

APPROVED  
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING  
GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING

February 11, 2021 3:30 p.m.

Zoom 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 3:31 p.m. In attendance by zoom roll call, board of commissioners: Chairman Mercer, Eileen Mooney, Marie Ryan, Mary Pat Akers, John Grogan  
Executive Director (ED) Tina Danzy, Assistant to the Executive Director Madonna Meagher

Public that checked in: Joe Merola, Vice President Local Tenants Organization (LTO), Bill Cooke, Carolyn Valli, Jackie Sinico,

II NORTH PLAIN ROAD (HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOUSING PROJECT PRESENTATION:

Town of Great Barrington Selectboard member Bill Cooke and Carolyn Valli, CEO of Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity (HFH) presented an overview of the 14 - 20 housing units to be built on North Plain Road in Gt. Barrington. A detailed proposal of the HFH was sent to all board members in their packets. While not exclusively for Great Barrington residents, highlights for this project included: the ability to keep younger families in the community, the ability to have home ownership which stabilizes neighborhoods, and the added success of HFH sponsors to help new homeowners be successful with budgeting and also mentoring/training building skills for their own homes.

III APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM: Board Meeting, January 14, 2021.

Chairman Mercer asked if the board had any changes. Mooney asked that the fee accountant Sue Honeycutt's response to Mooney's question on the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) be added into the minutes. **Akers made a motion to approve the January 14, 2021 draft minutes as amended with Sue Honeycutt's response of looking into the amount of the PILOT budget figure that concerned Mooney. Ryan seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ryan aye, Mercer Aye. Akers aye, Mooney nay. Grogan abstain. Motion passes 3-1-1**

IV EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

a) Executive Director Danzy reported that the Resident Services Coordinators (RSC) are arranging COVID-19 vaccination clinics at all the sites and have been in contact with residents who might want the vaccine. Anticipated timeline for the clinics were toward the last week of February and that volunteers might be needed. Board members Grogan, Ryan, Mercer and Akers agreed to be volunteers. Executive Director Danzy also reported that there have been a total of three positive cases at Flag Rock since the pandemic began, no other sites have had reports of positive cases. Daily sanitizing continues on all properties.

b) The December financial report was included in all board member packets along with the quarterly financial report prepared by the fee accountant. Warrant cover sheets for December and one cover sheet for January 4, 2021 were also included in the packet. Executive Director Danzy reported that the Berkshire Bank balance is currently \$264,402.66.

Discussion ensued regarding Mooney's questions about budgeted amounts for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) to the town and also to the Town of Sheffield. Executive Director Danzy stated that PILOT budgeted amounts are set aside for Gt Barrington and Sheffield.

Executive Director Danzy provided new board member Grogan a brief financial history of her 2 ½ years working at the GBHA. Summarizing that the GBHA had been in financial crisis when she started and that during her tenure the finances are solid (as mentioned in the current balance).

c) Executive Director Danzy asked the board for a vote on the DHCD Amendment #11 award increase to the Contract for Financial Assistance (CFA) in the amount of \$199,469.00. **Mercer made a motion to approve the increased amount in Amendment #11, Seconded by Ryan. Roll Call Vote: Ryan aye, Mercer aye, Akers aye, Grogan aye, Mooney aye Motion passes 5-0**

d) Executive Director Danzy asked the board to approve a trash removal contract for all three properties. Presently, Dewey Court trash is serviced by Casella Waste and Flag Rock and Brookside Manor are serviced by Roger's Trucking. Both companies submitted bids for Dewey Court with Roger's Trucking being the lowest bidder for a two year contract. Discussion ensued with Executive Director Danzy reporting the history of GBHA acquiring the Dewey Court property from Berkshire Regional Housing Authority in mid 2018 and how Casella continued to service Dewey Court without a contract to GBHA. **Akers made a motion to approve Roger's Trucking trash removal 2-year contract (for all GBHA properties), Seconded by Mooney. Roll Call Vote: Ryan aye, Mercer aye, Akers aye, Grogan aye, Mooney aye Motion passes 5-0**

e) Executive Director Danzy reported that maintenance supervisor Rich Phair was injured on-site and is hoping to be back at work around the 19th of March. Scott Sheridan has been attending to all properties and a seasonal worker is being utilized as a back-up maintenance worker helping with sanitizing and winter property safety. Executive Director Danzy also reported that she has secured additional help with the properties if needed while Rich Phair is out on leave.

