

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY  
Wednesday, February 22, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER: Attendance Roll Call. Chairman John Grogan opened the meeting via Zoom at 2:00pm with a roll call: Tom Blauvelt, “aye,” John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye.” Also present: Executive Director Tina Danzy, Maintenance Supervisor Rich Phair and Accountant Sue Honeycutt.

E. Mooney stated she had just sent the board an email for their information.

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

A. Financials – T. Danzy stated the current financials are in the packet including quarterly reports. She highlighted expenditures regarding vacancies and turnover are as expected and impact the bottom line - and she noted a \$162,926 bank balance.

B. Legal – T. Danzy stated there are several court cases for nonpayment pending court agreement or agreement for repayment and one unit has a judgment for possession for cause.

C. Vacancies – T. Danzy stated a senior unit was just housed and three are slated for move in March 1. There are waitlist pulls for four other units of which one has an insurance claim issue. E. Mooney asked what is that issue – T. Danzy replied it is where a frozen pipe burst and it is an ADA upgrade which is now delayed. J. Grogan asked how long it takes to fill four units – T. Danzy replied there are active pulls for one ADA unit, a two bedroom unit which is on the fifth pull and another unit just vacated. She noted it is a long process to get eligible people for the units because it pulls from across the state.

T. Danzy also noted resident services are at an all-time high and there have been many tenant referrals for assistance. She also noted the craft event at Flag Rock was successful.

D. Maintenance – R. Phair stated there is a lot of unit turnover - he noted damage due to pipes freezing in a unit that needs rehabilitating, but funds are available to do the work. He stated and painting and kitchen upgrades are continuing, some using a contractor. He stated regarding water filters, one can be put on the main feed to seniors for approximately \$3,000 not including installation, and for family units, it would be \$500 per unit. He noted it all depends on the main and if pipes need to be moved. P. Orenstein stated funds have been allocated to the Town for the water issue and we can discuss making a request. T. Danzy added the total estimate would be in the \$20,000 range. E. Mooney asked if the leased DSS building is involved in the estimates/concerns – R. Phair replied it would involve all buildings on the property. E. Mooney clarified the Town has not been officially notified about funds so there is no pressure to apply. R. Phair stated there have also been emergency heat calls due to tenants not refilling propane tanks – he noted seniors have meters so they can be monitored. J. Grogan asked if the burst pipe was related to the propane issue – R. Phair replied no, that was because of low temperatures.

J. Grogan asked what is the report at the end of the financials – T. Danzy replied it is the quarterly Mod report.

E. Mooney stated the first item under new business may not comply with Open Meeting Law, and the assistant attorney advised if it does not comply, any action taken will not be valid. J. Grogan replied we can come back to that.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Agreement on items included in each packet sent by office before a meeting. Potential Board votes.

J. Grogan asked if there is anything the board is not getting in the packet that members want – all agreed it is good as is.

B. New fiscal year preliminary budget. Potential Board votes.

T. Danzy stated she had sent the draft template for the budget to the board a week ago – and S. Honeycutt added the first page is a PDF separate from the budget packet. S. Honeycutt stated DHCD has strict budget guidelines – DHCD sets the level for nonutility expenses and cannot be budgeted above that and a budget cannot be submitted with a reserve under 35%. She continued to state GBHA received a 9% increase - which is an extra \$44,000 and it is being spread across a number of expense categories. Regarding salaries, there is a new Executive Director salary schedule which is designed to make up for the lack of increases over the last three years and will provide an increase of 4.7% annually. She added that administrative staff will receive a 5% increase. Also, regarding labor salaries, she stated they will increase in April, but it is not known how much it will be and DHCD does not permit us to anticipate that expense. She covered the status of a number of expense categories – Agreed Upon Procedures increased in price; maintenance contract cost increased \$2,000 for the security camera and basketball hoop; property insurance increased and workman's comp decreased - and a few non-routine items including appliances and a network printer were added. She stated GBHA will be at 35% projected based on income. It was noted the budget does not vary much year to year.

