

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF JUNE 21, 2022, BOARD MEETING

Call to Order and attendance roll call. Acting chairman/vice chairman John Grogan called the June 21, 2022, meeting of the Great Barrington Housing Authority board to order at 2:30 pm. Board members present were Mr. Grogan, Eileen Mooney and Philip Orenstein. Mr. Orenstein was appointed June 13 at a joint meeting of the Great Barrington Selectboard, Mr. Grogan and Mrs. Mooney to fill a vacancy on the GBHA board until the May 2023 town election. Also present was Tom Blauvelt, who was recommended as the governor's appointee by the Selectboard, Mr. Grogan and Mrs. Mooney. However, since Mr. Blauvelt's notice of appointment had not been received by the Great Barrington town clerk, he has not been sworn in as a board member. Thus, he participated in the meeting but could not vote.

A vacancy remains as the Great Barrington Selectboard, Mr. Grogan and Mrs. Mooney had also appointed Sherry Steiner to the board but she withdrew the next day.

Others present for the virtual meeting included former GBHA board member and chairman Jim Mercer and GBHA director Tina Danzy.

Mr. Grogan explained that he had used the previous Zoom link listed on agendas and did not realize until shortly before the meeting began that it belonged to Mr. Mercer and was not a town link. A town link will be used from now on, he said. He thanked Mr. Mercer for allowing his link to be used.

Board Reorganization. Mr. Grogan called for the election of officers starting with the chairman. Mrs. Mooney nominated Mr. Grogan and Mr. Orenstein seconded. There were no other nominations. Mrs. Mooney, Mr. Orenstein and Mr. Grogan voted for Mr. Grogan, who was thus elected as board chairman.

Mr. Grogan called for nominations for board vice chairman. Mrs. Mooney said she wanted to nominate Mr. Blauvelt, pending his official appointment to the board. She, Mr. Grogan and Mr. Orenstein agreed to table the election until Mr. Blauvelt is officially on the board.

Mr. Grogan called for nominations for board treasurer. Mrs. Mooney nominated Mr. Orenstein. He had questions about what this entails. Ms. Danzy and Mr. Grogan provided information. There were no other nominations. Mr. Grogan, Mrs. Mooney and Mr. Orenstein then voted to elect Mr. Orenstein as board treasurer.

Mr. Grogan nominated Mrs. Mooney as recording secretary. There were no other nominations. Mr. Orenstein, Mr. Grogan and Mrs. Mooney voted to elect Mrs. Mooney as the recording secretary. (Mrs. Mooney began to take notes of the meeting after her election and noted she had not been recording the meeting.)

Mr. Grogan nominated Mrs. Mooney as public records access officer. There were no other nominations. Mr. Grogan, Mr. Orenstein and Mrs. Mooney voted to elect Mrs. Mooney as the public records access officer.

Mr. Grogan called for nominations for the board's representative to the Community Preservation Committee. Mr. Mercer had been the representative. Mrs. Mooney suggested that Mr. Blauvelt be the representative when he is officially on the board as he had been the committee's chairman, representing the Finance Committee. However, he did not seek re-election to the Finance Committee. Mr. Grogan, Mr. Orenstein and Mrs. Mooney agreed to table the vote on a representative until Mr. Blauvelt is officially on the board.

Under **procedural discussions**, Mr. Grogan said he expects the board and staff to work as a team and be civil to everyone. He said warrants should be signed by three board members and preferably by all. Ms. Danzy said this can be done in a timely manner.

Ms. Danzy said everyone on the board should be approved to sign checks.

Mr. Grogan said payroll reports provided to the board should show the employee's name, amount and overtime. Mr. Orenstein said the monthly packet of information should include payroll reports.

Mrs. Mooney asked if board meetings should be earlier in the month. Ms. Danzy said she would prefer the first or second week of the month.

Mrs. Mooney said she is uncomfortable with automatic disbursements taken by the payroll company, Adirondack Payroll. Ms. Danzy said the company is paid \$52.50 a week and does not have a contract. Mr. Orenstein recommended that the board have a letter explaining the company's fees. Ms. Danzy said the office has that and will provide it. Mr. Orenstein and Mr. Grogan said they have no problem with automatic deductions.

