

APPROVED
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING
October 13, 2020 3:30 p.m.

Telephone remote participation per Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Provisions of the Open Meeting Law

I CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mercer called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. In attendance by telephone roll call, board of commissioners: Chairman Mercer, Eileen Mooney, Louis DelMasto, Marie Ryan, and Mary Pat Akers
Executive Director Tina Danzy, Assistant to the Executive Director Madonna Meagher

Public: Marlene Koloski, President Local Tenants Organization LTO, Joe Merola, Vice-President (LTO), Nan Wile, Jackie Sinico

II APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM: Regular Meeting 9/23/20

Chairman Mercer asked the board if they had changes or comments regarding the September 23, 2020 board meeting draft minutes. Mooney had multiple concerns about the wording in the draft minutes and corrections. Chairman Mercer suggested Mooney send concerns to Madonna for a revisit of approving minutes at the next meeting.

III EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Executive Director Danzy reported that the COVID-19 protocols are still in place. Sanitizing is being done daily and tenants are reminded to practice social distancing and mask wearing at all times. She also stated that because of COVID-19, there will be no annual inspections but DHCD recommended shortened "Health & Safety" inspections instead of comprehensive inspections.

Late notices (friendly reminders) are being sent out to tenants. Directly addressing concerns from Mooney about tenants falling behind on rent, Executive Director Danzy reported that The Resident Services Coordinators (RSC) will be helping tenants that have gotten behind on their rents by making referrals to local agencies.

The Executive Director reported that the GBHA financials look good with over \$300,000 in the bank account and approximately \$40,000 in invoices queued to be paid. Mooney questioned the deficit in the admin salaries on the financial report. Executive Director Danzy replied that the fee accountant, Sue Honeycutt, made the adjustment and that the admin. salaries are balanced out. Discussion ensued regarding the budget of the Local Tenants Organization (LTO) and a rundown of contract costs. Mooney questioned if the playground money (Creative Place Making Grant) received by the GBHA would be in a separate account. Executive Director Danzy explained the process of how all money is accounted for and how it is billed.

The maintenance staff have been painting porches to "freshen-up" the properties that aren't covered in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The Health & Safety grant for adding a ramp at Dewey Court is underway. Maintenance is also preparing for replacing/repairing roofs on family tenant sheds.

IV OLD BUSINESS:

Board of Health (BOH) issues:

Executive Director Danzy reported that the GBHA was able to access the unit and all BOH issues have been completed. A report from Moran Mechanical has not been provided as of this meeting.

Check of Residential Units for Moisture:

Board member Mooney suggested that moisture checks done in (family) units should be checked during humid months for accuracy.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):

LTO President, Marlene Koloski asked to get the MOU back from Attorney Liebel stating he has had it to look for over a year. Discussion ensued regarding getting the MOU finalized. Executive Director Danzy would like to provide an update at the next board meeting.

RFP for Audit Accountant:

Following Mooney's questions about the AUP auditor, Executive Director Danzy will confirm with AUP auditor Gary DePace how many years he has audited the GBHA and update the board at the next meeting.

Financial Review Policy(FRP):

Board member Mooney wanted clarification on what the FRP listed on the agenda. Chairman Mercer responded that Mooney had questions and concerns including (but not limited to): discussion on whether vendor checks should be viewed by the board before being sent out; the role of board with financial checks and balances, and oversight of the board on operations of the GBHA. Mooney was not prepared to address these issues at this meeting and asked for an email from Chairman Mercer describing specifics so that she can address her concerns.

Communication Policy:

Discussion continued until the next meeting.

Appointment of New Public Records Access Officer (RAO):

Mooney addressed the board stating she wanted to replace Madonna Meagher, Assistant to the Executive Director as current RAO. Mooney reported that Ms. Meagher was not letting people access public records. Discussion ensued with board member Ryan, stating that as a former RAO, she experienced first hand that it is a tremendous amount of work to be an RAO. Ryan stated that Ms. Meagher has done a good job as RAO and suggested that Ms. Meagher continue as RAO to the housing authority. **Mooney made a motion to have the Executive Director or the Chairman become the new Records Access Officer, seconded by DelMasto. Roll call vote: Mooney aye, DelMasto aye, Ryan nay, Akers nay, Mercer Nay. Motion fails. 2-3.**

V. NEW BUSINESS

Termite Project:

After several adjustments to the project, the termite project at Dewey Court is ready to get started. Kurtz, Inc was the sole bidder. With the estimated cost of the project at \$223,586 a board approval will be needed to begin the project.