P. Orenstein asked if the worksheet is part of the state system – S. Honeycutt replied it is her worksheet and once approved, the budget will be entered into the system. He also noted the reserve amount is currently 19% - he asked where the additional funds were found - S. Honeycutt replied we need to make money and the net surplus is \$60,963 projected if we stay within the budget. She clarified that reserves are accumulation of profits, and as there have been a lot of expenses, the reserve is low. P. Orenstein asked how the \$83,000 increase in rental income impacts the budget/reserve – S. Honeycutt replied rental income reduces the subsidy and is not a factor for the reserve. J. Grogan asked what becomes revenue – S. Honeycutt replied cutting expenditures. He noted that is not how it usually works. She continued to explain the increase in rental revenue does not increase the reserve as it is offset by the subsidy. S. Honeycutt continued to state the only thing that does not impact subsidy is 50% of solar credits and 10% Mod construction costs for administrative fees which is considered retained revenue. There continued to be questions about how the reserve is funded and it was agreed P. Orenstein would discuss offline. E. Mooney asked why under insurance the variance and total general is in red – S. Honeycutt replied property insurance is up and workman's comp is down, so the net effect is it went down. E. Mooney asked about how funds for water for Flag Rock impacts rental income – S. Honeycutt replied that is an expense.

J. Grogan made a motion to accept the Executive Director's salary schedule; T. Blauvelt seconded. J. Grogan asked if any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: Tom Blauvelt, "aye," John Grogan, "aye," Eileen Mooney, "aye," Philip Orenstein, "aye. All in favor: 4-0.

J. Grogan made a motion to accept the 2024 budget for 4001; T. Blauvelt seconded. J. Grogan asked if any discussion – J. Grogan stated he is supportive due to the subsidy explanation, and noted the terminology is confusing, but the number are okay. E. Mooney asked why P. Orenstein is planning to abstain – he stated he had already explained. Roll call vote: Tom Blauvelt, "aye," John Grogan, "aye," Eileen Mooney, "aye," Philip Orenstein, "abstain." Motion passed: 3-0 with one abstention.

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the 2024 budget for 689; T. Blauvelt seconded. J. Grogan asked if any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: Tom Blauvelt, "aye," John Grogan, "aye," Eileen Mooney, "aye," Philip Orenstein, "abstain." Motion passed: 3-0 with one abstention.

C. ED Performance Evaluation & Contract Renewal. Potential Board votes.

E. Mooney stated the evaluation form does not comply with Open Meeting Law and if it is discussed she will file a complaint. J. Grogan stated it is a document/form that is public and can be reviewed – E. Mooney replied ratings cannot be anonymous and added the Attorney General has

