Present: Karen Smith, James Mercer, Jackie Sinico, Diane Dillon (via phone)
Administration: Tina Danzy, Sue Honeycutt

CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Karen Smith at 2:00PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 18, 2018

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

Unanimous approval.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Smith made a motion, seconded by Mercer to adjourn the open session and enter Executive Session, per MGL c. 30A, Section 21 (a)(1) to discuss complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual, specifically the complaints by Eileen Mooney alleging violation of the Open Meeting Law by the Commissioners of the Great Barrington Housing Authority and/or under MGL c. 30A. Open session will reconvene following Executive Session.

Unanimous approval via roll call vote.

REGULAR SESSION RECONVENED

a) Vote regarding response to complaints made by Eileen Mooney

Smith made a motion, seconded by Mercer to delegate to James Pender and Colin Boyle of counsel to respond to complaints by Eileen Mooney regarding violations of the Open meeting Law by the Commissioners of the Great Barrington Housing Authority.

Unanimous approval via roll call vote.

RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD
Koloski reported the tenant association will be setting up an LTO. Information was distributed. Koloski is working with Jack Cooper in Boston and a woman named Marguerite in Worcester. The LTO will be meeting once per month. Koloski reported the previous President of the tenants association has resigned. Smith stated the Board was unaware of this development. She stated there are very specific steps that need to be followed in forming the LTO. Koloski stated further information along with training will be received later this week.

**CITIZEN SPEAK**

Koloski made mention of an incident that occurred at a gathering held at Flag Rock involving herself and Chairperson Smith. Chairperson Smith stated this was not the proper forum for that discussion. This is a personal issue and not a Board issue.

A tenant in attendance stated they would like an inquiry made in regard to possibly purchasing of a generator. At minimum to provide power to the community room. It would give residents a place to go for heat in the winter, cooling in the summer, to charge cell phones, heat water, etc. Smith stated she felt this would make perfect sense and asked Phair to pursue cost estimates.

A tenant stated they knew a few residents of family units who would like to attend Board meetings but are unable to because meetings are held while they are working. Smith stated the Board will look at rotating meetings so some meetings are held later to accommodate family unit residents who would like to attend.

A tenant stated they believed it would be more convenient if Board meetings were held in one place. The Senior Center would be a convenient place, rather than traveling to different locations. Smith stated the next Board meeting will be held at the Dewey property. Following that meeting the Board will re-visit the meeting schedule and rotation, and also will work to change the time of a few meetings to accommodate working families.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT** – Tina Danzy

Interim Director Tina Danzy gave the following report:

- Continuing to working on organizing the office.
- Main focus is getting the PHA system up and running.
- Current rent rolls have all been added to the PHA system.
- Receipting is also being done out of the PHA system.
- Currently entering all vendor information onto the PHA system. This is very time consuming. Hoping to have vendor information up to date in the system by the first week of February.
- Request for updated contact sheets have been sent out to tenants. Email, emergency contact, current phone #, etc. A few have already been returned.
- A notice has also been sent to tenants reminding them to pay the most recent rent determination. Several have continued to pay the old amount. If any tenants have any questions or changes in income please contact the office.
- File reviews will be taking place when DHCD makes their visit. A reminder has been sent to DHCD that we are still awaiting their response for a visit date.

**Vacancies**
• Unit 110 is ready for rental.
• Unit 14 is still in process of repair. Some of this repair will be outsourced.
• Brookside Unit 6E has recently been vacated. Floor refinishing will take place tomorrow.
• Dewey vacancy is just about ready for rental.
• GBHA has recently been able to pull potential tenants from the new CHAMPS waitlist system. Packages have been mailed to the top 30 potential tenants on the list focusing on handicapped priority for one bedroom units. There has been an issue in pulling potential tenants for the Dewey vacancy, which should be resolved tomorrow.
• Danzy has been approved as a CORI screener and will be able to complete that process.
• Danzy is awaiting approval to confirm incomes/wages of potential tenants throughout the State of Massachusetts.
• Danzy stated she has been looking into Public Housing courses that are required to be taken within the first year of an Executive Director’s employment. She is interested in taking some courses, the first being held on February 21st. The subject will be Personnel. Danzy will pay for these courses herself.
• There have been concerns raised in regard to the smoking policy. Danzy will reach out to other local Authorities to see what they do in the area of enforcement. A smoking policy could be added to new tenant leases, and to existing tenant leases as an addendum. Enforcement ideas could include a “tissue test” where a white tissue is used to identify smoke residue on walls. If smoke residue is found, the expense of a full clean and shampooing would fall to the tenant.
• Concerns have been raised in regard to parking. Individuals have come to the office very upset regarding notes that have been left on cars in the parking lot advising people not to park there. Individuals have felt harassed by this action. Danzy asked whoever is doing this to please stop immediately. If anyone has a parking issue please bring that concern to Danzy’s attention for resolution.
• The parking area contains spaces for handicapped/drop off. A family member of a tenant who was recently released from the hospital made a brief stop to drop off medication – when they returned to their car there was a note left on their windshield. Danzy stated the Board should consider creating a spot for 5 – 10 minute pick up/drop off.
• Danzy stated it has been brought to her attention that a cost estimate had been previously sought for replacement of a heater in the greenhouse. The cost estimate was around $1,600, but replacement was never followed through. Danzy would like to know if residents would like that revisited. She believes the greenhouse to be a wonderful resource for residents.
• Danzy stated there will be three “Meet and Greet the Staff” gatherings held. This week will be at Flag Rock. Dewey will be on the 24th from 1:00 – 2:00. The third will be at the Senior Center on the 31st from 12:00 to 1:00.

