

APPROVED

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING

February 23, 2022 3:30 p.m.

Participation was done entirely by webinar. 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 3:33 p.m. In attendance: Board of Commissioners: Chairman Jim Mercer, Mary Pat Akers, Eileen Mooney, Marie Ryan, John Grogan
Executive Director (ED) Tina Danzy, Assistant to the Executive Director Madonna Meagher, Rich Phair, Maintenance Supervisor
Fee Accountant Sue Honeycutt, RCAT project manager, Hugh Mackay
LTO Vice-President, Joe Merola, LTO President, Marlene Koloski
Public: N. Wile, L. DelMasto, J. Sinico

II EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Executive Director Danzy began her report, taking a few minutes to clarify some open ended items discussed at previous meetings. Executive Director Danzy reminded the board and the public attending that it is a goal of the administration to work cooperatively with the Local Tenants Organization (LTO) ; however, it is difficult when the LTO states tenant concerns without first addressing those concerns with the office. Executive Director Danzy stated that the LTO, by not following the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement, the LTO elected officers have given misinformation to tenants and the public in recent board meetings. The code of conduct in the MOU with the office administration has not been followed and the chain of command needs to be followed. Tenant concerns need to come to the office first, then if the tenant isn't satisfied with the office response, the LTO can become part of the mediation.

In the formal LTO complaint listed on the agenda under new business, Executive Director Danzy addressed several issues:

Water: With regard to the Housatonic Water Works (HWW) recent notice reporting on the drinking water quality for all of Housatonic residents, including Flag Rock Village, the GB Housing Authority is a customer like any other resident of Housatonic. The notice from HWW indicated that the drinking water was standard and it was not an emergency issue, had it been, the office would have made additional steps to ensure the safety of tenants. The GBHA office posted notices and mailed notices to family units as well as hand delivering notices to the Flag Rock senior units. Any Flag Rock tenant that has a concern should direct those concerns to the HWW.

Office Hours: The GBHA office is open to the public Monday-Thursday from 10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.. Other than holidays, (Massachusetts recognized holidays), staff training sessions, off site visits, etc. the office is staffed. When the office is closed, notices are on the door as to the return time. The employee personnel policy also includes vacation, personal, sick days which may affect what personnel are on site on any given day.

In regard to other items listed on the agenda to be discussed at this meeting,

Maintenance Policy:

Executive Director Danzy stated that a policy for maintenance requests is already based on urgency. Tenants are always notified upon entry into their apartment. Only if there is an urgent issue, would access be done immediately. The office has an effective work order system for tenant needs and special arrangements can always be made by

contacting the office. There is no need for a policy regarding maintenance repair.

Key Replacement:

Tenants who lose their keys and need new ones made or new locks are only charged the actual costs of replacement. No policy is needed, there already is a lease addendum outlining the charges for tenant incurred carelessness.

Regarding other issues listed on the agenda:

Executive Director Danzy stated the housing authority posts job vacancies on the bulletin boards at each site as well as in the Shopper's Guide that is available to all town residents each week. Additionally, the unfilled office clerk position has been mentioned in public board meetings each month since October. Executive Director Danzy noted that the office has no control of what notices are taken off the bulletin boards by the tenants or visitors.

The office is bound to confidentiality of tenant issues. The office cannot comment on how many tenants are assisted through referrals or need financial assistance. The GBHA is focused on housing, it is not a social service agency, however, applicants are helped with referrals and the office staff and Resident Services Coordinator assist tenants as needed.

Executive Director Danzy stated that the office conducted Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) clinic drop ins. About 75% of tenants participated and reported having no issues reaching the office. Additionally, Executive Director Danzy noted that the office receives numerous cards and letters from tenants thanking our staff for all their hard work.

Executive Director Danzy stated that beginning the first Thursday of the month, she is starting a "Tea with Tina" drop in 10-11 a.m. to come and spend some time with the Director and voice any concerns they might have.

Warrants and invoices are available to the board to sign on the Tuesday following the board meeting. All other citizens seeking to review documents, need to contact the office for arrangements based on the current records viewing policy.

Lastly, Executive Director Danzy reiterated that the GBHA has no financial concerns. The recent DHCD, Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) audit had zero findings.

a) **FINANCIALS: UPDATE:**

Executive Director Danzy stated that the Berkshire Bank balance is \$147,570.76. December 2021 financials along with warrant cover sheets were provided in the board packets.