Executive Director Danzy reported that there were two units at Flag Rock that were vacated and work is being done to refurbish these units for a quick turn around for future tenants.

Executive Director Danzy included in the packet for board members a listing of the maintenance payroll including overtime since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, & Economic Security Act (CARES) will be reimbursing the GBHA for money spent on actual costs for COVID-19 expenses. (as discussed at January 14, 2021 board meeting).

V OLD BUSINESS:

a) In regards to the mold remediation of a family unit, Executive Director Danzy stated that the work in the unit is 90% complete and the tenant will be moving back into the unit on or before 2/22/21.

b) Executive Director Danzy reported that Tom Boyer from DHCD was on-site to inspect the progress of mold remediation. He had recommendations for moisture and humidity monitoring devices that would require minimal training for GBHA staff. Additionally, (when COVID-19 abates) and more frequent inspections resume, he recommended tenants need to use proper airflow in the apartments including good air flow in closets (not packed closets of homegoods). Responding to Executive Director Danzy's suggestion of a "lock box" insuring a direct electrical connection for humidifiers, Mr. Boyer agreed it was a good idea. In regards to making monetary concessions to the residents who will have humidifiers, Mr. Boyer suggested a comparison history from the electric company.

Discussion ensued with Mooney having concerns about the increased electrical cost to tenants, specifically mentioning a former female tenant by name and her current relative living at Flag Rock by name. Mooney also had concerns about having all the family units evaluated. Executive Director Danzy responded that DHCD would not pay for additional evaluations unless it was absolutely necessary and each evaluation could cost as much or more than \$3000.

Mooney continued with her increased concerns about a "possible" 4th family unit at Flag Rock with mold stated by Attorney Elaine O'Connell (corrected by Executive Director Danzy as O'Donnell). Board member Ryan asked Mooney if the attorney had written to her specifically regarding the mold issue. Mooney reported that attorney O'Donnell wrote to the town Board of Health (BOH) agent and that it was a public document discussed at the BOH meeting. Executive Director Danzy stated that it was speculation and that the office was unaware of this document but would seek information. Akers asked why Mooney, as a board member, did not immediately direct her BOH information directly to the Executive Director. Ryan stated that this topic shouldn't be discussed unless the Executive Director has had time to get more information on her own. Chairman Mercer stated that the mold issue has been discussed at many meetings and that the board does want to be proactive. Chairman Mercer stated his objection to Mooney not sharing information and "surprising" everyone. Chairman Mercer reiterated the chain of command that board questions, concerns and information be sent to the Chair then to the ED.

Chairman Mercer continued that as a board they can follow-up regarding evaluations of family units and the cost to GBHA for outside evaluations.

Chairman Mercer suggested putting the topic on the next board meeting agenda.

c) Updates to GBHA website:

Discussion ensued that the personnel policy wouldn't need to be included on the Town website right now but the policies such as Snow clearing, no smoking and grievance should go on the website. Chairman Mercer suggested this as an agenda item next month.

d) Update on Evacuation and Fire Drills:

Discussion ensued with Fire Chief Burger's recommendations for fire drills and evacuation as presented to the board by Mooney last month.. Executive Director Danzy stated that she was in favor of fire drills but COVID-19 safety protocols should be adhered to and suggested a subcommittee of the board come up with a safety plan for steps that can be safely implemented such as laminated exit signs and a common area to gather safely in emergencies. Chairman Mercer volunteered to help with the safety plan.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Mercer welcomed new board member John Grogan and gave a brief listing of accomplishments at the GBHA in regards to the Place Making Grant. Chairman Mercer also reported that he sent the LHA manual that outlines the responsibilities of the board, that day to day work is the responsibility of the Executive Director and not the board. Also addressed was the oversight of the GBHA finances.

a) Board Review of ED's time sheets and attendance records

Mooney suggested the board have access and review time sheets and attendance records as written in a PHN notice. Ryan stated that none of the board has had a chance to read and review the emails Mooney sent during this meeting and suggested no further discussion on the topic.

b) Board Review of Staff overtime since April 1, 2020

Mooney wanted more information on payroll and overtime. Executive Director Danzy stated that monthly and quarterly financial statements are presented to the board with all the YTD amounts. Ryan asked Mooney if there were specific questions about payroll and overtime. Mooney stated it's the board's duty to oversee finances. Chairman Mercer stated that there is oversight, listing the payroll service, fee accountant, DHCD and the AUP auditor and at times an additional auditor.

