

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

DRAFT

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BOARD MEETING

Great Barrington Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Meeting held at Claire Teague Senior Center

Present: Karen Smith, James Mercer, Jackie Sinico, Diane Dillon (via phone)

Administration: Tina Danzy

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:15PM by Chairperson Smith.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – March 19, 2019 and April 1, 2019 – Redacted

Mercer made a motion, seconded by Sinico to approve the meeting minutes of March 19, 2019 as presented.

Unanimous approval.

Mercer made a motion, seconded by Sinico to approve the April 1, 2019 Special meeting minutes, redacted.

Sinico stated she did not state “it is not known how he would interact with people once here”. Page 2, paragraph 5, the second half of the first sentence.

Unanimous approval, as amended.

CITIZEN SPEAK

None

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Tina Danzy

- PHA System – Late rent notices were processed from the PHA System last week, with good response. Tenants are working to bring their rent up to date. If a workable amount of arrears, in-house agreements are being made.
- Rent for the month of April was billed out - \$38,768.15. As of today all but \$7,229.00 has been collected, which is a tremendous improvement. Approximately \$3,000 is under a payment agreement.

- Preventive Maintenance Feature – staff had training last week on use of this software in the PHA System. It will be much easier to produce accurate reports from this software. Older data was purged.
- IPADs for maintenance crew have been received. There will be training next Monday on how to use the IPADs, sync, print and file reports from them.
- Accounting feature – there has been much work done in this area. Now waiting for Accountant to assist with codes that need to be added to tie everything together.
- Vendor payments are up to date as of yesterday. A transfer was made from the Dewey account to assist with meeting expenses.
- Vacancies: Unit 14 has had a couple of responses. Hopefully the office can work through the process and have someone ready and on board as soon as the unit is ready to be occupied. A pull list has been done for Unit 216. Currently waiting on verifications. Hopefully a tenant will be found from this list, otherwise another pull will have to be done. A couple of applicant appeals that have been made, and was hoping one would work out, but they have been passed over to legal and will take some time. Unit 102 has given notice to vacate as of 4/30/19, so a pull from the wait list will be done for that unit.
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts went live with the CHAMPS system on April 10th. Application for housing can now be made directly through the system. No more paperwork is necessary. Applicants can update their preferences, change housing needs or addresses online. The office expects people will continue to use paper for a while, but this online system will help everyone eventually.
- Note: A PHN Notice was made on the CHAMPS system the other day. The notice mentions some of the issues that can be experienced with the CHAMPS System. It can be difficult to explain to applicants where they stand on a wait list. Housing priority is determined by preferences and how many an applicant has. It is very important how the questionnaire is filled out as it makes a difference how the system pulls applicants. If an applicant is #3 on one pull it does not necessarily mean they will be #1 or #2 on the next pull. Applicants who are a non-response on a pull are able to be removed from the list and would have to re-apply if interested. Copies of public notices are available at the office or via website at www.mass.gov/service-details/public-housing-admin-notices.
- Karen Lewis, GBHA Administrative Assistant, has given her resignation, effective May 14, 2019. She has agreed to stay on until a replacement is found if needed and if available.
- Trainings: Staff will be attending various trainings. May 7th and May 19th – 21st Danzy will be attending training. There will also be a training session on Dwelling and Unit Inspection held in June in Chicopee. Danzy and Phair will attend this training. It is no cost – sponsored by the Commonwealth.
- Alarm replacement – still waiting on estimates
- Stove replacement at Brookside – Project has been approved, purchases have been made. Waiting on replacement schedule.
- Danzy has walked the property with maintenance in an effort to determine where best to locate a dog walking area. It will be a fenced in area. Working on securing bids.
- Flag Rock Family Clean Up – notices have been sent. Good progress is being made. May 1st will begin walking around properties to determine what may be left to do.
- Tenant mentioned there is siding coming off of Building #2 at Dewey. Danzy stated when the weather is better a walk around to inspect the physical facilities will be done.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

Smith stated since last July GBHA has assumed costs in regard to the Dewey property, maintenance, administrative costs, etc. The Accountant has made a calculation of a fair number that has been transferred to the GBHA account from the Dewey account to help with these costs. There will be an amount transferred each month from the Dewey account which will contribute to payment of salaries, etc. to assist in keeping these expenses more balanced between properties.

