

APPROVED
GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

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BOARD MEETING

Great Barrington Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

Tuesday, August 6, 2019

Meeting held at Community Room, 2 Bernard Gibbons Drive

Present: Acting Chair James Mercer, Jackie Sinico, Eileen Mooney, Diane Dillon

Administration: Tina Danzy, Executive Director

Madonna Meagher, Assistant to the Executive Director

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:03PM by Acting Chair Mercer.

MOVE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Acting Chair Mercer made a motion to move to executive session, Diane Dillon seconded the motion. Audience member and Great Barrington citizen Michelle Loubert, made a point of order, wanting to know about this agenda item regarding litigation strategy and the lack of specificity on the wording of this agenda item. Great Barrington Housing Authority Attorney Colin Boyle was in attendance. Attorney Boyle responded to Ms. Loubert's statement about whether litigation was pending. Attorney Boyle responded that litigation did not have to be pending, it could also mean "demonstrably likely". Discussion ensued with Mooney questioning the attorney about litigation strategy being a public matter. Attorney Boyle clarified that what would be discussed in executive session would have a detrimental effect if exposed in a public meeting. The attorney offered to meet with Mooney privately to discuss further, Mooney refused. A vote was taken on the motion to move to executive session.

Mercer and Dillon voted approval via roll call vote.

Sinico and Mooney opposed via roll call vote.

Motion failed

Attorney Boyle left the meeting: 2:11 p.m.

FINANCIAL UPDATES – Budget Presentation by fee accountant - Sue Honeycutt – Fenton Ewald & Associates. Sue Honeycutt reported that the DHCD needs a budget submission for year end reports. Honeycutt needs the Housing Authority Board to approve April and May 2019 budget and is currently working to complete the fiscal year budget. Discussion ensued with Mooney questioning Honeycutt about the increase on account #4190. Additionally, Mooney was concerned that the budget being presented by Honeycutt was not sufficient and should have been done by 4/1/19.

Mooney made a motion to continue the budget discussion. No second was given.

Motion failed

Honeycutt reiterated that the DHCD will hold back on the subsidy to the GBHA until the paperwork is received. She continued to stress that the paperwork could be signed stating "not approved" and still be submitted. Honeycutt reminded the Board that the [financial records] from the last fiscal year were so incomplete, that it was impossible to get a current fiscal year budget to the Board by April 1, 2019. Honeycutt also suggested that the Board attend a thorough training session with a fee accountant and an attorney in Northampton.

Acting Chair Mercer made a motion to approve the budget and sign papers as requested. Dillon seconded the motion.

Mercer and Dillon voted approval via roll call vote.

Sinico and Mooney opposed via roll call vote.

Motion failed

Accountant Honeycutt then asked the Board members if they would sign the documents she handed to the board including: lead paint certification, certificate of compliance with notification of state and federal laws, and compensation report. **No action was taken by the board to fill out the documents.**

In a closing statement about the accountant and the budget, Acting Chair Mercer stated that the delayed budget was the result of prior accounting problems which are now being sorted out.

MINUTES – May 22, 2019 and May 28, 2019, June 18, 2019

Mooney made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2019, seconded by Sinico.
Unanimous approval via roll call vote.

Mooney made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2019 seconded by Sinico
Unanimous approval via roll call vote.

Acting-Chair Mercer made a motion to approve the minutes of June 18, 2019. Dillon seconded the motion.
Mooney had a couple points of clarification about the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) term is one year. Mooney stated these were clarifications and not corrections to the minutes.
Unanimous approval via roll call vote

MAINTENANCE REPORT – Tina Danzy for Rich Phair Executive Director Danzy reported:
Flagrock: new living room lights were installed in the senior apartments, the speed bumps are a bit noisy but are working well to slow traffic, inspections of all the Flagrock elderly units and family units went fine, there are some housekeeping issues that are being addressed. Two bids went out for the fire alarm panel and will need board approval for it to be replaced.

Mooney made a motion to approve replacing the fire alarm panel, seconded by Sinico
Unanimous approval via roll call vote.

Capital Improvement plan to have ADA doors only included two front doors. Executive Director Danzy would like to get the board's approval for moving forward with the front ADA doors and researching the replacing the back doors.
Mercer made a motion to approve the capital improvement plan for the front doors seconded by Mooney
Unanimous approval via roll call vote.

RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD/LOCAL TENANT ORGANIZATION (LTO) UPDATE –

Marlene Koloski, President of the GBHA/LTO has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which should be ready to present to Executive Director Tina Danzy in a couple of weeks. A cookout is planned in August for the tenants. Addressing the ADA doors, Marlene mentioned she could write a letter of complaint if it could get the DHCD to move more quickly in replacing the back doors. Discussion ensued about the doors being locked after business hours in the community room part of the complex. Safety is a high priority. Executive Director Danzy will check if there is a door locking policy.

A lengthy discussion centered on the proper procedure for getting a GBHA board member from Sheffield to represent the Dewey Way residents that are now part of the GBHA. Acting Chair Mercer offered two suggestions to have this happen. 1. Have the housing authority draft a letter to the Gt. Barrington Board of Selectmen to appoint a Sheffield resident to the GBHA board, 2. Request our State Representative, Smitty Pignatelli and Senator Hinds to make a legislative change on the State level. Mooney stated that a change in the by-laws would be required.

