

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND (AHTF)  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
APPROVED MINUTES  
Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 6:30 PM  
Remote virtual meeting by ZOOM.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Fred Clark (Chair), Joseph Method, Bill Cooke and Garfield Reed

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jane Ralph of Construct

**Mr. Clark** called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM, read Governor Baker's and Governor Healy's Orders regarding public access to public meetings and called the roll of members present. He called for a motion to accept the minutes of February 21, 2023 and the subcommittee meeting on March 15, 2023. Both were approved by roll-call vote.

**Mr. Clark** welcomed Jane Ralph of Construct who will present a proposal for a second year of financial support to the emergency rent support program that the AHTF has participated in with Construct and others. He shared his ZOOM screen and showed a copy of the proposal from Construct.

**Ms. Ralph** thanked Mr. Clark and explained that Construct initiated the rental assistance program immediately after the Covid 19 "shut-down", and with the generous participation of Great Barrington, Lenox, and other sources have been able to support both tenants and landlords - frequently as a financial source of last resort. The current grant request is for \$50,000. The funds are not advanced to Construct as a lump sum but are set aside in a separate account for encumbered funds and periodically drawn down on request from Construct supported with an activity report.

Mr. Clark asked for a roll call vote on the proposal from Construct: Cooke-yes; Reed-yes Method-yes; Clark -yes. Unanimous approval.

**NEWS & NOTES**

**Mr. Clark** reported that Governor Healy has signed a new bill extending remote participation in Town meetings to March of 2025. We can also hold hybrid meeting, but will stay on ZOOM for the time being. The Habitat project on North Plain Road was granted a Special Permit on March 27<sup>th</sup>. The next steps is preparation of documents for infrastructure construction and paperwork for bidding. The Grove Street house is finishing up and Habitat is looking for people to help paint and is preparing for their lottery drawing on the property. In the next meeting the Board will conduct its annual reorganization / election of officers and a conversation about an annual calendar. Mr. Clark would like the board members to look for new ways to create or promote affordable housing and look for Town owned properties that may be now or may soon be candidates to become affordable housing.

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**Trustee Speak Time: Mr. Reed** suspects that ADUs are not going to be a hit.

**Citizen Speak Time: Amy Turnbull** is very much in favor of accumulating money or access to money to move quickly when opportunity presents itself.

**Media Speak Time: None**

**Next meeting will be on May 16, 2023 at 6:30 PM.**

**Adjournment:** Without objection Mr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 7:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Shepley Evans

Admin. Support



## Project/ Grant Request

*This form is to be used to request funds from the Great Barrington Affordable Housing Trust Fund*

Name/ Organization: Construct  
Address 316A State Rd Great Barrington, MA 01230  
Contact Person Jane Ralph  
Email 413.429.4381  
Phone  
Title of request: Rental Assistance for Great Barrington Residents  
Address of Project: Administered from 41 Mahaiwe St office  
Dollar amount requested: \$50,000  
When are the funds needed: April 15

### Describe briefly the request:

Construct seeks \$50,000 for rental assistance for households at or below 100% of area median income (AMI). Starting in early April 2020, Construct has seen an exponential increase in need for rental assistance. At first it was due to households where income had been reduced due to COVID-19. Now, rent has also increased exponentially for many Great Barrington residents while income has remained flat. We see many households between 50% and 100% of area median income in need of assistance and they are not eligible for RAFT (Rental Assistance for Families in Transition). RAFT eligibility requires a formal eviction notice or applies only to new lease ups. An eviction filing then follows the household as they seek future housing. Even when it is granted, RAFT often takes 2 months or more. Construct, as a community-based organization is able track funds responsibly and get assistance out the door much more quickly, avoid threat of eviction and sustain households and landlords alike.

Affordable housing units, if applicable: All assists will be for households of low to moderate income not exceeding 100% AMI

Number and type of deed restricted units: NA

Income Qualification % of AMI: <100%

How will this request promote affordable housing? This request helps keep Great Barrington renters sustained in their homes even as rents continue to rise. Construct's Housing Navigator will also provide opportunities for financial coaching, microloans and other economic sustainability tools administered through Greylock Federal Credit Union or Lee Bank.