

Great Barrington Housing Authority Minutes  
Thursday January 19, 2023

- I. CALL TO ORDER: Attendance Roll Call. . Chairman John Grogan opened the meeting via Zoom at 3:09pm with a roll call: John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.”  
Absent: Tom Blauvelt  
Also in attendance: Executive Director Tina Danzy and staff Madonna Meagher.
- II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT: Financials, vacancies, maintenance, legal (mold damage, et. al.) and other updates. Potential Board votes.
- A. Bank Balance – T. Danzy reported the bank balance is \$121,242.61
  - B. Vacancies – T. Danzy stated there are currently eight vacancies three of which came up at the end of the month. She noted there are four open offers and active pulls for others so hopefully there will be confirmed tenants soon.
  - C. Maintenance – T. Danzy reported on behalf of Pich Phair that Maintenance is working on unit turnovers and repairs, floor replacement, painting, etc. is moving forward. She also stated sidewalks are being tended to and with snow forecasted, she asked tenants to take note and stay safe. Regarding floor replacement, T. Danzy stated GBHA had received a low bid for floor replacement from Neat Dash but the company never signed the contract, so another RFP will need to go out. She noted the funds for the project are preapproved for the few units turning over and it can be expensed so it does not come out of the operating budget. T. Danzy stated regarding Dewey, she and the Maintenance crew visited and the engineers are doing a scope of work for the septic change out to see what is needed.  
T. Danzy stated for Brookside, the turnovers are being worked on and a donated flat screen TV was installed in the community room pending upgrades. She noted, as discussed, the goal is to secure funds for upgrades to all community rooms.
  - D. CHAMPS Update – T. Danzy stated the state is partnering with CHAMPS to do a massive purge so within 90 days a lot of people who are inactive/nonresponsive will come off the list – and she expects units will then be filled more quickly.
  - E. Legal – T. Danzy reported there are a handful of cases in court in the past month for nonpayment. She noted some are in mediation and that Karen Lewis, Resident Services, is working with a few residents to obtain funds to maintain their housing.
  - F. Other items – T. Danzy reported GBHA has COVID testing kits and can provide one kit/2 tests per resident. She asked that residents contact the office. She also shared the GBHA-LTO hosted holiday event was a great success and crafting events for residents are being planned.
  - G. Policies – T. Danzy stated she had discussed with J. Grogan and asked that the board prioritize the Pet and Smoking Policies which are most problematic from her perspective. She also noted three updates need to be uploaded into the system – Language Access Plan; Reasonable Accommodation Plan, which needs updating; and Fair Housing Plan which was approved recently. She stated J. Grogan will help on this and DHCD has templates so she is hopeful they can be reviewed and approved at the next meeting and get uploaded into CHAMPS for tenant selection.
  - H. Water quality and distribution – T. Danzy noted there are continued concerns about water quality and DHCD has approved assisting residents with funds for water through the end of the fiscal year in March. She stated it has not been effective to buy, store and distribute water and suggested a \$20.00 concession for January-March which would be recorded as for water and coded back to utilities which are reimbursed by DHCD. J. Grogan added this would just entail moving funds that have already been allocated to most benefit tenants. E. Mooney asked to discuss this under New Business and noted she would suggest getting reimbursed by the Town. She also asked how tenants would be

notified and receive the funds. T. Danzy replied a letter would be sent to residents and they will receive the concession in billing for February and retroactive for January. P. Orenstein clarified it will essentially be a reduction in rent with no cash exchanged.

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the plan for temporarily rectifying the water situation for tenants in light of the latest notice regarding Haloacetic Acid levels; P. Orenstein seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – Jackie Sinico, resident, expressed her support and noted tenants are asking for water. Roll call vote: John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0.

1. Board questions –

- a. P. Orenstein asked if the engineers working on Dewey are from DHCD or independent – T. Danzy replied it is a large-scale project which comes through DHCD who contracts with the engineers.
- b. J. Grogan confirmed there are total eight vacancies and T. Danzy added there are four offers and some acceptances. She noted the family unit is being worked on and they are on the third pull – but the upcoming purge should help.
- c. J. Grogan stated the policy review/updating process is proceeding, but more slowly than expected. He stated it would happen over time and supported the approach to prioritize the Pet and Smoking Policies. He continued to state that the DHCD lease has no smoking prohibition. T. Danzy stated the DHCD lease is standard and GBHA adds attachments/addendums. T. Danzy stated she would work on revising the Pet and Smoking Policies as they are most urgent. J. Grogan stated the pet policy is different for family vs elderly units with family units prohibiting pets without written permission from the GBHA – but it appears many families have dogs. E. Mooney asked that the Pet Policy be added to the next agenda.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Agreement on items included in each packet sent by office before a meeting. Potential Board votes. J. Grogan stated there will be a new process for this – he and T. Danzy will meet one week and a day in advance of meetings to coordinate on agenda items so all gets posted in time and that the packet will be run through T. Danzy for efficiency. He asked that agenda items be sent to him at least the Monday before the following Wednesday meeting. E. Mooney asked if packets can include the amount/specifics for which the payroll company is paid each month as this information had been provided in the past - T. Danzy replied that can be provided.
  1. P. Orenstein asked when is the budget process – T. Danzy replied she will start looking at numbers from DHCD regarding increases and will start template review within the next month, She added if there are items the board is concerned about to send them to her. P. Orenstein stated he would like to budget for phase one for the video camera – T. Danzy stated she would set aside \$1,000 for that.
- B. ED performance evaluation & Contract renewal. Potential Board votes. J. Grogan stated the Executive Director’s performance evaluation will need to be completed soon. The board agreed to use the same process as in the past – each board member would complete the form and send to J. Grogan who will compile input and it would then be discussed by the board at a meeting. J. Grogan stated he would send the form to the board. The board also agreed it was not necessary to include tenant feedback as part of the process as there is an existing mechanism for tenants through the LTO.
- C. Revisit water distribution, town reimbursement/DHCD reimbursement. Potential Board votes. E. Mooney stated the Town is getting a \$100,000 state grant to offset costs for HWW customers and GBHA should seek reimbursement. T. Danzy expressed concern about taking reimbursement from both DHCD and the Town and emphasized that DHCD reimburses GBHA dollar for dollar for utilities which will cover the cost of water.