Under **executive director's report**, Ms. Danzy said all warrant sheets through June and the back up has been provided. She worked with state DHCD financial staff while the board lacked a quorum.

The bank balance is \$316,193.54.

American Rescue Plan Act funding of \$162,077 has been allocated for furnace at Dewey Court and elevator at Flag Rock and she is working closely with Hugh of RCAT, or Regional Capital Assistance Team, which works with DHCD.

Also, Ms. Danzy reported:

--The only vacancy is at Brookside. It came this week and an offer is pending.

--Review of family units at Flag Rock will resume. It had stopped because Covid infections were reported at some units.

Maintenance supervisor Richard Phair providing the maintenance report, said two lawn mowers have been purchased so O'Brien's is no longer doing lawn mowing.

Brookside needs painting and bathroom fans, he said, and staff is trying to spruce up Dewey Court, which has some broken fences.

Mr. Phair said a hoop was broken on a new basketball court at Flag Rock.

As far as he knows, all units at Flag Rock are in compliance with Board of Health correction orders, he said.

Ms. Danzy attended in person and board members Mr. Grogan and Mrs. Mooney attended virtually a June 15 meeting of the Western Massachusetts Executive Directors meeting with state Sen. John Velis of the Second Hampden and Hampshire District. The meeting was held at the Agawam Housing Authority and concerned problems with the CHAMP software system used for applications in housing authority.

Information about reviewing and possibly updating a fair housing marketing plan for language access will be provided in coming months.

LHA governance training on “Working Effectively with Your Board and OML Compliance” will be held July 14 from 9:30 to 11 a.m.

An ad has been placed for a seasonal maintenance work, Ms. Danzy said.

Mr. Orenstein suggested a newsletter be provided perhaps every other month. Ms. Danzy said this might be done.

Mr. Grogan requested that an update on legal matters be provided at the next meeting. Ms. Danzy said a lawyer might be available to provide an update.

Marlene Koloski, Tenants Organization president, said tenants do not want to work because their rent payments will increase. Her comments related to the ad for seasonal maintenance worker as tenants have hiring priority according to DHCD regulations. Mr. Orenstein asked Ms. Danzy if this is so and she said rent increases do not necessarily follow. She would like to have economic workshops, she said.

Under **new business**, Mrs. Mooney moved that the board consider using unexpected **ARPA funds** to hire a firm to determine how drainage from Monument Mountain could be prevented from contributing to moisture retention at Flag Rock family units. Ms. Danzy and Mr. Phair said trees around units will be cut so more sun reaches units. Mr. Phair said he would call tomorrow (June 22) Tom Boyer, construction supervisor, to have him come out and determine if drainage contributes to moisture retention.

Mrs. Mooney’s action was not seconded and she withdrew it.

No action was taken on the agenda item for **parking consideration and redesign**. Mrs. Mooney said one tenant said the area marked as “no parking” should remain that and another tenant said it should be used for much-needed parking.

Mr. Grogan asked if **doggie clean up stations** are provided. Mrs. Mooney said someone from the Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter complained to her that Flag Rock tenants are bringing their dogs onto its abutting property.

No vote was taken but there seemed general agreement that a letter should be written to state Sen. Adam Hinds and state Rep. William "Smitty" Pignatelli requesting their help in solving problems with CHAMPS and local preference. Mr. Grogan and Ms. Danzy will prepare a letter, to be considered at the next meeting.

There was no **Old Business**.

No one spoke for the **LTO Report**.

Review of minutes of the April 13 meeting resulted in no vote as Mr. Grogan voted to accept them, Mrs. Mooney voted against and Mr. Orenstein had been on the board. It was agreed minutes should be marked as "unapproved" and posted.

Under **Citizen Speak**, Jackie Sinico said Mrs. Mooney should do the minutes. Susan Ball said garbage is everywhere, with ripped bags. Ms. Danzy said she also is concerned about this.

There being no further comments or business, Mr. Grogan adjourned the meeting at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Mooney

Material provided for board meeting: Compliance letter to board from Fenton-Ewald for April 30 financials plus balance sheets for 4001 and 689 for April 30, 2022, 3 pages each.