There has also been discussion with the State prompting them that a subsidy payment has not been made to GBHA since last October. In addition, all exemptions that needed to be funded by April 1st. Monies will be forthcoming. The revenue stream is improving. Work is also being done to sort out utility costs of the three properties.

Smith thanked Danzy for her hard work at getting all these financial areas straightened out. She also thanked Marlene Koloski for her hard work on setting up the LTO.

OLD BUSINESS

- a) Re-vote on acceptance of LTO with all needed documentation and revised bylaws

Smith made a motion, seconded by Sinico to accept and acknowledge the Local Tenant Organization (LTO) upon submission of all required documentation: votes, meeting minutes and revised bylaws.

Unanimous approval via roll call vote.

- b) Pension Review

Smith stated the Board had decided to re-visit GBHA contribution match to employee pension funds in 6 months. GBHA is not quite there financially, and will review this subject again in 3 months.

Mercer made a motion, seconded by Sinico to postpone discussion in regard to matching employee pension contributions to the July Board meeting.

Unanimous approval via roll call vote.

- c) Final Vote on Executive Director Contract

Mercer made a motion, seconded by Sinico that the Great Barrington Housing Authority (GBHA) approve the contract with Tina Danzy for the position of Executive Director with a salary of \$56,067.00 per year. All fringe benefits under the GBHA Personnel Policy will also be included. Contract term will be April 17, 2019 to April 16, 2020. At the end of this contract the GBHA will adjust the hours of the position of Executive Director to 26 hours per week, as per State guidelines.

Smith, Mercer, Dillon and Sinico all voted approval via roll call vote.

Smith stated there is much movement around the reduction in a year to 26 hours per week. Hopefully the LTO and State Representatives can assist in this area.

LTO REPORT – Marlene Koloski

Koloski reported last August residents participated in a tag sale that raised \$267.00 for the purchase of a Gazebo. The purchase has been made and the gazebo was delivered the other day. The LTO would like to donate the gazebo to the GBHA for use by the Flag Rock Elderly and Disabled tenants. Smith thanked the residents for their donation. The gazebo will be put up and inspected for safety by Phair. Koloski stated her hope is the LTO can continue to work with the GBHA Board without negativity and fighting to make GBHA a happier place.

Smith stated she and Koloski also visited Brookside, Unit 7C together and found the unit to definitely be in need of re-painting and power washing. A volunteer has come forward to perform this work on this one unit. Smith stated she proposes power washing the siding and the ceiling and let it dry. Approach State through ARCAT to see if they would assist in funding this work being done to all units. The work would have to be bid out as the maintenance crew would not have time in their schedule to complete it. Smith offered to pay for the two gallons of paint necessary to do this one unit, 7C, and take pictures of before and after. The Maintenance Department will supervise the work done.

A tenant requested a copy of the State guidelines where it states Dewey residents are unable to vote in regard to Board Officers. Smith stated in the State Regulations, when home rules regulation was done in order to transfer Dewey to GBHA, it is stated in order to vote or serve on the Board an individual must live where the Housing Authority is located. Smith has been in touch with DHCD legal to bring this to their attention. Their response was they will work through legislation to clear this up. Smith stated she is not sure if Dewey residents will be allowed to vote in a Board officer election, but will definitely be allowed to sit on the Board. Both situations have been brought to their attention.

LTO Board: Marlene Koloski, Sue ?, Mary Formal and Doris VanDuesen

Property communication members: Sue – Brookside. Casey, Mary and Cheryl – Flag Rock Family

Doris was asked to provide her email to Tina so the State Guidelines could be forwarded to her.

Phair inquired why a tenant who caused extensive damage to a unit is allowed to be on the LTO? Koloski responded this tenant is not on the LTO Board, but is a tenant liaison. Smith stated any current tenant on any of the three properties is considered a member of the LTO. There is a codicil in the bylaws which states members must be in good standing to serve on the LTO Board. The problem with that is no one has access to any of that information on a tenant. It would be up to the LTO to address those issues – not the Board.