D. Staff Job descriptions. T. Danzy stated she would look for/provide the board with the most recent version of staff job descriptions.

#### IV. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Replacing fee accountant: Discuss and approve RFP. Potential Board vote, The board reviewed the process/input/iterations of the RFP – including P. Orenstein’s original draft, T. Danzy’s/Madonna Meagher’s input, Sue Honeycutt’s/Gary DePace’s job scope/description and E. Mooney’s edits/revisions. J. Grogan continued to state the Monson document scope/duties need to be incorporated and that will become the final version of the RFP. He stated further that there should be a final draft by tomorrow. P. Orenstein confirmed the compensation/ contractual information would be removed. J. Grogan asked for ideas for the RFP’s distribution – E. Mooney stated it should be sent to the MA Survey of CPAs which has various publications. It was discussed it should also be sent to the DHCD list and local accounting firms. T. Danzy suggested targeted outreach perhaps including Lisa Fallon. The board agreed these are all good routes and it is important to be proactive, but also that it may be challenging to find someone for the role as the state makes it complicated and many in the field are retiring/not interested in scaling up. It was discussed that the board would consider Fenton Ewald if they were interested and wanted to apply. The board agreed it only wanted to consider options for GBHA and did not decide to not renew/terminate Fenton Ewald – Teresa Ewald and S. Honeycutt had made that decision. The board discussed how/when the RFP can be approved and if a special meeting is needed. E. Mooney stated her preference for a separate special meeting.

J. Grogan made a motion to vote to approve and send out by all means possible E. Mooney’s version of the RFP with the Monson information included; P. Orenstein seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – E. Mooney stated she would like to know exactly what is in the RFP before voting. Roll call vote: John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “no,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.” Motion passed 2-1.

B. Policy readings - Second Readings - Grievance, Snow Removal. Potential Board vote. E. Mooney stated she had distributed the Grievance Policy and asked for approval.

E. Mooney made a motion to accept the Grievance Policy; J. Grogan seconded. J. Grogan asked for any board/public discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0.

1. T. Danzy asked about pending edits to the current version of the Grievance Policy - there was discussion about some additions/deletions/rewordings for the document and E. Mooney agreed to send T. Danzy the final version and to discuss any questions offline. J. Grogan noted if there are any major changes it can be brought back to the board for reapproval.

V. LTO REPORT: J. Sinico stated Marleen Koloski is working on scheduling the next meeting.

VI. Minute Review/Approval Board Meeting of December 14, 2022, November 16, 2022, October 19, 2022, October 13, 2022, September 29, 2022 & August 23, 2022

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the November 16, 2022 minutes; E. Mooney seconded. J. Grogan asked for any board/public discussion – E. Mooney stated P. Orenstein’s name is misspelled and T. Danzy asked that Rich Phair and Madonna Meagher be added as staff attendees. E. Mooney added the minutes need to note what materials were discussed at the meeting and that will be added. Roll call vote: John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0.

E. Mooney made a motion to approve the October 19, 2022 minutes; J. Grogan seconded. J. Grogan asked for any board/public discussion – T. Danzy asked that Jackie Sinico be identified as a resident. Roll call vote: John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0.

P. Orenstein made a motion to approve the October 13, 2022 minutes; J. Grogan seconded. J. Grogan asked for any board/public discussion – E. Mooney stated Chief Burger’s name is misspelled and T. Danzy asked that Jackie Sinico be identified as a resident. Roll call vote: John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0.

E. Mooney made a motion to approve the September 29, 2022 minutes; J. Grogan seconded. J. Grogan asked for any board/public discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0.

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the August 23, 2022 minutes; E. Mooney seconded. J. Grogan asked for any board/public discussion – T. Danzy asked that Rich Phair and Madonna Meagher be added as staff attendees. Roll call vote: John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0.

A. The board discussed payment to S. Ostrow for the minutes – T. Danzy stated she would get a W9 and hours will be approved by the board by signing the check to S. Ostrow.

#### VII. CITIZEN SPEAK:

A. J. Sinico stated she will be the Tenant Representative and would not go on the board until election time. She noted she is not using the title for any advantage, only to hear resident input, ideas, etc. J. Grogan expressed his appreciation for her efforts.

#### VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

A. J. Grogan thanked Jim Mercer for providing the HWW notice to the board.

B. The board agreed that J. Grogan and T. Danzy would meet on February 1 and the next Policy Subcommittee meeting is February 8, time is TBD. J. Grogan stated the next board meeting is planned for February 22 at 11am. P. Orenstein stated he could not make that date and it was agreed another date would be identified.

IX. ADJOURNMENT- E. Mooney made a motion to adjourn; J. Grogan seconded. J. Grogan asked for any board/public discussion –there was none. Roll call vote: John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.” All in favor: 3-0. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:13pm.

Documents reviewed: Fee Accountant RFP; Grievance Policy

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow