

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Board Meeting
October 18, 2012
Minutes

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

OTHERS PRESENT: Barbara Heaphy

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

Minutes:

Motion made by Dana, seconded by Deborah to accept the minutes of the September meeting. All members voted in favor.

Check Register:

The \$11,900 check to the Town of Great Barrington was the Brookside sewer bill for six months. Check to Gary O'Brien for \$900.00 was sidewalk repair at Flagrock. He came in with the lowest bid. Motion made by Dana, seconded by Bill to accept the September check register. All members voted in favor.

Executive Director's Report:

Applications slightly increased since last month.

Currently, there are two elderly vacancies at Flagrock. One is in very poor condition because the tenant was a heavy smoker and lived there for 13 years. I will be applying for extra funding that is available for costly vacancies like this one. This tenant was grandfathered in when we passed the no smoking regulation here in 2009 so he could continue smoking in his unit. Ariane stated that there should be regulations implemented by the housing authority regardless of the smoking rule; regulations requiring regular inspections so apartments don't get as bad as this one. Tenants must be made responsible for keeping their units clean and sanitary. Ariane agreed to write up a proposal for a policy on unit upkeep and cleanliness.

The three bedroom family unit has been filled as well as the one bedroom elderly unit.

Accounts receivable is high again this month. The majority is owed by the family I've taken to court for eviction. We never came to a written agreement. The family paid \$1,000.00 but this wasn't the amount we discussed. Therefore, they have been reserved and have another court date, Nov. 14, for an eviction hearing. The six families and one elderly tenant who still owe have been sent notices. Two families were served 14 day notices and have responded. I am working with them. The past tenant is not responding to my phone calls and letters. I am taking her back to court.

Capital Needs Projects:

The sitework at Brookside – We have been awarded an additional \$33,000.00 for lighting at Brookside under an energy conservation program. We will be adding additional energy efficient, non-glaring, LED lighting in the parking area. The amended contract will need board approval and the chairman's signature. Motion made by Dana to approve the amended Capital Improvement Work Plan 116025001, Project No. 116017 from \$202,973.00 – 236,355.00, a difference of \$33,382.00. Deborah seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

The bathroom exhaust fans at Flagrock are complete and I will be receiving the funds to pay the contractor

in early November.

Dewey Court Update:

Brad Gordon and his accountant, Theresa Ewald agree that the best way to proceed at this time is for Berkshire County Regional and Gt. Barrington to enter into a memorandum of understanding. The MOU would state that GBHA would manage Dewey Court for the BCRHA. I will be meeting with Brad next Monday to talk about this further and go over details and responsibilities. Brad is looking at a January, 2013 start date. I will have more information after I meet with Brad.

Housing Regionalization Update:

I attended a meeting in Holyoke on housing reform with Western Mass Executive Directors. Representatives from both DHCD and Mass NAHRO spoke. Lizbeth Heyer from DHCD spoke at length about the commission report and said that changes are definitely coming such as:

Restructure and regionalization

Elimination of small housing authorities as individual separate housing agencies. Small is defined as under 200 units of housing.

Executive Directors would be replaced by site managers. Site managers would report to regional managers, around eight in the state. There would be one central office.

Site-manager would have about 20% of the responsibilities an Ex. Dir. has now. The central office would handle the other 80%.

This proposal will cost the state 12 million dollars and a comprehensive bill will be filed on this in January.

This proposal is one of four made by the commission and the one Lizbeth Heyer supports. However, she said she's open to suggestions from others

. She strongly believes that Public Housing needs change in order to provide the best service for its residents. She said that this comes first and is not about our jobs. This was not very good news. It's still very unclear how this change will take place and when it will take place.

The board discussed this issue for a while and feel there isn't enough information at this time. It is a big change and needs to be implemented gradually.

The Western MA Directors plan on meeting with local politicians very soon to talk about this regionalization proposal and urge them not to vote for it.

Administrative Assistant:

My administrative assistant quit abruptly with no advance notice. I will place an ad in the Shopper's Guide soon.

Multiple Vacancies:

It looks as though we will have 3 or 4 vacancies at once. Since we didn't use a summer assistant, there is some funding available for extra maintenance help with these turnovers if needed.

Next meeting – October 18, 2012

Motion made by Bill, seconded by Ariane to adjourn at 3:35 p.m.

All members voted in favor.

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