concerns about the agenda. P. Orenstein asked what is the complaint about the agenda – E. Mooney replied during the meeting she will send an email from the AG Division of Open Government. She continued to state the agenda information is not correct – J. Grogan replied he added ‘vote possible’ to agenda items. J. Grogan shared a summary document with ratings and comments – which, he noted, the board has seen and is a public document. He summarized that T. Danzy does a fine job - and noted a couple of questions are below 2, but just barely - and noted there needs to be improvement re: question 17: quickly and clearly addresses areas of sub standard performance, but most ratings are over 2. T. Blauvelt stated if the summary analysis runs afoul of Open Meeting requirements it can be brought into compliance by attaching individual detailed evaluations to the posting. J. Grogan stated it is just a way of looking at data and condensing many pages of information into a single page – he noted each comment is attributed to a person via color coding. E. Mooney stated that was done recently – J. Grogan replied it is in the final document. E. Mooney stated ratings are still anonymous and asked for the separate evaluation document from J. Grogan - he replied he would provide it. She added it must be a public document as GBHA is a state funded institution. J. Grogan stated T. Danzy has done a good job and there have been improvements in performance – T. Blauvelt agreed and P. Orenstein agreed and added it is a subjective process. J. Grogan stated there is also a pending contract renewal and he will complete the paperwork. T. Danzy stated her concerns about scores being lower than for the last evaluation – she noted a lack of facts regarding GBHA achieving financial stability and there being no citations/findings on the last two AUPs and the same with PMR. She also stated day to day operations and working with DHCD were not noted in the evaluations. J. Grogan stated DHCD oversees T. Danzy’s procedures and there have been many positive things that should have been mentioned. T. Danzy stated there are no measurable goals – and she asked what can be done to enhance her performance. T. Blauvelt suggested improving the relationship with the LTO as there has been some tension. He added that T. Danzy has always been very professional and forthcoming with information. T. Danzy replied stating the current relationship with the LTO is fairly positive, but agreed there can be improvements. J. Grogan stated more of T. Danzy’s accomplishments should have been noted - such as the AUP and financial stability. Regarding goals, he asked the board to think about setting some goals for T. Danzy to be evaluated against. E. Mooney stated her evaluation was impacted by T. Danzy seeking a waiver regarding a tenant representative on the board as that is a board decision. She continued to state the tenant representative is nominated by the LTO and appointed by the Selectboard – it is a process required by state law and the board decides if there is a waiver. E. Mooney forwarded to the board, T. Danzy and Marlene Kolowski, LTO lead an email noting her concerns about the waiver request and noting state requirements. T. Danzy replied she was instructed by Sarah O’Leary at DHCD to submit a waiver on behalf of GBHA – and she was told board approval was not necessary. E. Mooney stated it was never mentioned to the board even though there were two board meetings around that time – and noted one of the two available seats should be for a tenant representative. J. Grogan stated T. Danzy did what she was told to do – and clarified the waiver request was dropped and there would be a tenant on the board.

#### D. Procurement Administration. Potential Board votes.

S. Honeycutt stated the 10% administrative fee on construction costs is being put in 4001 as retained revenue to boost profits – but T. Danzy has worked past normal work hours on projects and DHCD allows payment out of this line. P. Orenstein asked if that will impact the surplus as a

source of profit – S. Honeycutt replied normally yes, 10% administrative fee on construction cost can be put into 4001 program as retained revenue to boost profits – but Tina can get paid for her time out of those funds – J. Grogan replied yes that is fine. E. Mooney stated if there is a vote on this it will violate Open Meeting Law – J. Grogan replied there will not be a vote, it is just for informational purposes. T. Danzy provided an example - \$1m in ARPA funds have been awarded for projects and three quarters of that is for construction costs and 10% is in retained revenue. J. Grogan asked how T. Danzy's hours would be tracked – she replied likely with a spreadsheet and hours would be submitted periodically for reimbursement. It was confirmed the remainder would be transferred as retained revenue/reserves.

P. Orenstein asked about the net meter utility credit noting it should be a negative offset to the solar operator cost – S. Honeycutt replied the solar bill is paid with the electric bill credit and anything left over is savings. She clarified that we keep 50% which goes into retained revenue and 50% goes to DHCD - and she noted utilities impact subsidies. She continued to explain the net meter utility credit equals the solar operating cost, netting to zero, but on the DHCD form it appears differently.

E. Staff Job descriptions – T. Danzy stated they are in the packet.

F. Training Workshops update – E. Mooney stated Berkshire Housing group has good materials and she will send them to J. Grogan. She stated she learned that DHCD CHAMP system is not functioning and it is being addressed at high levels. She also clarified when LHA is referred to it means the board - and the board seeks waivers.

