

APPROVED

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

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BOARD MEETING

Great Barrington Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

Flag Rock Community Room

**Present:** Chair James Mercer, Jackie Sinico, Eileen Mooney, Marie Ryan, Cara Becker

**Administration:** Tina Danzy, Executive Director, Madonna Meagher, Assistant to the Executive Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by Chairman Mercer.

**MINUTES** – November 26, 2019. With one correction/change requested by Mooney regarding her vote in Old Business to aye. **Becker made a motion to approve the minutes as amended seconded by Ryan. Roll call vote: Mooney aye, Sinico aye, Mercer aye, Becker aye, Ryan aye. Motion passes.**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Executive Director Danzy requested a board vote to change the rent determination for the 667 program from annual to Bi-annual. which will be sent to DHCD. **Mooney made a motion to accept change in rent determination from annual to bi-annual, seconded by Mercer. Vote: Mercer aye, Mooney aye, Becker aye, Sinico aye, Ryan aye. Unanimous.**

Executive Director reported that the rent collection is on target. There are currently 5 vacancies: 2 at Dewey that have state approval, 2 at Flag Rock families and one Flag Rock elderly unit. In an update on the fire in the unit at Brookside apartments, the fire was deemed an accident and the GBHA incurred approximately \$8000 in repair/cleaning costs which will be partially returned from insurance once the \$5000 deductible is met.

The "LEAN" program from National Grid discussed at the October 15th and November 26th board meetings had a representative report that funding for a lighting upgrade for Dewey's exterior and the community room plus 2 furnaces replacement might be available. The funding for refrigerator replacements has ended.

Executive Director Danzy submitted a grant for special funds to assist the Dewey property with sidewalk repair by the community room along with an ADA ramp. Executive Danzy also requested for assistance on-site wide sidewalk and parking lot areas. The state will determine to whom and how much will receive special funding during the next couple of months.

Resident Service Coordinator grants up to \$30,000 to be selected by the State for collaboration with other south county housing authorities were applied for. As of this board meeting, grant funding for the Resident Services Coordinator (RSC) has not been decided.

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)/resident meeting was held on December 4, 2019. Residents provided feedback and will continue to work with Marlene Koloski on a "want/need" list.

Executive Director Danzy reported that the maintenance department is logging snow removal and applications of ice melt. This should assist in documentation should GBHA liability be in question. Executive Director Danzy requested the board vote to have residents move and clear their vehicles by 10 a.m. in the morning following the completion of a snow/ice storm to allow for cleanup/deicer to keep parking lots safer for residents. Discussion ensued with Mooney requesting something put into writing about snow removal around cars.

Financial report from the Executive Director Danzy included a bank balance of \$4,000. in the Dewey account, and \$110,950 in the GBHA account. Invoices were paid and mailed as of this meeting totalling \$44,139.44. Executive Director Danzy met with



Berkshire Bank to close out/transfer old security deposit accounts. Executive Danzy also emailed DHCD to request funds to assist with the many vacancy turn-overs of units.

#### **Budget Report:**

Sue Honeycutt, CPA from Fenton, Ewald and Associates presented the DHCD budget with revisions to be approved by the Board and submitted to DHCD. Mooney questioned many line items including administrative salaries affecting the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) subsidies. Mooney's questions were answered by Honeycutt which included an overview of what a budget represents; a forecast of the upcoming year. Honeycutt explained to the board that unforeseen issues can skew budgets. While Mooney voiced concern that the GBHA was running out of money, Honeycutt reassured the board that the board gets a statement every month and that the GBHA was not going to run out of funds. With three quarters of the FY 20 year now completed, a budget revision would be necessary to get the budget back in order. Honeycutt reported that rental income had increased substantially and solar credits can now be factored in. Honeycutt mentioned that the solar credits were not budgeted at the beginning of the FY because there was no history on the figures. While administrative salaries and material costs due to vacancies have increased, budget columns can be adjusted to adequately reflect the actual figures.

Honeycutt requested that the board approve the revised budget she passed out at the meeting so that it can be given to DHCD before the deadline for submissions of final budget.

Discussion ensued with Mooney stating that the agenda of the meeting did not have "vote" on it and that she didn't know how the board could vote on the revised budget. Honeycutt said the approval could be revisited in February but if it isn't approved, DHCD will not accept the revision. Board member Becker asked Honeycutt if there was a chance that DHCD wouldn't fund administrative salaries to which Honeycutt stated with an explanation of why administrative salaries are over budget, DHCD is likely to approve the increase.

