

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Regular Meeting In-person at Flag Rock Village Common Room 2 Bernard Gibbons Dr., Housatonic. MA
Wednesday, June 21, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER: Attendance Roll Call. Chairman John Grogan opened the meeting at 11:00am with Board members John Grogan, Eileen Mooney and Phil Orenstein present.

Also present: Executive Director Tina Danzy and staff Rick Phair and Madonna Meagher; LTO president Marlene Koloski; tenants Ann Pruhenski, Rosemary Besancon and Jackie Sinico and two others; and for part of the meeting, Zachary Holt of Power Options.

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

- a. Spectrum bulk-rate Ongoing Discussion. Potential Board votes. T. Danzy provided an overview and recommended canceling the group plan and to provide residents with 60-days notice to obtain their own individual plan through Spectrum by September 1. She also noted staff would help residents with this as needed and they would receive regular reminders of the deadline. Jackie Sinico, resident, asked if staff could get a summary/cost of available plans from Spectrum to make it easier for the residents to consider options – the Board agreed this is a good idea.

J. Grogan made a motion to discontinue Spectrum bulk rate with GBHA to enable residents to negotiate their own deal and to terminate the current group plan within 60 days beginning July 1. E. Mooney seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – it was decided that the information would be obtained from Spectrum and distributed to residents by either T. Danzy, M. Meagher or K. Lewis. It was verified that the current service would terminate as of September 1 and would no longer appear on the rent bill. All in favor: 3-0.

- b. Cell phone reimbursement for staff. Potential Board votes. J. Grogan stated T. Danzy has confirmed with other housing authority directors that staff is reimbursed for work-related cell phone use and noted he had reached out to several housing authority boards regarding how they handle cell phone reimbursement, but had not received a response. He added that DHCD does not recommend reimbursement, but to instead purchase separate cell phones – which would be a significant expense. J. Grogan stated staff should be reimbursed some amount – T. Danzy confirmed other housing authorities are doing \$50. The board discussed what would be an appropriate amount. P. Orenstein asked if DHCD does not recommend it, why do housing authorities do it and noted this is more like compensation provided to staff in regard to phone use.

E. Mooney made a motion to reimburse T. Danzy, R. Phair and Tim; the motion was not seconded.

T. Danzy stated M. Meagher uses her phone for work, especially in emergencies.

P. Orenstein made a motion to provide \$35 for T. Danzy, R. Phair, Tim and M. Meagher; J. Grogan seconded; J. Grogan asked for any discussion – Marlene Koloski, LTO recommended a \$25 reimbursement. E. Mooney expressed concerns as this is not a budgeted expense. All in favor: 3-0.

- c. Power Options - Potential savings. Potential Board vote Zachary Holt of Power Options presented his proposal, sent to board members before the meeting. Discussion was continued to the policy meeting.
- d. Housatonic Water - Flag Rock Filtration possibilities and ongoing water distribution concerns . Potential Board Votes. J. Grogan noted haloacetic acid is still an issue – and asked about Flag Rock looking at installing a filtration system at the source especially for the senior units. M. Koloski suggested testing the water periodically. P. Orenstein stated either a large filter on the main pipe, individual filters in units or another solution should be funded in part by the Town – and that the \$500 per household should be aggregated by GBHA. It was discussed that R. Phair should look into installing a filter on the main line. E. Mooney suggested making a motion to apply to the Town for

each unit at Flag Rock. J. Grogan suggested writing a letter to the Town Manager Mark Pruhenski and it was agreed he should send it ASAP and copy Board members. E. Mooney asked about ongoing rent decrease of \$20 per unit a month at Flag Rock because of water problems water distribution and T. Danzy confirmed DHCD has been reimbursing for the expense. E. Mooney suggested asking residents for receipts.

P. Orenstein made a motion that J. Grogan send a note to the Town making it clear that GBHA expects funding for each unit; E. Mooney seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 3-0.

