

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

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MEETING MINUTES

Great Barrington Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, August 15, 2018

Present: James Mercer, Jackie Sinico, Diane Dillon, Karen Smith (via phone for votes, until 2:52PM)

Administration: Vera Cartier

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairperson James Mercer at 2:30PM. Agenda items were completed out of order to perform votes under Executive Director's Report section first.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 18, 2018

Sinico made a motion, seconded by Dillon to approve the meeting minutes of July 18, 2018 as presented.

Unanimous approval (Smith had left the meeting)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

a) Board Signing for the Transfer of Capital Funds and Financial Funds to GBHA

Cartier stated this is the final step in the Dewey property process. This will be the vote by the Board to approve the contract for financial assistance and land transfer. All Board members received a copy of both in their packet. This requires a Board vote and signatures.

The first is Dewey Court.

The following resolution was introduced by Vera Cartier, read in full and considered.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONTRACT FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR STATE-AIDED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT WORK PLAN OR DEVELOPMENT NO. 667-3 FOR HOUSING PROGRAM 667-3.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE Great Barrington Housing Authority, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Authority shall enter into a contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the form submitted at this meeting and contract in the name of Great Barrington Housing Authority under its corporate seal, and the Secretary is hereby authorized to attest the same.

Section 2. The Authority hereby requests the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, (Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs) enter into such contract with the Authority and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to approve such contract.

Section 3. The Officers of the Authority shall be, and they are hereby authorized and directed, on and after the execution of said contract by the respective parties thereto, to do and perform on behalf of the Authority all acts and the things required of the authority to perform fully all of its obligations thereunder.

Section 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately. Karen Smith moved that the foregoing resolutions be adopted as introduced and read, which motion was seconded by James Mercer, and upon roll call the "Ayes" and the "Nays" were as follows:

Four members voted Aye via roll call vote
No Nays

The Chairperson thereupon declared said motion carried and resolution adopted.

The next one is the actual land transfer of Dewey Court to the GBHA.

The following resolution was introduced by Vera Cartier, read in full and considered.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONTRACT FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR STATE-AIDED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT WORK PLAN OR DEVELOPMENT NO. 705-2 FOR HOUSING PROGRAM 705-2.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE Great Barrington Housing Authority, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Authority shall enter into a contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the form submitted at this meeting and contract in the name of Great Barrington Housing Authority under its corporate seal, and the Secretary is hereby authorized to attest the same.

Section 2. The Authority hereby requests the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, (Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs) enter into such contract with the Authority and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to approve such contract,

Section 3. The Officers of the Authority shall be, and they are hereby authorized and directed, on and after the execution of said contract by the respective parties thereto, to do and perform on behalf of the Authority all acts and the things required of the Authority to perform fully of its obligations thereunder.

Section 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately. Karen Smith moved that the foregoing resolutions be adopted as introduced and read, which motion was seconded by James Mercer, and upon roll call the "Ayes" and the "Nays" were as follows:

Four members voted Aye via roll call vote

No Nays

The Chairperson thereupon declared said motion carried and resolution adopted.

b) Board Signing of the Required Financial Forms for Certification of the Budget

Cartier stated these forms are certifying various items: Top five compensation forms, year-end financial statements, Fiscal Year end certification of preparer and lead paint laws. These forms are required to be signed by the Board.

Smith made a motion, seconded by Mercer to approve the Certification of the Budget of the Great Barrington Housing Authority. The appropriate signatures were obtained.

Unanimous approval via roll call vote.

Cartier stated the GBHA budget has officially been approved. A formal letter was received yesterday approving the budget, granting monies for purchase of a new truck and \$10,000 technology grant.

c) Champ Conversion and Training

Cartier stated the Authority is working on bringing forth CHAMP, a centralized waiting list system being utilized in Massachusetts. Currently, the wait list is kept on an Excel spreadsheet. The State will provide funds to train, which Karen Lewis and Vera Cartier will be attending to learn how to upload the current waiting list to the new system. Data is currently being entered into a template. Participation in this new platform will not change the status of people currently on the waiting list. This process should be complete in the next couple of months.

d) Pools and Fire Pits at Family Apartments

Cartier stated a clear policy around the use of fire pits and pools is needed at the family apartments.

She is personally against pools as they are a danger to children. Not a small kiddie pool that is supervised and emptied when done, but pools that are filled and left unattended where a child could fall in unnoticed.

Cartier has spoken to the Fire Chief and has learned nothing regarding the use of fire pits can be enforced without a clear policy. She is unable to find a policy that may have existed in the past, so a policy will have to be drafted, and brought forward to the Board, signed by the tenant and then can be enforced. Some of the family units have inappropriate fire pits with no screen, are located too close to the buildings or the LP storage tanks.

e) Security Deposits

Cartier stated all tenants at all properties will be required to have a security deposit form this point forward when they begin their tenancy. This has not always been the practice and needs to be

enforced. Current tenants who did not pay a deposit will not be asked for one. It is a protection for the Authority against tenant damage, and can also be used if rent falls into arrears. The amount required would be equal to the tenants rent and would be collected when the lease is signed. Security deposits are held in an interest bearing account and are returned to the tenant when they vacate the property, upon satisfactory inspection. The Authority will always work with any tenant who requires time to pay their security deposit.

f) Dehumidifier Installation

Cartier reported that although the dehumidifier project got a late start, all seems to be progressing well. Tenants who have had the work done are complimentary of the workers and the work being performed.

RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD – Marlene Koloski

Flag Rock Village

- It was reported the cat issue still remains a problem.
- Tenants have expressed concern regarding the use and safety of fire pits in the family units. No one wants to see the use of fire pits be taken away completely, but to be used in a safe manner. Mr. Mercer inquired whether existing fire pits have screens. Koloski stated yes, some do, but some do not, and not all fire pits are far enough away from the unit or LP storage.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

a) Rent Collections

Cartier reported rent collections are going well. The Dewey Property has a few residents on re-payment plans, which are currently up to date. Flag Rock currently has one unit with a re-payment plan that is also up to date. Cartier has enforced a \$25.00 late fee for rent payments that go more than 30 days in arrears. This late payment can be forgiven the first time a tenant is late or for unforeseen circumstances. Cartier requests a conference with the tenant when they are 8 days late, and follows up with a 14-day letter if necessary.

b) Bank Balances

Cartier reported the Dewey Property is currently required to operate as a separate property right now as monies for that property have not been received from the State yet. Currently the main accounts that are open are Dewey, GBHA rent account and pet deposit account. She will also be opening a security deposit account. There is also the 689 account that is Berkshire Meadows and two portfolios that contain the trust and stocks.

c) Vacancy Updates

Cartier reports all properties are 99.5% occupied. There are currently (4) vacancies – two 3 bedrooms and two 1 bedrooms. The 3 bedrooms have been delayed due to work that needs to be done. The 1 bedrooms move faster. One tenant moved from one unit to another, which opened up a 1 bedroom.

The other 1 bedroom should be ready for occupancy next week. Dewey has no vacancies. We have received (1) notice to move, with people on the waiting list. It will not stay vacant long.

d) Clarification of GBHA Bank Accounts

Properties are listed in the following order: Brookside – 661, Flag Rock Senior – 6672, Dewey Senior – 6673, Dewey Family 7051, Flag Rock family – 7052.

OLD BUSINESS

a) Light Switches/Energy Saving – Rich Phair

Phair reported he has not heard anything back regarding the trial dimmer control. The last contact he had with them the gentleman stated he needed to re-think this. Phair will follow up on the status,

NEW BUSINESS

a) Status of Water Situation

Handouts were provided to meeting attendees.

Mercer stated brownish colored water is caused when sediment accumulates on the bottom of water pipes. During rapid flow situations, such as a break or flushing, this sediment gets stirred up. This sediment can stay suspended for a longer period of time in warmer water. This has been the warmest the water has been in 30 years. The DEP was out last week and measured the temperature of the water in the reservoir to be 84 degrees.

The entire system was flushed recently and the water turned a terra cotta color. The warm water took longer to settle out, but as of last Friday there were no further complaints – things went back to normal.

Bacteria testing is performed at random and has been negative for bacteria and viruses, although the color has been off. Hopefully the color will improve. The water is safe to drink. Chlorine was state mandated until the new line was connected. The state is currently reviewing the permit. Once that is complete, hopefully by the end of the month, the amount of chlorine will be reduced.

MAINTENANCE REPORT - Rich Phair, Maintenance Supervisor

- Unit 4A has turned over.
- Unit 3B is being worked on and should be ready next week
- Unit 27 is still being worked on. It has been delayed by the humidifier project. The product is there but it is not hooked up yet. There has also been a delay in the carpeting.
- Spraying for spiders took place and seems to have reduced the problem.
- A Unit at Dewey had a drain pipe break, which was repaired.

- Unit 14 work has not started yet. It is currently being used as a storage area for product being used for the ceiling fan and dehumidifier project.

In regard to the dehumidifier project, there is a change order being worked on. The engineering firm that designed the project designed installation to be done in a particular area of the unit. This design does not work in the 2 bedroom units because the water main comes through the floor in that area. It is possible the installation could be made higher up in the same location, but there is an outlet underneath. A drip or a leak would be a major hazard. Possibly cover or move the outlet? To change the location of the dehumidifier installation would be a major change order and would increase the cost.

- Unit 212 is now empty and should be occupied quickly.
- Working on estimates for power washing
- Working on estimates for clearing gutters in the fall
- Mercer stated he had noticed the siding was detaching on one of the family units. Phair stated this would be resolved.

Rich stated he appreciated everyone's patience with the Maintenance Department. They are working as fast as they can.

CITIZEN SPEAK - None

BOARD SPEAK

Dillon inquired whether moving the meeting to Tuesday instead of Wednesday could be considered. She is requesting this due to her upcoming work schedule. It was determined this would be acceptable (Smith also agreed before she left the meeting). Board meetings will now be held on Tuesday at 2:00 so to not keep staff past their regular working hours.

Sinico stated she agrees that vacant need to come first, but she would like to see preventive maintenance become a high priority also. Mercer stated they are working towards a system of work orders, prioritizing work to be done, etc. Sinico stated possibly hiring additional help, 20 hours or so.

Mercer stated the Board will review the performance of the Executive Director at the next Board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Sinico made a motion, seconded by Dillon to adjourn the meeting at 3:24PM.

Unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted by Debra E Brazie