#### IV. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Update fee accountant search. Potential Board vote – J. Grogan provided an update on the search and reported there have been 3-4 replies asking for more information. He asked if there were other ideas about who to reach out to and how to promote. Marlene Koloski, LTO lead, stated there needs to be a tenant on the board and noted an LTO meeting will be scheduled. J. Grogan confirmed the board is not seeing a waiver and added a board seat opens May 9. J. Grogan asked if M. Koloski has a point of contact at each of the three sites – she agreed with that approach. It was noted the goal is to have two names for the board – and it was noted E. Mooney would be contacted for ideas. M. Koloski also stated the holiday party was a good event, but could be earlier in the day.

B. Policy readings - Second Readings - Pets, Language Access. Potential Board vote. E. Mooney stated she had some minor changes including adding written notice to the tenant and a time period before removal of a pet. T. Danzy stated at that point multiple efforts have been made to contact the tenant/alternate. It was discussed that the Humane Society should be informed the tenant is not giving up the pet. The time period for notice was discussed and P. Orenstein suggested the language - after multiple efforts to contact the tenant's alternate. E. Mooney stated she would send her other small changes to T. Danzy. P. Orenstein suggested the first paragraph re: animals that assist persons, be moved below management approval of pets as it is an exception to the rule. Also regarding grandfathering – they may reregister pets regardless of size limits. T. Danzy stated senior pets are all under 35lbs and she has not approved reasonable accommodation for any pet in a family unit. P. Orenstein suggested making it clearer. E. Mooney confirmed 705 is family housing - T. Danzy stated the policy is same for everyone. It was agreed it should be changed from 705 to family housing.

E. Mooney made a motion to approve the Pet Policy; J. Grogan seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: Roll call vote: Tom Blauvelt, “aye,” John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye. All in favor: 4-0.

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Regarding the Language Access Policy, T. Danzy stated she rarely has a need for this as people usually come in with family to interpret – she clarified it is part of the fair housing requirement.

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the Language Access Policy; T. Blauvelt seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: Tom Blauvelt, “aye,” John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye. All in favor: 4-0.

T. Danzy stated she would be working on the Reasonable Accommodation Policy for the next meeting.

C. Water deduction from rent - ongoing? Including request for town reimbursement Potential Board vote.

J. Grogan stated the board needs to consider the rent reduction for water for next year – T. Danzy stated she will reach out to DHCD and let them know the board is making a request regarding DHCD continued support. E. Mooney asked why families get the same as individual elderly tenants and asked if the amount should be adjusted. T. Danzy stated she would inquire if this would violate the discrimination policy.

V. LTO REPORT: No report was provided.

VI. Minute Review/Approval Board Meeting of January 11, 2023 and January 19, 2023

J. Grogan made a motion to approve the minutes of January 11 and January 19, 2023 as amended; T. Blauvelt seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. Roll call vote: Tom Blauvelt, “abstain,” John Grogan, “aye,” Eileen Mooney, “aye,” Philip Orenstein, “aye. Motion passed 3-0 with one abstention.

VII. CITIZEN SPEAK

A. Joanne Irodry, tenant, asked why GBHA attorney is making decisions about allowable medical expenses – as she has submitted expenses for water, blood pressure monitor, etc. J. Grogan replied if T. Danzy denied an expense there is a right to grieve the decision to T. Danzy and the board. J. Irodry stated T. Danzy would not accept the grievance and it went to the lawyer. J. Grogan stated it needs to go through the process - J. Irodry stated she would file a grievance.

B. Jackie Sinico, tenant, stated the water situation will be ongoing and expressed her hope that DHCD would continue to allow this expenditure – J. Grogan agreed – and noted T. Danzy was going to approach DHCD on this matter.

C. J. Irodry asked about the Pet Policy – and described her situation with her cat who needs to go outside and asked if can add a cat patio outside her window at her expense. J. Grogan directed her to the pet policy.

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

A. E. Mooney asked for the tenant assistance board report, that Karen Lewis date and put her name on it.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – J. Grogan made a motion to adjourn; T. Blauvelt seconded. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 3:50pm.

Documents reviewed: 2024 preliminary budget, financial statements Pet and Language Access policies.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow