

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER: Attendance Roll Call. Chairman John Grogan opened the meeting via Zoom at 11:00am with a roll call: Tom Blauvelt, “aye,” John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.”

Also in attendance: Executive Director, Tina Danzy and staff Rich Phair and Madonna Meagher.

II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT: Financials, vacancies, maintenance, legal and other updates.

A. added item: Financials – T. Danzy stated she had sent financials to the board along with responses to P. Orenstein’s questions. The board discussed and agreed that all Q&A should be circulated to the entire board and would be included in the packet.

1. P. Orenstein asked how to get access to the approved FY23 budget. T. Danzy replied the budget is submitted to DHCD and they send approval; it is not formally posted, but is reflected in the monthly financial reports and in the annual plan. P. Orenstein also inquired about the income statement, operating receipts showing operating subsidy earned and received. He noted the excess received over earned is cash accounted for as payable on the balance sheet. Sue Honeycutt of Fenton Ewald replied the state sends subsidy funds and every year the balance rolls over - the state has not asked for the funds, but they can. P. Orenstein confirmed the cash balance includes the operating subsidy and suggested the financial report highlight the reserve calculation as that is more accurate. P. Orenstein asked about the OPEB balance and confirmed there is an actuarial report – and he asked for a copy. S. Honeycutt is to confirm when the next actuarial report is due. It was confirmed there are no current retirees and this is a future expense for future retirees.

2. E. Mooney asked about extraordinary maintenance – do additional funds come from the reserve and does the board need to approve. S. Honeycutt replied funds come from operations not from a reserve. P. Orenstein added the reserve fund is a budgetary oversight calculation – S. Honeycutt clarified it is retained earnings and noted DHCD now requires a 35% reserve balance.

B. Added item: Vacancies – T. Danzy reported there are three vacant units – one has a lease, another was offered and the third is a family unit.

C. Maintenance – T. Danzy reported on repair/clean-up work in progress and unit inspections. She stated several tenants are in arrears and have received notices to quit, but there are efforts to get them assistance. She also noted the recent on-site vaccination clinic was well attended.

D. Plowing contract - Potential Board vote – T. Danzy reported there has not been much response and it is being rebid. She noted the contract last year with Gary O’Brien was \$19,000 for two years and GBHA has budgeted \$22,800 for the upcoming season – though bids received to-date are considerably higher. She noted there will likely be a need for quick approval once a plowing company is identified.

E. Smoking Policy Update - Potential Board vote – T. Danzy expressed concerns about lack of enforcement of the smoking policy and suggested consequences for violations be more formalized and specific. J. Grogan noted the board is working on this policy and will forward it to T. Danzy. P. Orenstein pointed out a process is outlined in the current policy – T. Danzy replied it is not strong enough for housing court – steps need to be well documented.

F. Added item: Legal – T. Danzy noted there is a pending lawsuit and she/the board would like to meet with the attorney. It was confirmed if/when there is a settlement DHCD approves/pays – it is not clear what is the board’s role.

G. RSC Report & Funding - Potential Board vote – T. Danzy stated the RSC program is going well and the board will receive a full report – five tenants received housing stabilization assistance and access to benefits - and additional workshops on financial stability and budgeting will be held. T. Danzy stated the LTO submitted a letter attesting to the value of the program and supporting its continuation. T. Danzy noted tenants are aware of the program and can reach out to Karen Lewis during work hours.

J. Grogan made a motion to approve acceptance of the ongoing grant for the RSC program; P. Orenstein seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: T. Blauvelt, “aye,” J. Grogan, “aye,” E. Mooney, “aye,” P. Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 4-0.

H. Ongoing water distributions - Potential Board vote – T. Danzy stated there was a distribution last week - 300 gallons are distributed and the total cost is \$300 for each distribution. She also stated it was likely DHCD would reimburse the expense. The board discussed the Haloacetic Acid levels, but the current status was unclear. The board discussed making water distribution by request rather than automatic and if there should be an end date.

J. Grogan made a motion to cease mass water distribution and instead to keep water on hand and provide it as needed/requested for the next two months until December 19. T. Blauvelt seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – Jackie Sinico, resident of Flag Rock, asked that tenants be informed of the new process and to call Karen Lewis. She added the water is much appreciated by the tenants. Roll call vote: T. Blauvelt, “aye,” J. Grogan, “aye,” E. Mooney, “aye,” P. Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 4-0.

I. New AUP results – T. Danzy stated there were no findings this and last year – the only issue being that the reserve is under 35% due to unforeseen expenses. It was clarified that AUP is Agreed Upon Procedures not an audit, though all GBHA financials are reviewed.

III. Chairperson update - Community outreach progress and ideas.

A. J. Grogan stated he has called accounting firms to inquire about taking on GBHA, but there has been no response – he will continue outreach. He also stated the current situation with minute taking is not working out and there needs to be a new option.

J. Grogan made a motion to find another minute taker; T. Blauvelt seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: T. Blauvelt, “aye,” J. Grogan, “aye,” E. Mooney, “aye,” P. Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 4-0.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Sheffield involvement in Dewey’s governance - Potential Board vote – E. Mooney stated she had reached out to the Sheffield administrator and received a reply that the Selectmen are not interested.

B. Potential for CPA funding for a basketball backboard - Potential Board vote – J. Grogan raised the idea to apply for a CPA grant for a new backboard. T. Blauvelt stated that would be within CPA guidelines under recreational. J. Grogan stated he would write/submit for a grant – it was noted the deadline is coming up. J. Grogan stated the board should let him know ASAP if there are any other ideas for funding under CPA.

C. New Town Wildlife regulations - Informational – E. Mooney stated the Board of Health has enacted new regulations – especially regarding bird feeders. T. Danzy stated Brookside and Flag Rock tenants should be notified – and confirmed GBHA staff can contact the Town regarding any violations.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Parking lot camera - Potential Board vote – P. Orenstein stated, as discussed previously, the plan is to take a phased approach. He contacted a consultant who agreed with his assessment and noted phase I is easy/inexpensive only requiring a camera and wifi – with an estimated cost of \$300 for the camera, \$200 for installation and \$75-100/year for maintaining cloud video footage. He added that Phase II is more expensive and complex to have cameras in various areas of the property where there is no wifi would require underground cables to be added – the cost is TBD. He stated one camera to start seems logical to determine its capacity and effectiveness – and would need to be within the wifi access area. The best placement for the camera in light of vandalism/other concerns was discussed and that a sign “video surveilled” might be a deterrent. T. Danzy suggested having two cameras with one placed by the workshop, but wifi would need to be extended. The board agreed, depending on cost, and stated this item should be included in the FY24 budget. P. Orenstein stated GBHA would need a new policy to cover who can get access to the video – and it would be added to the policy work.

VI. LTO REPORT: New tenant survey. There was no report.

VII. Minute Review/Approval Board Meeting of July and site visit Meetings. E. Mooney stated the July and site visit meeting minutes have been approved, but the August 3 minutes still need approval.

P. Orenstein made a motion to approve the August 3, 2022 minutes; J. Grogan seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: T. Blauvelt, “aye,” J. Grogan, “aye,” E. Mooney, “aye,” P. Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 4-0.

IX. CITIZEN SPEAK: No citizens requested to speak.

X. BOARD COMMENTS: There were no board member comments.

XI. ADJOURNMENT - . Grogan made a motion to adjourn; E. Mooney seconded. J. Grogan adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 12:26pm.

Documents Reviewed

- Budget/financial report; warrant reports

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow