

Great Barrington Housing Authority Regular Meeting in Person & via Zoom
at Flag Rock Community Room 2 Bernard Gibbons Dr., Great Barrington, MA 01230
Wednesday, February 28, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman John Grogan opened the meeting at 1:00pm with Board members John Grogan, Maureen Meier, Eileen Mooney, Jackie Sinico and Phil Orenstein present.
Also present: Executive Director Tina Danzy

II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

1. 2025 Budget, financials, reserve fund, vacancies, maintenance, legal, grievances and other updates.
Potential Board vote.

T. Danzy stated the Board has received the draft budget for next year. Sue Honeycutt, Fenton Ewald Assoc., presented stating GBHA had received an increase in its subsidy for next year totaling \$57,813 – but she noted that due to reserves being low, at 2.98%, the funds will go towards increasing the reserve to the required 35% - so overall, the budget has not increased significantly. Regarding the budget, she continued to note GBHA will get more next year in solar savings that should amount to \$19,000 and salaries will increase 2% for the executive director and 7% for other staff along with increased costs for benefits. She also stated legal fees have increased significantly due to tenant account receivables and the state will cover half of what is budgeted. She suggested asking the state for \$70,000 in additional funding to fund the reserve and cover the proposed budget. She noted even with the additional funds the budget would be tight next year. She added many housing authorities are facing the same issue with increased expenses/low reserves.

E. Mooney asked about the administrative other line and it was noted that is based on last year and covers unanticipated costs. P. Orenstein confirmed total \$125,000 is needed to get to the full reserve based on the proposed budget – and if the \$70,000 is not approved there will need to be significant budget cuts.

J. Grogan made a motion to accept the budget as proposed; **E. Mooney seconded**. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0.

E. Mooney asked S. Honeycutt to send the revolving fund list.

T. Danzy provided an update on maintenance projects stating the Dewey community room and other upgrades there were progressing well – and a security camera was installed. She also stated the Brookside community room and back porch and Flag Rock surrounds projects are being scoped. She noted that Rich Phair, Maintenance Director, would be out for two months or more and the Board discussed if Worker's Comp or GBHA was paying him – T. Danzy stated she would check into how it works. E. Mooney asked about his cell phone charges and T. Danzy replied he is still in contact and is expected to return to the job. T. Danzy also provided an update on nonpayment cases that have a court ordered agreement and others that are pending. She noted these cases can be protracted which leads to increased costs for legal services. She also provided an update on vacancies and applications and noted Resident Services continues to provide important support. She noted she was sending a letter to Sen Elizabeth Warren regarding the \$30.00 connectivity issue. E. Mooney asked about the court decision/agreement – T. Danzy responded she would provide a copy once it is finalized. T. Danzy also confirmed there are no pending grievances.

III. CITIZEN SPEAK:

a. Unidentified resident of Flag Rock stated there was an issue with the elevator - she raised her concerns with the office and did not get a response/notification the issue was fixed. It was clarified that when there are concerns T. Danzy should be contacted first.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Set next regular meeting Date. Potential Board vote – The Board agreed to meet on March 20 at 1:00pm at Flag Rock. It was discussed that it is no longer necessary to meet weekly, but a special meeting could be scheduled, if needed.
2. Maintenance work situation & compensation, Potential Board vote. J. Grogan stated Tim has been doing multiple jobs at GBHA in R. Phair's absence and that he should be compensated in some way – \$500-\$1000 was floated as an amount and his work/compensation was discussed including that he is always on call. It was also noted that budget continues to be tight.

P. Orenstein made a motion for the Board to authorize \$500 appreciation payment to Tim for his hard work;

M. Meier seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – it was raised whether this would be considered a gift or salary and T. Danzy stated she would look into it. All in favor: 5-0.

3. New Policy suggestions. Potential Board vote – E. Mooney stated she had provided a draft of a new policy and asked the Board to review and provide input.
4. Minutes responsibility – M. Meier stated she would do the minutes.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Plastic sheeting for railings – J. Grogan stated when the weather improves it will be put up.
2. ED hiring update – J. Grogan stated it is a difficult process to place ads and the targeted publications were discussed. E. Mooney asked about the number of units stated in the ad – it was discussed that Carolina of EOHLC approved the number and to change it might cause additional delay. E. Mooney emphasized the need for it to be correct.

E. Mooney made a motion to contact Carolina and confirm/correct the number of units stated in the ad; **P.**

Orenstein seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. Motion failed 4-1 with E. Mooney voting “yes” and all other Board members voting “no.”

J. Grogan provided details on his email correspondence with Andrea Lindsay, Executive Director, Stockbridge Housing Authority, about a management agreement for her to serve as interim GBHA Executive Director while the hiring process continues. It was agreed there should be exploratory discussions.

M. Meier made a motion to draft a letter to let the Stockbridge Housing Authority know the GBHA Board has agreed to have an exploratory discussion with the Stockbridge Housing Authority about a shared Executive Director arrangement. **J. Sinico seconded.** J. Grogan asked for any discussion – it was agreed the letter should be addressed to the Executive Director and J. Grogan should proceed. All in favor: 5-0.

V. LTO REPORT – There was no report.

VI. Minutes Review/Approval Board Meetings of 11/29, 12/13, 1/24, 2/2, 2/9, 2/16. Potential Board votes.

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the November 29, 2023 minutes; **J. Sinico seconded.** J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0

E. Mooney shared edits to the December 13 minutes regarding the Annual Plan presentation and attributing a statement to T. Danzy.

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the December 13, 2023 minutes as amended; **J. Sinico seconded.** J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the January 24, 2024 minutes; **E. Mooney seconded.** J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the February 2, 2024 minutes; **J. Sinico seconded.** J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the February 9, 2024 minutes as amended; **J. Sinico seconded**. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0

M. Meier asked about the review/amendment process for posted draft minutes – and the process was discussed. It was agreed Board members would be advised when draft minutes are posted and asked for edits. At meetings a blacklined copy would be used so Board members can see edits and they can be discussed.

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the February 16, 2024 minutes; **E. Mooney seconded**. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0

VII. BOARD COMMENTS

- a. M. Meier suggested doing an exit interview with T. Danzy and that feedback be shared with the Board. It was discussed and agreed that J. Grogan and perhaps one other Board member would be present at the meeting.
- b. The posting of GBHA Zoom meetings was discussed and J. Grogan agreed to contact CTSB to do so.
- c. J. Sinico asked for payroll detail and it was agreed that would be provided.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT - **J. Sinico made a motion to adjourn**; **P. Orenstein seconded**. All in favor: 5-0. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 2:37pm.

Documents discussed: Proposed GBHA budget

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow