

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Board Meeting
January 16, 2014
Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Deborah Salem, Ariane Blanchard, Ann Condon, Dana DelGrande

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

OTHERS PRESENT: Barbara Heaphy

The meeting was called to order by Deborah Salem at 2:16 p.m.

Minutes:

Motion made by Deborah, seconded by Dana to accept the November 21, 2013 minutes. All members voted in favor.

Check Register:

November: Deborah asked what was purchased at Carr Hardware: painting supplies, vacuum cleaner, misc. maintenance supplies. Also, why was a door purchased? We had to replace the front door of unit #14 due to regular wear and tear. Motion made by Dana, seconded by Deborah, to accept the November check register. All members voted in favor.

December: Ariane asked about the Barrett Tree Service bill at \$2300.00. This was for a tree that was leaning on one of the buildings at Brookside. It had caused some minor damage to the roof. Health and Safety funding will cover this. Barbara got three quotes for this job and Barrett was the lowest bid. Deborah asked about a window that was replaced. It was a window over the kitchen sink in a family unit. The seal had broken. Also, Lockshop had to repair the lock at apartment #29 and replace the lock on the door of #27. Deborah asked if we ever use Norburt in GB. No, we have used the Lockshop since I started and before. They are dependable, know our buildings and have our lock info on file. Deborah will give Barbara Norburt's phone #. December check register is higher than usual due to the property insurance annual bill. Motion made by Ariane, seconded by Ronnie to accept the December check register. All members voted in favor.

Executive Director's Report:

There is one elderly vacancy at Flagrock that I am in the process of leasing up. Accounts receivable is high this month. Christmas always has something to do with non-payment or late rents. Also, rents are higher due to changes in incomes. Tenants are working with me to get caught up with re-payment agreements. The past tenant hasn't paid in January. I will send her a letter.

Dewey Court:

There is one elderly vacancy on the first floor. Since there is no elevator, some tenants on the second floor have requested first floor apartments. There is a waitlist established for these tenants and they are required to provide third party medical verification of their need. The tenant at the top of this list will move to the vacant first floor apartment. I will lease up the second floor apartment once it is ready.

An engineer from DHCD is coming to Dewey Court later in January to look at the heating system in building 3. He is a heating specialist who will troubleshoot the problem and make a recommendation.

705 Boiler Malfunction:

On December 23, around 8:30 p.m., the boiler for family apartment #6 exploded. Ariane heard the loud boom and said her apartment shook. She went outside and couldn't see anything like fire or smoke. It wasn't until the tenant came home an hour later and discovered the door to her boiler room blown off its hinges. The boiler was shot and had to be replaced. It was frigid cold out and luckily the tenants had relatives to stay with that night. On Christmas Eve, Rich purchased a new boiler and Moran Mechanical installed it that day. Barbara has submitted a damage claim to Sullivan Insurance.

Patricia LaFore Attorney Contract:

Motion made by Dana, seconded by Ariane to renew our legal contract with Atty. Patricia Lafore. All members voted in favor.

Non-Smoking Property Policy:

Ariane opposes a non-smoking policy. She thinks it is an infringement of civil rights. Cigarettes are a legal substance that people should be able to enjoy in the privacy of their homes. Deborah stated that smoking is an infringement on the rights of non-smokers being forced to smell it and breathe it.

Dana feels that a non-smoking policy is disrespectful to the people who are addicted to smoking. She suggests that there should be a designated smoking area.

Barbara used Lenox Housing Authority's policy as an example of one already in place: the first step would be to poll all the tenants about having a smoke free property. If it was favored and passed, it wouldn't go into effect for six months, giving tenants time to adjust: either try to quit, or move to a property that allows smoking.

Barbara's concerns are: (1) Non-smoking tenants and employees are exposed to second hand smoke. (2) There is a high cost to turning over apartments that have sustained heavy nicotine damage.

Both Ronnie and Ann are opposed to a smoke free property policy. Since the majority is not in favor, this topic will be tabled for now. When the non-smoking policy was passed in 2009, an area on both properties was supposed to be designated for smokers. This was never done. Barbara and Rich discussed it several times but never could decide on a specific area. Therefore, the board will meet and determine the designated area for both properties. Barbara will arrange a time for this meeting.

Dana made a motion that by the next meeting, Barbara, Rich and any board members that can participate, walk the properties and determine a designated smoking area. Ann seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. A decision will be brought to the February meeting.

Motion made by Dana, seconded by Ronnie to adjourn at 3:50. All members voted in favor.

Next meeting is February 20, 2014