

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING  
GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING  
NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Participation was done on site at GB Town Hall (Selectmen's meeting room) room and by Zoom  
Zoom remote participation per Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Provisions of the Open Meeting  
Law

**I: CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Grogan called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. In attendance: Board of Commissioners: Chairman John Grogan, Phil Orenstein, Jackie Sinico, Maureen Meier, Eileen Mooney

Executive Director (ED) Tina Danzy, Assistant to the Executive Director Madonna Meagher

Public: Susan M, June B, Nora B., Karen S. Ann P, Lynn N., Rosemary B., Pete W., M. Errichetto, K. Perotti, M. Mercer

Chairman Grogan addressed the board and attendees with rules of civility in the meeting and asked that there be no shouting.

**II: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Executive Director Danzy reviewed the financials and warrant cover sheets. Executive Director Danzy noted that the GBHA AUP audit mentioned two findings: the reserve account is less than 20 percent and transcription error inadvertently placing a \$1200 tenant deduction in an "exemption" column instead of deduction column. The correction was made. There was no change in the calculated rent for the tenant.

In a vacancy update, Executive Director Danzy noted that one family unit had been leased and there is an active pull for three vacant units, the majority of the list is with local residents. MassNAHRO ([National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials](#)) has filtered the list, purging outdated applicants leaving GBHA with more local applicants. GBHA is partnering with MassNAHRO to use their services to process the list pulls. It will save GBHA money and time.

Executive Director Danzy continues requesting additional funding for legal expenses from EOHLC.

The GBHA staff attended a Narcan training session. GBHA might get 5 Narcan units a month.

Tree removal at Flag Rock continues to need an engineer letter of intention addressing environmental concerns to the town Conservation Commission. Discussion ensued. Hugh Mackay is in contact with Shep Evans, Conservation Commission Agent.. Hugh Mackay continues to work on engineering for the drain ditch at Flag Rock.

Power Options initially stated solar is not an option at Brookside but they want to look it over again. Executive Director Danzy had discussion with EOHLC Greg Abbe to see if there might be money for other sites as well to fund solar projects. Orenstein stated while he considers green initiatives important, he was concerned with the best

use of Tina's limited work hours with researching solar panels on our properties given that there are so many other important topics on the docket. Executive Director Danzy is working with Power Options, and a team that is working on LEAN green energy projects such as forced heat pumps and upgrading sustainability. EOHLC is pushing for green energy and it's not taking up a substantial amount of her time. Orenstein stated he asked for and never received an answer of reviewing existing solar arrangements with Brookside and solar panels already existing in the Fairgrounds. Grogan had a conversation with Zach and would be waiting until January 2024.

Executive Director Danzy brought to the Board's attention that there is a safety issue with residents using ladders and tools to trim bushes and trees. While Ms. Danzy appreciated volunteerism from tenants; she asked that they have a conversation with her first before starting a "maintenance" project on their own.

#### MAINTENANCE UPDATE:

Executive Director Danzy reported Maintenance Supervisor Rich Phair is on disability for work related injury.

Housatonic Water Works had hydrant flushing and no discoloration in water was noted.

The last two family apartments at Dewey Court are scheduled for inspection, completing the inspection process.

The ramps at Brookside are still in revision with the vendor. Payment is on hold until it's completed.

Bear dumpster being delivered at Dewey. The cost for shipping is \$1900. Full cost paid for by MSPCA grant.

Air Conditioners need to be removed and Great Barrington Rotary Club should be called for free removal.

Regarding a grievance officer, Executive Director Danzy spoke with GBHA property attorney Elaine O'Donnell who will reach out to a few people who could be grievance officers. Discussion ensued regarding mediation versus grievance. Board member Mooney had concerns regarding funding for representation for the grievance policy and also about Attorney O'Donnell's charges for informal conferences. Chairman Grogan cited the grievance policy and that the Authority can bring in a lawyer and so can the tenant.

The Executive Director reported she has a hearing notice about the GBHA draft annual plan. On December 13th @ 11:00 a.m. at Flag Rock, it will need board approval. It was reviewed with the LTO.

Regarding the water filter. Moran Mechanical has been given the specifications GBHA awaits information.

