

# GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Board Meeting  
December 20, 2012  
Minutes

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

OTHERS PRESENT: Barbara Heaphy, Brad Gordon, Sue Honeycutt

The meeting was called to order by Deborah Salem at 2:20 p.m.

## **Minutes:**

Ann Condon made the correction that she was not on an affordable housing board as stated in the minutes. She was part of an affordable housing commission.

Motion made by Ariane, seconded by Bill to approve the minutes of the November meeting. All members voted in favor.

## **Dewey Court:**

Brad Gordon spoke to the board about a change in the approach to Great Barrington Housing's role in overseeing Dewey Court. We first spoke about G.B. taking over ownership but now we are looking at entering into a Memorandum of Understanding for a transitional period in which G.B.H.A. would manage Dewey Court for BCRHA during a trial period of six months and if successful would be renewed for another year. After a year and a half we would have a better sense of whether or not this arrangement could transition into ownership.

The current management system at Dewey Court needs improvement. It has been difficult for Brad to manage effectively from Pittsfield and G.B.H.A. is located right next door to Sheffield. Even DHCD likes the idea and approached Barbara with it several months ago. Also, with the upcoming housing reform which is moving toward regionalization and eliminating small housing authorities, managing another property could be an advantage.

Brad listened to questions from board members and in summary provided the following answers:

-We would be providing a service to BCRHA to manage Dewey Court and would not be financially responsible.

- Barbara would work in Sheffield different hours that would not interfere with her time in GBHA.

-There is a current manager who would be terminated with a month's notice, once everything is in place.

-A site visit is not necessary. We are not taking over ownership at this time. We will be managing, addressing issues that need attention. We will be using our experience as public housing managers to make improvements.

-If we agree to this management contract, Barbara will give a monthly progress report at each meeting.

-If we enter into this management agreement, the GBHA board will be able to review Dewey Court financials at regular meetings.

-With the Governor's upcoming regionalization proposal, DHCD is encouraging housing authorities to collaborate and combine services.

Motion made by Ariane to approve the MOU between Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority and Great Barrington Housing Authority under which GBHA will manage Dewey Court in Sheffield for BCRHA. Deborah seconded the motion. Dana voted in favor. Bill opposed. Ann abstained.

The vote was 3 to 1 in favor of the management of Dewey Court. Bill opposed because he doesn't know what the original charter says and feels this is something we should look into. Barbara will check the files.

**Check Register:**

The exhaust fan motors project at Flagrock is complete. DHCD transferred the funds electronically to our operating account. Ariane made a motion to accept the November check register. Ann seconded it. All members voted in favor.

**Executive Director's Report:**

Three one bedroom apartments are vacant at Flagrock. A fourth one will be vacant the end of December. One apartment is filled with tenant scheduled to move in January 1. I am in the process of filling the other three. One is heavily damaged with cigarette smoke and the extra funding I applied for this apartment turnover was approved. The amount is \$4090.00

Accounts receivable is high due partly by the amount owed by family. The court ordered this family to pay in full with tax refund in February. An elderly tenant was scammed and lost a large sum of money. He was not able to pay rent and will enter into a repayment agreement next month. The six families that owe have mostly partial balances and some have entered into repayment agreements. I went back to small claims court with past tenant who entered into an agreement to begin paying again this month.

**Dewey Court Update:**

I met with Brad Gordon in his office earlier this month and we talked about entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority. Great Barrington Housing Authority would manage Dewey Court under conditions agreed upon by both parties. For a management fee, Great Barrington Housing would oversee day to day operations, maintenance, tenant selection, apartment inspections, capital projects, etc. I would be working in Sheffield about fourteen hours in addition to the hours I work in Great Barrington. Rich would act as a maintenance consultant as needed. This collaboration would be beneficial to both Great Barrington Housing Authority and Dewey Court with the proposed regionalization plan that may eliminate small housing authorities. We have been encouraged by NAHRO to collaborate when we can.

**Fall Conference:**

The conference was well attended this year due to the Governor's regionalization proposal. Many small housing Authority directors were in attendance. The final session was about the future of small housing authorities and NAHRO's counter proposal to the Governor's proposal. There was talk of a centralized office overseeing eight regions in the state. If this proposal is passed, the transition will cost anywhere from 7 to 12 million dollars.

**Brookside Sitework:**

The project is going out to bid on January 9<sup>th</sup> and bids will be opened on January 23. The construction will start this spring.

**Legal Contract:**

Attorney Patricia LaFore's contract is up for renewal. Patricia charges \$125.00 a month which covers nine hours of service per month. Barbara would like to renew for another year. Patricia's service is very valuable especially regarding tenant lease violations i.e.: non-payment of rent. Motion made by Ariane, seconded by Bill to renew Patricia LaFore's legal contract for another year. All members voted in favor.

Motion made by Arianne to accept the Executive Director's report. Bill seconded it. All members voted in favor.

Motion made by Bill, seconded by Ann to adjourn at 3:55 p.m.

All members voted in favor.

Next meeting – January 17, 2013

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