- e. Financials – T. Danzy stated the report is for the first month of the fiscal year. P. Orenstein confirmed the 2024 approved budget he received corresponds with the report. The state attorney's fees were discussed and T. Danzy reported she has asked DHCD for an additional \$3,000 to cover costs already incurred. She added that if rents are collected through the legal process GBHA can keep the majority of it. E. Mooney asked about the mold lawsuit - T. Danzy replied it is in preconference. E. Mooney asked to look at current warrants and for them to be available at meetings for signature as all three board members should sign. J. Grogan stated warrants can be reviewed when checks are signed. T. Danzy stated in the packet is everything that was paid in April – warrants, payroll, etc. E. Mooney asked to see warrants from Adirondack – J. Grogan replied it was agreed we do not need to see the invoices, but to file a public records request if needed. E. Mooney stated she would file a public records request. E. Mooney also asked about paying employees bi-weekly instead of weekly as a cost saving measure. T. Danzy replied that would be a hardship for employees and confirmed they have always been paid weekly.
- f. Vacancies – T. Danzy reported she is working on filling units and there is interest in a unit at Dewey and move-ins at Flag Rock and Brookside.
- g. Updates – T. Danzy reported -
 - Inspections are continuing and advance notice is provided to residents.
 - Pet area signage is up and pet owners should not tie out their dogs. She added an electrician will be installing additional lighting in the back and confirmed it is a small job that does not have to go out to bid.
 - Gardening project is going well and an event will be planning for the end of the growing season. She also thanked J. Sinico for the great job with the flower beds.
 - Father's Day breakfast was well attended and a cookout is planned for July 12 with a rain date of July 13 – she asked that residents RSVP in advance.
 - Some family unit yards need cleaning up and those residents are responsible for mowing their area. She stated those families will be notified in person, by email and/or letter.
 - Recertification will be July 1-August 15 with drop-in times at all sites. She noted Karen Lewis, the resident services coordinator, and the staff would be on hand to help residents with paperwork.
 - T. Danzy stated she attending various webinars and trainings - and is applying for staff safety training grants. J. Grogan asked if the Board can assist in these efforts – T. Danzy replied yes, if members have the time to help with grant research/writing.
 - T. Danzy stated she is taking procurement training so GBHA can use the state website for purchases.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. "Cost of Maintenance" discussion - hiring vs. contractors - finding a permanent PT solution. Potential Board votes.

T. Danzy said she has not found a part-time maintenance worker and will advertise for someone.

- b. Expense reduction/Reserves increasing discussion & brainstorming. Potential Board votes. J. Grogan stated if the reserve continues to be low this should be on meeting agendas. T. Danzy described multiple unanticipated expenses and highlighted that insurance will not cover certain expenses including a situation where a resident had to vacate a unit due to flooding and repairs were delayed and GBHA had to cover the expense.
- c. Board Appointments: Community Preservation Board Rep., Public Records Officer. Potential Board votes.

E. Mooney made a motion for J. Grogan to serve as interim Board representative to the CPC; P. Orenstein seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 3-0.

J. Grogan made a motion to renominate E. Mooney as Public Records Officer; P. Orenstein seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – it was confirmed that the Public Records Officer handles public records requests. All in favor: 3-0.

- d Set July Meetings for Policy Subcommittee and regular meeting. Regular meeting to be at Dewey facility.

The policy meeting was scheduled for July 6 at 2:00 pm in person at Flag Rock and the regular meeting was scheduled for

July 20 at 11:00 am in-person at Dewey. E. Mooney asked to receive policies in advance of the meeting and T. Danzy replied she is working on them and will try to send prior to the meeting.

IV. CITIZEN SPEAK:

- a. A. Pruhenski asked about the office's use of emergency contact information in emergency situations. T. Danzy said the office informally monitors residents and will do wellness checks as warranted and confirmed that residents are asked to provide emergency contacts annually in the recertification process. T. Danzy stated lifeline buttons are helpful.
- b. J. Sinico asked about the downstairs bathroom next to the community room being locked. T. Danzy stated items are stored in the bathroom and it is locked for security reasons. J. Sinico and others said people using the community room or laundromat have no bathroom available.

P. Orenstein made a motion that the Board recommends the Executive Director use procedures with an eye towards keeping the bathroom open 24/7; E. Mooney seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion – P. Orenstein stated this is a recommendation to find a way to keep the bathroom open. E. Mooney stated she seconded but not that a formal vote does not seem appropriate because the item was not on the agenda. J. Grogan stated this is a recommendation not a mandate. All in favor: 3-0.

V. Minutes Review/Approval Board Meetings of May 25 and June 7 Policy Subcommittee Potential Board vote.

P. Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes of May 25 and June 7 as amended; E. Mooney seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion– there was none. All in favor: 3-0.

VI. LTO REPORT – M. Koloski stated there is an issue she will discuss with T. Danzy. She said a recent meeting lacked a quorum because three LTO board members were not present.

VII. BOARD COMMENTS

- a. E. Mooney asked that Board members receive an outline of T. Danzy's report in advance of the meeting, which could save presentation time during a meeting. She also asked for information on rent, DHCD funds, etc. payments into the GBHA account. J. Grogan stated it was discussed before that DHCD does not provide a lump sum. E. Mooney stated she would submit a public records request. J. Grogan replied that is fine, but financial information is provided monthly and public records requests are time consuming for the staff. E. Mooney stated she continues to have concerns.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT - **P. Orenstein made a motion to adjourn; J. Grogan seconded. All in favor: 3-0.**
The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 1:26pm.

Documents discussed: April financial report; RSC report from Karen Lewis; Power Options cost analysis for GBHA; executive summary of electricity participant agreement with CNE.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow