a vacancy

occurring in a position before the normal expiration of the appointment must be filled as soon as practicable by a new gubernatorial appointee who serves for the remainder of the unexpired term. Each commissioner continues to hold office after the term expires until a successor is appointed. In any instance in which more than one commissioner is serving beyond the original term, any new appointee is deemed to succeed the commissioner whose term expired first.

(2) The Secretary of State shall prepare a certificate evidencing the appointment of each commissioner. An original of this certificate must be provided to the appointee. One authenticated copy must be retained by the Maine State Housing Authority and one by the Secretary of State. An authenticated certificate of appointment is conclusive evidence of the appointment. [PL 1993, c. 359, Pt. D, §3 (AMD).]

E. The director is a full-time employee of the authority, but may receive fees or honoraria for services provided to others not in conflict with full-time duties and not performed during time for which the director is receiving compensation from the Maine State Housing Authority. In addition to any authorized compensation, the director is entitled to any employee benefits that are available to other employees of the Maine State Housing Authority, including, but not limited to, authority contributions to any retirement plan, insurance plan, deferred compensation plan or other similar benefits. Each commissioner is entitled to compensation according to the provisions of Title 5, chapter 379, except notwithstanding Title 5, section 12003-A, subsection 4, authorized expenses incurred by a state employee, or designee of that state employee, serving in an ex officio capacity as a commissioner must be paid from the budget of the authority. [PL 2011, c. 560, §1 (AMD).]

[PL 2021, c. 657, §§13-15 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 737, §§A2,C106 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 104, §§C8,10 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 574, §2 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 218, §1 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 359, §§D2,3 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 101, §1 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 560, §1 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 449, §3 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 657, §§13-15 (AMD).

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