Doris, tenant from Sheffield inquired whether the rules for tenancy at Dewey have changed? It used to be Sheffield residents were considered first, along with disabled, veterans, etc. Smith explained the new CHAMPS statewide system still works based on priorities, based on a point system. It would be possible for an individual to accrue more priority points then a Sheffield resident. So yes, in that respect, there have been changes.

A question was also raised regarding house rules or tenant rules. Sinico stated policies and procedures are issued with each tenant lease. Smith stated she knows there are policies and procedures for tenancy, and believes they should be pulled out and brought up to date.
**FINANCIAL UPDATES** – Sue Honeycutt, Ewald Fenton

A written financial report was handed out.

Sue Honeycutt reported her firm has been working on a budget revision to the FY2019 budget that was developed last year. This budget will end as of March 31, 2019. The revision is due to DHCD agreeing to pay for some of the expenses that have been included in the budget. The Board needs to approve the exemptions for direct reimbursement. Payment for these expenses will be made direct and will not be part of the subsidy calculation.

Items to be paid by DHCD are as follows:
- Technical Grant $10,000
- New truck payment will be reduced to actual cost
- Bookkeeping and minute transcription expenses
- Additional monies to increase reserve
- Legal settlement of $39,000
- Attorney fees

In addition, the Sheffield property will also be incorporated into the budget using 9-month actuals from the June 30, 2018 budget. Certain expenses assigned to the other two properties will now be shared with the Sheffield property.

The firm is working on preparing financial statements. In the past there has been no information to prepare financial statements from. No rent rolls were reported and very few invoices were paid. This is now getting cleaned up and financial statements will be ready by the end of the year. Consistent statements will be available to the Board going forward.

**Smith made a motion, seconded by Sinico to approve budget revisions to the FY2019 budget, for 401 and 409 programs, as presented.**

Unanimous approval.

Pertinent documents were signed.

There was discussion surrounding why government monies were received by the authority 6 months late. Sue Honeycutt explained the firm has no control as to when payments are made to the authority. The process is as follows, the Board certifies financials in July. This past year financial certification was not brought to the Board until the end of August. If certification had been done in July payments would have been received on time. Certification of financials will be done on time this year so payments will not be delayed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

a) Technology Update Review and Discussion
Smith stated recommendations received by Tom Roy during the technology assessment will begin to be phased in. The cost of this phase is expected to be $1,460.00, with an additional $360.00 estimated for labor.

**Smith made a motion, seconded by Mercer to approve $1,500.00 be used to begin the technology upgrade.**

**Unanimous approval.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

a) Re-appointment of Tina Danzy

Mercer stated he believes the Interim Executive Director, Tina Danzy, has done a great job stepping into the role and pulling the three properties together. Her term as Interim Executive Director is scheduled to end on February 10, 2019. Mercer stated he would like to make a motion to extend Danzy’s directorship status to April 10, 2019.

**Mercer made a motion, seconded by Sinico to extend the term of the Interim Executive Director, Tina Danzy, to April 10, 2019. Extension term will be February 11, 2019 to April 10, 2019.**

Sinico stated per public notice, advertisement should begin within (60) days following the termination of an Executive Director. She has asked for this position to be advertised for 2 months and has been told her request has been taken under advisement. It has been (82) days since the departure of the Executive Director. When will this position be advertised?

Smith stated this vote will be acted upon first, and then later in the agenda there will be discussion as to the process and timing of advertisement for a permanent Executive Director.