Fee accountant Sue Honeycutt joined the webinar and responded to questions Grogan and Mooney had regarding the financial report, fees for Adirondack Payroll, capital projects, budget and cost statements, Discussion ensued regarding the amount of paper used in copying quarterly reports that aren't necessarily needed. Grogan made a motion to petition DHCD but withdrew the motion.

b) **MAINTENANCE UPDATE:**

Maintenance supervisor Rich Phair gave an update on the properties.

Two bids for a tree removal at Flag Rock were received and an estimate for a tree removal at Brookside that is split and could be dangerous will be forthcoming.

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Each property has required hundreds of pounds of ice melt and sand during recent winter storms.

The Flag Rock fan project is starting.

The Flag Rock storm-drain catch basin has had a partial collapse. Excavation estimates are being received by the office.

Board member Mooney asked when Brookside building #8 porch ceilings would be painted and asked about the Flag Rock Family water usage.

c) WAITLIST/VACANCY UPDATE:

Executive Director Danzy gave an update on the status of vacancies. Three open units, with two offers ready for leasing on 3/1/22 and one active pull.

d) COVID-19 UPDATE:

Executive Director Danzy reported she distributed the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from the state including thermometers, a variety of masks, and small gloves. DHCD sent a notice that rapid test kits will be available in early March for distribution. Executive Director Danzy will contact tenants when the kits are at GBHA.

e) OTHER UPDATES:

Executive Director Danzy reported that DHCD attorney Sarah O'Leary will be on site to do a board training session and to address issues the board wants to discuss. Executive Director Danzy asked for board members to email her and she would pass along concerns and topics for discussion to Attorney O'Leary. No date has been set for the training session.

III OLD BUSINESS:

- 1) Key Replacement
- 2) Maintenance policy

Agenda items moved to the March board meeting.

IV NEW BUSINESS:

Regional Capital Assistance Team (RCAT) officer assigned to Western Mass small housing authorities Hugh Mackay informed the board on the capital projects needing board discussion and possible votes on the agenda. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) revision pending \$9500 due to emergency safety repair in process needed a vote to proceed. **Mooney made a motion to proceed with the \$9500.00 revision, Ryan seconded. Roll Call Vote: Akers, aye; Ryan, aye, Mooney, aye, Mercer, aye, Grogan aye. Motion passes 5-0**

Flag Rock family bathroom exhaust #116077 change order to add moisture control switches totaling \$6580.00 **Grogan made a motion to approve change order for moisture control switches for \$6580.00 seconded by Mooney. Roll Call Vote: Akers, aye; Ryan, aye, Mooney, aye, Mercer, aye, Grogan aye. Motion passes 5-0**

Flag Rock elderly (667) flooring update. Discussion ensued with Mr. Mackay outlining the bid project. The lowest bid of \$58,000 came in \$35,000 over what RCAT estimated the cost of the project. Stating that the board could reject the bid and it would be then sent for re-bidding. **Grogan made a motion to reject the bid of \$58,000 seconded by Akers. Roll Call Vote: Akers, aye; Ryan, aye, Mooney, aye, Mercer, aye, Grogan aye. Motion passes 5-0**

Brookside Exhaust Fan project #116066. Discussion ensued after a brief history of no Ground Fault Interrupters and bathroom fans. The RCAT estimate was just under \$34,000 and the lowest of three bidders was \$100,000 more than the RCAT estimate. **Grogan made a motion to reject the lowest bid of the three bidders. seconded by Mooney. Roll Call Vote: Akers, aye; Ryan, aye, Mooney, aye, Mercer, aye, Grogan aye. Motion passes 5-0**

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Reallocate formula funding. Mackay led the discussion of what reallocating formula funding included. In regards to finishing off the Creative Place Making project, with approximately \$105,000 left in the grant from DHCD, and a low bid to complete the project for approximately \$149,000 the decision would be up to the board. No motion was made.