Mooney had questions regarding the financing of the Housatonic Water Works water filters at GBHA. Executive Director Danzy, responding to Mooney's "where is the money coming from?" stated that the board approved funding the water filtration system but the town had yet to fund the filtration money. The Executive Director was following on the Board of Commissioners request to fund filters without the final say from the town. Mooney continued the question "Where is the money coming from?". The Executive Director Danzy responded that the town has yet to formalize the funding but as Executive Director she was continuing to research and comply with the Board's directive. Executive Director Danzy noted that there is no extra reserve fund for GBHA to pay for this filtration system. Executive Director Danzy asked the board where the money should come from as she would have waited until it was finalized from the town. Mooney (verbatim) stated she didn't "think the board approved the installation". Executive Director Danzy stated the board had approved the funding for the filtration system.

***Transcriber: \*Nota Bene. September 21, 2023 approved minutes.***

***III. NEW BUSINESS: a. Housatonic Water - ...The board discussed adding a filtration system to the water main***

*for Flag Rock. T. Danzy stated she received an estimate of \$2,000. Which she would send to the board. The board discussed requests for reimbursement for water related expenses. It was confirmed there are 32 units at Flag Rock. E. Mooney made a motion to vote to inform the Town GBHA will request \$9,600 to put towards a filtration system. P. Orenstein stated the Town has authorized \$300 per household and they will require receipts. He suggested providing bottled water receipts with reimbursement going to residents. T. Danzy stated GBHA provided a \$20 per month concession. E. Mooney suggested the water main filter for the senior units and individual systems for the family units also be covered by the Town. P. Orenstein offered to talk with the Town about the \$300 reimbursement going to each resident and how to streamline the accounting. He also noted residents should be asked to weigh in. P. Orenstein made a motion to discuss with the Town how to access the \$300 per household, approve \$2,000 for the senior units water main filtration system and get an estimate for the family units; J. Grogan seconded. J. Grogan asked for any discussion - E. Mooney stated we should ask the Town for additional funds for the filtration system. P. Orenstein replied he would mention it, but will not ask for more money. All in favor: 4-0.*

Discussion ensued with Orenstein asking for product information regarding the water filters being ordered from Moran Mechanical, and to make sure we disclose to all relevant parties what is being installed, and what type of maintenance is required by the filter. Executive Director Danzy mentioned that information from Rich Phair indicated that the filters would need cleaning not necessarily replacing. Grogan suggested before installation of filters it would be good to know what contaminants are filtered including HAA5 and manganese for example, otherwise it might be useless to purchase these filters. Orenstein reported the town had received the money and one page application will be off to the public shortly. He stated that the GBHA is more complicated. If an individual tenant is able to request money from the town and will be eligible based on the application they should do so on their own and receive the money on their own. GBHA spent money on bottled water and we're discussing purchasing filters. Orenstein continued that the board should discuss a separate application on behalf of the residents for those items (i.e. bottled water purchased). Orenstein commented that the GBHA board will be in a better position to have a discussion once the one page application is released. The town needs to guide the GBHA board. Executive Director Danzy asked the board to be patient and not go too fast with decision making until there is more information from the town. EOHLC (formerly DHCD) has been covering the water charges that we have been giving as concessions. She also will put a temporary delay with Moran Mechanical until more information is forthcoming.

Executive Director Danzy asked the Board to approve Financial Assistance 5001 Formula Funding for Fiscal Year '26 in the total amount of \$2,347,498.51 for Dewey Court septic systems and elevator switch. **Grogan made a motion to accept the EOHLC financial assistance 5001 award as read by Executive Director Danzy seconded by Orenstein. Roll call vote: Grogan, aye; Orenstein, aye; Mooney, aye; Meier, aye; Sinico, aye. Motion passes 5-0**

Executive Director Danzy asked the board to approve a refurbishment contractor for the cigarette smoke damage in a flag rock senior apartment. Executive Director Danzy asked for three bids but only received two estimates. One was from First Response and the other from Liptek for cleaning the entire unit. We've used First Response before. A Couple of times they were fine and then we were not satisfied with their work the last time. Liptek's bid was \$8,214.69 for cleaning the entire unit. Discussion ensued. Rich Phair said Liptek was used before and we had a good response. There is a capital project for this turnover. Discussion ensued. Meier asked for recommendations. Sinico had concerns with contracting out the refurbishment rather than using the GBHA maintenance staff. **Mooney made a motion to hire Liptek for cleaning the entire unit, seconded by Grogan. Roll call vote: Grogan, aye; Orenstein, aye; Mooney, aye; Meier, aye; Sinico, nay. Motion passes 4-1.**

### **III: CITIZEN SPEAK:**

**Tenant Lynn N. commented that Theresa and Madonna have been welcoming in the office. We live in a state that takes care of seniors and medical issues and we should count our blessings.**

### **IV: NEW BUSINESS:**

Goals and Effectiveness with working with the ED.