Mercer made a motion to send a letter to the Gt. Barrington BOS, seconded by Sinico.
Mercer, Sinico, Dillon aye, Mooney, nay.
Motion Approved

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Tina Danzy

Executive Director Danzy welcomed Madonna Meagher as the new Assistant to the Executive Director position. A seasonal part-time position was also filled to help with power washing and landscaping at the properties. Karen Lewis, office clerk will be staying on through tenant annual certifications. Drop in times for Karen to help tenants has been very effective.

A Performance Management Review (PMR) is set for Thursday, August 8. A DHCD team from Boston will review last fiscal year files including annual inspection reports and annual recertification paperwork. They will make visits to a few apartments.

Two units were filled and leased for August 1st. Two additional property units are available and will need to be filled. One apartment needs maintenance, the other was vacated in good condition. The termite project is in the capital plan. All the locks are being changed at Dewey Way and all tenants will be getting new keys. This will be a master key system.

Executive Director Danzy reported that the Berkshire Bank balance is currently \$64,178.74 and Dewey Way bank balance is \$36,283.13. Mooney asked about the 90/60/30 unpaid invoices, Executive Director Danzy responded that the invoices are current, even if some invoices are dated a couple of months old, the office has received them and are currently processing them in a timely manner.

OLD BUSINESS

Appointment of public records/access officer. Acting Chair Mercer reported that Madonna Meagher would accept the appointment of public records/access officer. Executive Director Danzy voiced a concern that the Assistant to the Director position is only 18 hours a week and that shouldn't include the extra hours needed for processing public records being requested. That extra time would need to be compensated.

Election of officers,

Sinico nominated Eileen Mooney for the position of Chairperson of the Great Barrington Housing Authority Board of Directors, seconded by Mooney.

Sinico and Mooney voted approval via roll call vote.

Mercer and Dillon opposed via roll call vote.

Motion failed

Acting Chair Mercer reminded the board that the date for the State to have an OML training session for the board with be confirmed, and the public would be invited.

Fee Accountant Contract,

Discussion ensued about whether or not to continue using the current accountants.

No motion was made.

Close of the dehumidifier project,

The final payment is needed to close out the dehumidifier project.

Mercer made a motion to pay the final payment, seconded by Sinico.

Unanimous approval via roll call vote

Motion Approved

NEW BUSINESS

Pension,

Acting Chair Mercer reported that the 2018 finances are in good shape and recommended that the employee pensions be reinstated. Discussion ensued to wait until a budget is passed before deciding on reinstating the pensions. No motion made.

Rent Collection Protocols,

The GBHA does not have a current rent policy. The Performance Management Review team from Boston will be asking to review the policy. Discussion ensued about the types of payments including cash. Executive Director Danzy stated that rents cannot be paid in cash - personal checks or money orders only. If two personal checks are returned for insufficient funds, the tenant will have to pay with money orders. Additionally it was mentioned by Acting Chair Mercer, that good business practices include not accepting post-dated checks. Discussion ensued regarding the definition of the word "Authority" in the document.

Sinico made a motion to approve rent policy as presented by Executive Director Danzy, seconded by Mooney.
Unanimous approval via roll call vote
Motion Approved

Abandoned Unity Policy,

Executive Director Danzy asked the board to approve the GBHA Abandoned Unit Policy. Discussion ensued about photographing the units for documentation of inspection status.

Mooney made a motion to approve the Abandoned Unit Policy as presented by Executive Director Danzy, seconded by Sinico.
Unanimous approval via roll call vote
Motion Approved

Employee cell phone stipend,

Discussion ensued regarding employee's receiving a stipend for using their cell phones for emergencies because they are on call. Some estimates are compensation between \$25 to \$50 a month. Protocols for communication finances and maintenance for GBHA was postponed until the next meeting. Board member Mooney agreed to bring in a communication policy draft at the September meeting.

CITIZEN SPEAK

Great Barrington resident Loubert suggested that the Board check in to the public records law about using personal cell phones for business.

LTO President, Koloski asked for a status on security deposits, are they being collected, if not can they be refunded. Executive Director Danzy will clarify with the PMR.

Tenants at Dewey suggested a list of State medical deductions could be helpful for annual recertifications. Another Dewey tenant voiced a concern about smoking by renters, Executive Director Danzy stated there is a no smoking policy and any smoking must be done outside and 25 feet away from any building. A few other attendees gave the GBHA management praise for working hot water, and gutters.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mooney suggested the board write Debbie Brazie a thank you letter for transcribing minutes. Mooney also suggested that the entire board make a site inspection of properties before the next meeting. Discussion ensued and no consensus was reached. Mooney agreed to write a draft description of the Board duties and GBHA facilities for the town website and present it to the board at the next meeting.

Sinico had concerns about remote participation in Board meetings and suggested better communications of board members regarding agenda items.

Acting Chair Mercer reminded all in attendance that meeting at the Claire Teague Senior Center would need to be timely, the meeting would need to be finished by 3:15 pm.

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 17TH 2PM CLAIRE TEAGUE SENIOR CENTER

ADJOURNMENT

Mercer made a motion, seconded by Dillon to adjourn the meeting at 3:27PM.
Unanimous approval.

Documents reviewed: Agenda, Minutes of May 22, 2019, May 28, 2019, June 18, 2019, Rent Collection Policy, Abandoned Unit Policy, GBHA liability details report, budget, Certification of top 5 Compensation Form, Fiscal Year End Certification of Preparer and Executive Director

Respectfully submitted,

Madonna Meagher