MAINTENANCE – Rich Phair

- Dewey countertop project is done – closing out project with ARCAT
- Breaker inspection for de-humidifier project has passed – closing out project with ARCAT
- Estimates have been received to patch Flag Rock driveway from Tri-Town Paving and Wilkinson of \$3,500 and \$2,500
- Unit 14 is all painted. Doors were delivered yesterday and are being painted today. Unit should be ready for occupancy by the middle of the month. Still some repair to do outside of the unit.
- There is a tenant at Dewey worried about neighboring dogs wandering onto the Dewey property and has asked for 600 to 700 feet of fence to be replaced to prevent this from happening. Phair recommends this work be done.

- Mount Everett Landscaping and a plumber were required to assist with resolution of a clog due to the way piping was installed many years ago when garbage disposal units were removed. This situation could happen again. The piping is hard pipe that was soldered, with no joints or clean outs.
- Obrien completed spring clean ups last week. However, they neglected to complete behind Building 6 at Brookside. This work will be finished when they come to mow.
- Gutter cleaning will begin the week of April 29th for all family units and the elderly section of Flag Rock Village.
- Livingroom lights – all boxes require extensions to bring to code. An estimate of \$1,800 has been received for completion of that work.

Smith asked Phair to type out a list in the future of all these projects/costs to submit to Danzy and to the Board ahead of the monthly meeting. It is very difficult to consider all of these estimates on the spot without looking at the finances.

In addition, \$1,800 to fence in a very small area at Dewey for dog walking seems expensive. Could the same thing be achieved with snow fence? Possibly look at different options that are less expensive.

- The siding issue at Dewey on Building 1 has been noted and is part of the termite damage currently being worked on. Waiting for architect and engineer to finish their portion.

Smith suggested the Maintenance Department and Board should take a walk around the properties to discuss maintenance/repair needs.

Mercer inquired at to the status of the drainage project at Brookside. Phair stated there has not been a response back from the architect or engineers yet. Work had been scheduled to begin in March.

BOARD COMMENT

Sinico stated she has spoken to a couple of people at the Stockbridge Housing Authority – Heaton Court. They currently have assigned parking and all have stated it works very well.

Sinico reminded everyone she would like to see a couple of removable speed bumps installed on Bernard Gibbons Drive to slow summer traffic.

Mercer thanked everyone who worked so hard on putting together the LTO. Smith thanked Marlene, and everyone, for their efforts with the LTO.

Sinico inquired if the GBHA was paying for training for anyone other than Danzy? Smith stated the Executive Director makes the decisions as to what staff need what training, based on state requirements and what training is pertinent to each position. The Board does not get involved with this. Smith continued that it is very important that everyone “stay in their lanes” in regard to Executive Director responsibilities and Board responsibilities. Crossing lanes is when problems arise. Day to day functions such as maintenance, training, re-certifications, etc. are the duties of the front office. Policies and procedures are the responsibility of the Board to discuss. The LTO will work with tenant concerns and issues.

Sinico stated when spending GBHA money she would like to stay informed and would like the Executive Director to provide an explanation of expenditures. Smith stated the Board does not approve every expense, only the out of the ordinary, larger expenses.

Smith also stated she would like to make sure that Danzy is reimbursed cost of training and mileage for classes she attended and paid for out of pocket AS AN Interim Executive Director – as previously voted by the Board.

The next meeting of the Great Barrington Housing Board will be held on Wednesday, May 22nd at 2:15PM at the Clair Teague Senior Center.

Sinico made a motion, seconded by Mercer to adjourn the regular meeting at 2:55PM

Smith made a motion, seconded by Sinco to enter Executive Session under MGL c. 30A, §21(a)(1) to discuss complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual, specifically the complaints by Eileen Mooney and Michelle Loubert alleging violation of Open meeting Law by the Commissioners of the Great Barrington Housing Authority and/or under MGL c. 30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss litigation strategy regarding same.

Unanimous approval via roll call vote

Respectfully submitted by Debra E Brazie