Chairman Grogan asked the board members what are their goals for being on this GBHA Board?

Orenstein stated that he's here to assist in the oversight role in respect to the HA and to hopefully ensure that the tenants are being treated fairly.

Mooney: Ditto

Meier: I'm here because I want to give back to the town and am sympathetic to those who don't have a lot of money for them to have housing. People need a safe and comfortable place to live

Grogan: my goal is to make sure no one steals anything, people who work for the board are supported and to make sure tenants have the best possible place to live and feel part of the community. Additionally Grogan made an editorial comment - being on the board for a year and a half, he was convinced that people were stealing stuff, and conspiracies, it turns out the financing is complex but haven't found anyone being dishonest. It's important to support the office staff in their efforts is one of the most important things the board can do.

Sinico: I'm all about tenants, others on the board have the finances under control.

Next meeting date: December 13, 2023 at 11:00 the Annual Plan Hearing at the Flag Rock Community room, then immediately following can be the monthly board meeting.

Discussion ensued with Mooney wanting two meetings a month, Meier suggested having the board meet when necessary. Grogan would like monthly.

Renew policy update process: Mooney suggested she and Meier review the minutes and policy of the July meeting for accuracy. Mooney wanted a subcommittee, Grogan questioned if a subcommittee was needed.

Meier suggested she would try to transcribe minutes. **Mooney made a motion to review policies, seconded by Sinico. Roll call vote: Grogan, aye; Orenstein, aye; Mooney, aye; Meier, aye; Sinico, aye. Motion passes 5-0**

Mooney gave the background that CDCSB and Habitat for Humanity wants to work with GBHA. Mooney would like them to work with GBHA. Discussion ensued

A new minutes transcriber is needed, Stacy Ostrow is resigning.

### **V: OLD BUSINESS:**

HWW has plenty of water for fire protection at Flag Rock. Pressure is adequate for Flag Rock.

Defibrillators: Executive Director Danzy has applied for a safety grant for defibrillators.

### **VI: LTO REPORT:**

None

### **VII: MINUTES:**

8/16/23: Mooney had corrections to the minutes of 8/16/23 that weren't on the revised draft. Transcriber Meagher stated that the minutes had been revised and corrections made.

Grogan moved to approve the minutes of 8/16/23 seconded by Orenstein. Roll call vote: **Roll call vote: Grogan, aye; Orenstein, aye; Mooney, nay; Meier, aye; Sinico, nay. Motion passes 3-2**

**9/21/23 Minutes: Grogan moved to approve the 9/21/23 minutes seconded by Meier. Mooney had a change Page 3 under F “approved by the LTO should be “appointed” by the LTO. Roll call vote: Grogan, aye, Orenstein, abstain, Mooney, aye, Meier, aye, Sinico, aye. 4-1 abstention.**

**VIII: BOARD COMMENTS;**

Orenstein mentioned that Mooney heard Stockbridge HA had a bulk rate contract. Orenstein confirmed the bulk rate at Stockbridge. Discussion ensued with Sinico praising Resident Services Coordinator, Karen Lewis. Meier commented regarding minutes and how they are presented. Grogan mentioned that there is confusion if the meetings are not recorded properly.

**ADJOURNMENT: 1:45 p.m.**

**Sinico made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Mooney. Roll Call Vote: Mooney, Aye; Orenstein, aye; Sinico, aye; Grogan, aye; Meier, aye Unanimous 5-0**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Madonna Meagher

Documents reviewed: ED bullet points, Agenda, draft minutes 8/16/23; & 9/21/23, financial reports; Warrant cover pages, AUP report, 5001

Pursuant to MA General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 20 (e) (f), meetings of the Great Barrington Housing Authority are regularly recorded. Any member of the public wishing to speak at the meeting must receive permission of the Chair. Listed agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.