Mooney made a motion to accept the bid, seconded by Mercer. Roll Call Vote: Mooney aye, DelMasto aye, Ryan aye, Akers aye, Mercer aye. Motion passes 5-0

Grievance Policy:

Executive Director Danzy is working on a draft of a GBHA grievance policy for an upcoming annual plan. The draft grievance policy was given to the board to review based on Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) regulations and the policy is similar to other housing authorities. Discussion ensued with Mooney suggesting clearer language in the policy. No motion was made regarding Mooney's suggestions.

Ryan made a motion to accept the Grievance Policy as presented (without Mooney's suggestions) seconded by Mercer. Roll Call Vote: Mooney nay, DelMasto abstain, Ryan aye, Akers aye, Mercer aye. Motion passes 3-1-1

Procurement Policy:

Executive Director Danzy located an old procurement policy in the records but it was lacking a date that is needed for the upcoming annual plan. Discussion ensued with Mooney suggesting minor changes to the document.

Ryan made a motion to accept the Procurement Policy with the October 13, 2020 date and with Mooney's suggestions seconded by Mercer. Roll Call Vote: Mooney aye, DelMasto aye, Ryan aye, Akers aye, Mercer aye. Motion passes 5-0

NEX-GEN VCP Emergency Management Communications:

Executive Director Danzy thanked board members Akers and Mooney who attended a zoom presentation of the Nex-Gen system. Executive Director Danzy stated the system at a cost of \$1,300 a year would be an effective communication tool for all the properties in the GBHA. Board member Akers agreed that the system was versatile, easy to use, and had the local IT person who devised the platform. North Adams and Pittsfield housing authorities are using the system.

Mercer made a motion to approve the NEX-GEN VCP system, seconded by Ryan. Roll Call Vote: Mooney aye, DelMasto aye, Ryan aye, Akers aye, Mercer aye. Motion passes 5-0

Discussion ensued regarding logistics of contacting tenants who do not have internet or cell phones.

VI. LTO REPORT:

Koloski complimented Executive Director Danzy and Assistant to the Executive Director Meagher for doing a great job with the housing authority management of properties/tenants. Koloski questioned if elder apartments had condensation problems as one tenant's apartment had recently been visited by the town BOH. Koloski also reported that the LTO still has masks and hand sanitizer for tenants in need. LTO Vice-Chair, Joe Merola commented that the work at Dewey Court is coming along well and the tenants are in a good mood.

VII. BOARD COMMENTS:

Mooney stated she had sent board members information from Great Barrington Fire Chief Burger regarding safety drills. More information will be at the next board meeting.

VIII. CITIZEN SPEAK:

Tenant Jackie Sinico stated that Mooney had neglected to mention in "board comments" that two tenants have been peeking in Mooney's apartment windows and that peeking should be considered harassment and/or elder abuse. Sinico also asked where the Executive Director surveys are.

Nan Wile asked Executive Director Danzy if a group rate could be possible for internet and TV. Discussion ensued with board member Akers and DelMasto agreeing to help with finding out about that possibility. Executive Director Danzy welcomed additional information about package rates.

Madonna Meagher speaking as a private citizen of Great Barrington stated that on 10/6/20 @ 1:11p.m. board member Mooney stood in the hallway outside the office window, pointed her camera at Meagher, and started taking pictures while Meagher worked from her desk. Meagher stated she had not signed any photo release forms, nor given permission to be photographed and as a private citizen, the photos Mooney took are forbidden to be used/distributed and need to be erased from her camera. Meagher stated that she considered Mooney's behavior of photographing Meagher as a continuation of harassment and believed Mooney was trying an intimidation tactic that impacts Meagher's work at the housing authority. Meagher recommended that Mooney be removed from the GBHA board of commissioners.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: 4:38 p.m.

Mercer made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Ryan. Roll Call Vote: Mooney aye, DelMasto aye, Ryan aye, Akers aye, Mercer aye. Unanimous

NEXT MEETING: To Be Determined

Respectfully Submitted,

Madonna Meagher

Documents reviewed: Agenda, draft minutes 9/23/20, procurement policy, grievance policy, August monthly financials

Pursuant to MA General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 20 (e) (f), meetings of the Great Barrington Housing Authority are regularly recorded. Any member of the public wishing to speak at the meeting must receive permission of the Chair. Listed agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.