Mooney asked Honeycutt for a comparison of the old budget and new budget. Honeycutt pointed out she had given those comparisons on the financial summaries she had handed out, including highlighting for each board member the line items of interest. Specifics of the costs for the unit fire at Brookside were discussed including insurance deductibles and what the Local Tenants Organization (LTO) amount was in the budget, \$500 or \$600. based on a formula, Honeycutt would make the adjustment.

Request from Honeycutt for board approval for revisions to be sent to DHCD tabled until February board meeting.

**Pension Plan:** Chairman Mercer proposed that the pension plan for employees that had been put on hold due to financial difficulties at the GBHA 18 months ago be reinstated. Discussion ensued that the housing authority is financially stable according to the fee accountant, Sue Honeycutt. Additional discussion centered around whether or not the pension could be retroactive. **Chair Mercer made a motion to reinstate the pension plan for full time employees retroactive to April 1, 2019. Ryan seconded the motion. Vote: Mercer aye, Ryan aye, Mooney aye, Sinico Aye, Becker aye. Motion Passes**

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

Format for evaluation of the Executive Director was discussed. More drafts will be forthcoming. Chair Mercer distributed a National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) evaluation form for Executive Directors (ED) to help tighten the format being developed by the board. A tenant evaluation form of the ED will include input from the LTO. Process will be revisited at the February meeting.

Communication policy and website content were discussed. More specific content and definitions need to be on the website.

Discussion ensued about to adequately describe the relationship of the State to our housing authority regarding rents, and management of the properties.

Chair Mercer suggested the communication policy should be handled by the ED should all tenants need to be notified of important/critical matters. Mercer suggested Executive Director Danzy rewrite the Communication Policy and include the LTO. Regarding the issue of having Sheffield represented on the board, Chairman Mercer contacted Representative Pignatelli to discuss best options for what the State will allow for increasing the number of board members.

Diversity training was discussed. After a brief discussion by board members suggesting adding other groups to the training and Mooney suggesting sharing the costs with those groups, **Chair Mercer made a motion to approve \$800 funding for diversity training of the board and staff seconded by Ryan. Roll call Vote: Mercer aye, Ryan aye, Becker aye, Mooney nay, Sinico abstain. Motion passes 3 -1-1.**

Executive Director Danzy reported on notice to quit procedures.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD: LOCAL TENANTS ORGANIZATION (LTO)**

Marlene Koloski, President of the LTO thanked Chair Mercer for contributing to the holiday party for tenants. She also mentioned that she has been working with Executive Director Danzy on many issues and that they are working well together.

**CITIZEN SPEAK**

A Dewey tenant was concerned about anti-semitic remarks. With a legal issue pending, Chairman Mercer stopped further discussion from the tenant because of legal issues pending. A tenant from Brookside asked questions about replacing the laundry machines in the community room that have been running very hot, and aren't large enough for bulky items like quilts.

**BOARD COMMENTS:**

Mooney asked that the next agenda include: security deposits, hydrant testing for all properties, time to request agenda items. Additionally, Mooney asked for distribution of minutes and agendas before board meetings, and board member packets availability before meetings.

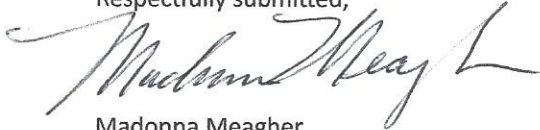
Chair Mercer commented that the Attorney General's office has several requests pending by GB housing authority board members regarding public record requests. Attorney Liebel is addressing the issues.

**NEXT MEETING: February 18th @ 3PM Flag Rock Community Center**

**ADJOURNMENT: 4:34 pm. Mercer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ryan. Unanimous approval by board**

Documents reviewed: Agenda, Minutes of November 26, 2019, Analysis of Non-routine expenditures and credits, Budget Request FY 20 ending 3/31/20, Balance Sheet ending 11/30/19, redacted tenant notice of lease violation, Executive Director job description, suggestions for using performance appraisals, NAHRO evaluation form, Tenant evaluation template, Template evaluation of job performance of GBHA, ED, website description, communication policy

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Madonna Meagher'.

Madonna Meagher