

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND (AHTF)  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, February 9, 2021, 6:00 PM  
Remote virtual meeting by ZOOM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bill Cooke, Chairman; Fred Clark, Vice Chairman; John Katz; Larissa Yaple; Garfield Reed.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jane Ralph & June Wolfe of Construct; Carolyn Valli of Habitat for Humanity; Mary Pat Akers; Eileen Mooney; Chris Rembold; Shep Evans, Administrative Support.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Cooke called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM and read Governor Baker's Statement following his Orders of 3/12/2020 and 3/15/2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, MGL Ch.30A, Sec 19, and imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place.

**MINUTES:** The minutes of January 6, 2021 had been previously been circulated and corrected. **Motion by Ms. Yaple, seconded by Mr. Clark to approve as corrected. By roll-call vote, unanimously approved.**

####

**Mr. Cooke** opened the discussion on whether to accept the conveyance of the Grove Street property and when to do so. He asked Mr. Rembold for advice or suggestions.

**Mr. Rembold** said that the Town currently has possession until the deed to a successor is recorded. He commented that there was no rush. As to the question of carrying costs, he had no information on that subject, and noted that the Town Meeting gave no time line when it approved conveyance to the Trust.

**Mr. Clark** opined that the Board needs to know a time line and asked the Board whether Grove Street was a 2021 project?

**Mr. Cooke** responded that it was a 2021 project.

**Mr. Rembold** suggested that, if the Trust would be wanting to receive proposals from prospective parties to take on the renovation and eventual onward conveying of the Grove Street residence, it might be good to draft a request for proposals for consideration at the next meeting.

**Mr. Cooke** called for volunteers to work on such an RFP.

**Mr. Clark** indicated his willingness to work on the RFP.

**Mr. Cooke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Katz, that Mr. Clark and Mr. Rembold would work on the text of an RFP to be considered at the next meeting of the Board. Unanimous approval by roll-call vote.**

####

**Mr. Cooke** raised the question of a vote on the contract with Construct for provision of an additional \$50,000 of Trust financial support for Construct's Rental Assistance Program. There was a brief discussion of prior commitments culminating in an acknowledgement of the vote at Town Meeting to allow an approved amount of \$100,000 of CPA funding to be allocated for either Down Payment Assistance or Rental Assistance.

**Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Katz, to approve a further commitment of \$50,000 to the Construct Rental Assistance Program.**

**Mr. Clark** asked for a report from a representative of Construct on how the Rental Assistance Program had gone so far.

**Mr. Cooke** suggested that the Board have Ms. Carlson come to the next meeting to discuss.

**Mr. Clark** opined that on-line content should first be approved by the board.

**Ms. Yapple** said that she no longer had her Facebook account, that she will need to set up a new account and that Mr. Cooke could make her administrator of the account in order to manage on-line affairs for the Trust.

**Ms. Yapple** opined that the Town could host meetings, surveys, other platforms to assist the Trust.

**Mr. Reed** said that the Trust needs to advertise where the people are.

**Mr. Cooke** concluded that the Board will start with Ms. Akers list of groups in town that could provide likely target customers for Trust programs. Mr. Rembold will accumulate ideas from board members to add to the list.

**Ms. Akers** said she was happy to do the ground work to connect to the groups on the list.

####

**Mr. Cooke** raised the general question of where the Trust would be going in the future.

**Ms. Yapple** said "job training", and work with Town government partners like the Planning Board to encourage a continuing supply of affordable housing.

**Ms. Wolf w/ Ms. Valli** will be attending the BNRC Housing Consortium Program. The Consortium is a gathering of interest groups and non-profits that, together, represent greater mass collaboration on common goals and common aggregate local support, and thereby command greater financial support for common objectives.

**Mr. Clark** said the market cost of land is a limiting resource. He opined that we need to find a way to stimulate production of homes that are affordable to own.

**Ms. Yapple** said Air B&Bs are being talked about as a source of tax revenue for affordable housing. Some towns are dedicating short term rental tax revenues to Affordable Housing.

**Mr. Reed** said Great Barrington is partly a service industry, i.e., the service economy. People working here need to have rental housing because they can't afford to own. The Trust should not move too far from rental housing as an important part of the answer.

####

**A spontaneous discussion ensued** about Greenagers' "Pathway to Trades" program and the stigma of High School trades curricula in a Berkshire world dominated by second home owners.

**Mr. Clark and Mr. Reed** agreed they would like to see a regional vocational institution.

####

**Mr. Katz** reminded that CDCSB is bringing on-line about 100 rental units in the next few years.

####

**Ms. Wolfe** had a flash suggestion that the Trust refer to "affordable housing" as "**essential worker housing**".

**Citizen Speak Time: None**

**Media Speak: Aleen Mooney**, "Interesting discussion."

**Adjournment:** Hearing no objection, **Mr. Cooke adjourned the meeting at 7:25 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,



Shepley W. Evans  
Administrative Support