**Unanimous approval via roll call vote.**

b) Public Housing Training Finance Discussion

Smith stated there are required Public Housing training courses that Danzy is eligible to participate in. She would like the Board to give Danzy approval to attend training sessions, at her own expense.

**Smith made a motion, seconded by Mercer to approve Interim Executive Director Tina Danzy’s participation in required Public Housing courses, at her own expense. If in the future Danzy is hired as the permanent Executive Director, her expenses for these courses will be reimbursed.**

Smith stated if Danzy is hired as the permanent Executive Director she would be reimbursed for her course expenses. Mercer stated he believes Danzy has gone the extra mile. If she chooses to apply for the permanent position and is chosen/hired by GBHA he feels she should be reimbursed for the cost of her courses and mileage. Sinico stated she does not agree. Unless an individual is a permanent Executive Director with a contract in place she does not feel the Authority should be responsible for the cost of courses they take while performing as an Interim. Smith stated there are (7) courses that must be completed within a year. They are offered at staggered times throughout the year. She does
not see a problem reimbursing Danzy for these courses if she applies and is hired as the permanent Executive Director. Dillon stated she would be in favor of anything Danzy participates in that would enhance or support the directorship. She thanked Danzy for being so motivated.

Smith, Mercer and Dillon voted approval via roll call vote.

Sinico disapproved via roll call vote

The motion passed.

c) Records Assess Officer

Smith asked for a volunteer of the Board to act as a Records Assess Officer. This position would be responsible for making sure the open meeting law was followed, would execute requests for public records requests and any other record requests that are made. Smith has taken on this responsibility to date, but will soon be out of the country for 6 weeks. Mercer stated he believed Smith has done an excellent job. An attendee requested whoever takes this position that it be posted on the GBHA website.

Smith appointed Sinico as Records Resource Officer.

d) Services needed by residents – Diane Dillon

Dillon stated she would like residents to start a conversation regarding what services would be beneficial to them. It is possible partnerships could be made with the community to make sure resident’s needs are met. Smith stated an example could be transportation to and from the monthly food truck or food pantry. Other examples could be counseling needs. Smith suggested Dillon contact Koloski to schedule a time for Dillon to meet with the tenant group.

Sinico stated she believes the Suggestion Box key should be kept by the tenants association President. Smith stated the current Suggestion Box is the responsibility of the Authority. She would be concerned with privacy issues if anyone but the Executive Director had access. If the tenants association would like to place their own suggestion box they are free to do so.

Maintenance Report

- Phair was called to a stove fire on Christmas Day at Brookside. This stove was an original stove. Phair will be ordering (2) stoves, one to replace and one as a backup. Danzy stated an inquiry should be made to CIP and ARCET in regard to appliance replacement. Many of the appliances in units are very old. The Authority could be looking at major replacements soon.
- Floors in unit 6D will be refinished.
- There was a major clog outside of family units 17 & 19. Phair is looking into the Authority purchasing their own “blow out” unit to help defer the cost of such issues. Owning the equipment is much more inexpensive then hiring a company to do the same work that could be handled in-house.
- Unit 1 – upstairs is just about ready for carpeting and doors.
- Work orders have been entered and filed.
• Phair is looking into cost estimates for a generator to power the community room during power outages.

**BOARD COMMENTS**

Sinico inquired why it has taken so long to find a tenant for Unit 110. Danzy stated the Authority has just begun pulling from the new CHAMPS waiting list system. The process takes approximately 30 to 45 days from start to finish.

Sinico also stated she missed the Capital Plan meeting as she did not know about it. She asked that notices are either emailed to her or hung on her door. Danzy apologized – the meeting was announced and held last minute. She is working on building a contact list to use for notification purposes.

Sinico requested office hours be plainly marked on the office door and that the office door be open and staff available to tenants during those hours. There have been many times tenants come to the office during office hours and the door is shut or no one is there. Danzy stated hours staff are accessible to tenants are between 9:00 to 2:00. The door has remained open during that time.

Sinico inquired about a junk car that has been present in the upper parking area for some time. Danzy reported that it is being dealt with.

Sinico stated she would like the sign noting tenant parking to be clearer/larger. Visitors have been parking in tenants spots for years, and complaints have gone unheard. Visitor parking is in the upper parking lot. Smith stated possibly handicapped parking should be the entire front row. Sinico stated she would like to see assigned parking for tenants. Smith stated Danzy should look into how other authorities deal with tenant/visitor parking.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mercer made a motion, seconded by Sinico to adjourn the meeting.**

**Unanimous approval.**

The next meeting of the GBHA Board will be held on February 19, 2019 at the Dewey property in Sheffield, 2:00PM.

Respectfully submitted by Debra E Brazie