Akers, stating concern with the payroll and financial inquiries that Mooney had discussed at several board meetings, asked Mooney if there were ethics or integrity issues with the people who are looking at the (GBHA financial) books. Specifically mentioned by Akers to be: fee accountant, Sue Honeycutt, (AUP) auditors, State auditors, GBHA treasurer, Marie Ryan, or Executive Director Danzy. Akers asked if Mooney "feels" someone is cheating or lying. Mooney objected to the assumptions Akers was making. Akers responded that there was no assumption on Akers part, just asking (about the questions that Mooney raises at nearly all board meetings). Mooney responded that there is a "chunk" of finances not available to the board but did not elaborate on the specifics of "chunk".

Chairman Mercer reiterated that there is financial oversight at the GBHA. Mooney disagreed with Chairman Mercer.

New board member Grogan stated that the Executive Director is like a Superintendent of Schools in that they are hired to oversee all aspects of the place they work and report back to the respective board. Grogan mentioned that the warrants are signed and the financials look good.

Grogan asked about the overtime for the maintenance staff and whether they were union members or subcontractors and where over 40 hrs work week had implications for time and a half. Executive Director Danzy responded that there is no union nor contract for these employees. The only contracted employee is her as the Executive Director and that is for a 26 hour work week. Grogan then asked if there is an overtime policy. Executive Director Danzy stated that overtime is rare for maintenance except for emergencies and snow removal. The pandemic of COVID-19 gave way to overtime since the three properties had to be sanitized every day including weekends and holidays and it was those extra hours that will be paid and covered by the CARES grant.

VII LTO REPORT:

LTO Vice President Joe Merola said that things are going well. Mr. Merola commented that RSC coordinator, Karen Lewis made phone calls to tenants. Mr. Merola also stated that the work on the building with termite damage is coming along and the professionalism is impressive.

VIII BOARD COMMENTS:

Mooney had questions about the warrant cover sheets and why they didn't include account numbers. Executive Director Danzy responded that the warrants are part of the PHA system the GBHA uses (instead of quickbooks) and that is the format provided. Mooney then asked if all account numbers could be hand written by office staff to which Executive Director Danzy responded that with the limited time of work hours, it would not be possible.

IX CITIZEN SPEAK:

Resident Jackie Sinico gave a compliment to Rich Phair and Scott Sheridan for the good job they do at the property. Sinico also asked Executive Director Danzy if the snowblower could cut a path between the parking lots so tenants don't have to walk in the active driveway and to cut a path near the raised beds so dogs can be walked.

IX ADJOURNMENT: 5:12 p.m.

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

NEXT MEETING: To Be Determined

Respectfully Submitted,  
Madonna Meagher

Documents reviewed: Agenda, draft minutes 1/14/21, Warrant cover page 12/7/20, 12/14/20, 12/21/20, 12/23/20, 1/4/21. December 2020 financial report, GBHA quarterly financial report, Mooney email 10/14/21, 10/29/20 regarding PILOT, 10/26/21 PILOT response, DHCD CFA #11, Roger Trucking quote, Habitat for Humanity booklet, GBHA maintenance payroll COVID\_19 expense sheet, Mooney email 2/8/21, Mooney email 2/11/21 re: warrant questions, Mooney email 2/11/21 re: PHN 2018-01 including cover page and PHN director's hours, Mooney's document presented to board in an email re: Attorney Liebel email to BOH, Mooney's attachment to board members re: 760 CMR 6.09:4 (d), Mooney's email to board re: ED work week.

Eileen Mooney's email 1/14/21 @3:30 p.m. with attachments: 1. Mooney's email to Madonna Meagher re: corrections to December 2020 minutes, 2. Note to Tina about payments, 3. Chief Burger's suggestions, 4. proposed agenda items for Jan. 2021.

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.