Board member Ryan leaves the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Creative Place Making #116070 grant. Discussion ensued with Mackay informing the board that by utilizing formula funding, the GBHA could finish a big project. Executive Director Danzy stated that if the board chose to wait to re-bid the project, more of the remaining grant money would be used for administrative costs. **Mercer made a motion to table the discussion until the next meeting seconded by Akers. Roll Call Vote: Akers, aye, Mooney, aye, Mercer, aye, Grogan aye. Motion passes 4-0**

Adding ED time sheets for board review. Mooney made a motion to have the Executive Director's monthly time sheets available for board review and auditing agencies per DHCD requirements. Grogan seconded. **Roll Call Vote: Akers, aye, Mooney, aye, Mercer, aye, Grogan aye. Motion passes 4-0**

Chairman Mercer addressed the OML Violation: **Mercer made a motion to table the discussion seconded by Akers.** Board discussion ensued. **Roll Call Vote: Akers, aye, Mooney, abstain, Mercer, aye, Grogan aye. Motion passes 3-1**

LTO Formal Complaint: LTO President Marlene Koloski stated concerns about the hours the Executive Director Danzy works based on her contract, job notices missing from bulletin boards, and office procedures regarding access to tenant units without a 48 hour notice to enter.

Discussion ensued regarding tamper proof notice boards and office/tenant confidentiality.

Website Postings:

Social Service Listings:

Mooney made a motion to include social service information on the housing authority site on the town website. Grogan seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Akers, stated she didn't want to vote, Mooney, aye, Mercer, aye, Grogan aye. Motion passes 3-1-no vote.

Jobs:

Grogan made a motion to list housing authority job postings on the town website with a notation of tenant preference for jobs. Mooney seconded.

Discussion ensued with Akers concerns about what town employees relegated to do updates. **Akers, aye, Mooney, aye, Mercer, aye, Grogan aye. Motion passes 4-0**

Tenant Representative:

Mercer made a motion to include "tenant representative" next to Mooney's name on the town website. Seconded by Grogan. Akers, aye, Mooney, aye, Mercer, aye, Grogan aye. Motion passes 4-0

Akers leaves the meeting: 5:45 p.m.

Housatonic Water Works (HWW) Update:

Chairman Mercer recused himself from this agenda item. Vice-Chairman Grogan proceeded with the discussion.

Discussion ensued with Mooney's concerns regarding the HWW notice to all HWW customers (including Flag Rock

tenants). Mooney stated she had questions regarding former and current tenants at Flag Rock that could be in the “increased risk” category mentioned in the notice. Mooney made a motion to have GBHA seek DHCD counsel regarding potential liability to the housing authority. Akers and Ryan had left the meeting earlier, Mercer recused himself, leaving Grogan and Mooney the only board members able to vote. With no quorum, the agenda item was tabled until the March board meeting.

V LTO REPORT:

LTO President Koloski had concern for the accuracy of board meeting minutes.

LTO Vice President, Merola, reiterated former concerns of rent-recertifications letters to tenants in non-compliance from August 2021.

VI. BOARD COMMENTS:

Grogan mentioned it is important to follow the chain of command to lessen bickering.

Mooney stated she’d like to be present when the treasurer signs vendor checks and the warrants.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM: Board meeting, January 19, 2022.

With Grogan unable to vote due to missing the January 19th meeting and Akers having left the meeting as well as Ryan, there was no quorum to vote on the minutes. Tabled until next meeting.

VIII. CITIZEN SPEAK:

Nan Wile addressed her comments to the LTO specifically stating that the LTO by-laws need to be redrafted to accommodate handicap and less mobile tenants. Wile also stated that she didn’t receive any notice (either email, or by a flier) before the last LTO meeting. Wile stated that the notice that was posted by LTO was dated Sunday for a Thursday meeting, the LTO is supposed to post 5 business days in advance of a meeting. Wile volunteered to help distribute fliers to tenants in advance of a meeting. Additionally, Wile asked the LTO to produce meeting minutes for tenants.

IX ADJOURNMENT: 6:01 p.m.

Mercer made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Grogan. Roll Call Vote: Mooney, Aye; Mercer, aye; Grogan aye, motion passes 3-0

NEXT MEETING: March 16, 2022 @ 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Madonna Meagher

Documents reviewed: Agenda, draft minutes 1/19/22; Annual Plan minutes of December 15, 2021, PHN 2022-03, December 2021 financial reports; Fenton Ewald quarterly reports, Small projects requisition from Pittsfield Pipers, Change Order Pittsfield Pipers, Form for general bid, Project exhaust fans, Warrant cover pages for December 13th & 20th, 2021 payroll summary from Adirondack Payroll, Graves engineering bid analysis, key replacement draft policy, repairs to unit draft, OML complaint, Urgent non payment of rent form, Mooney gmail re: Brookside porch ceilings, Mooney email re: items for Jan. 16 agenda.

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

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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.