

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Board Meeting
January 21, 2016
Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Deborah Salem, Ann Condon, Veronica Cunningham, Nan Wile, Richard Needelman

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

OTHERS PRESENT: Executive Director Barbara Heaphy,
Tenants: Jackie Sinico, Marlene Koloski, Jane Green,

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

Citizens Speak:

Deborah stated that she wasn't at last month's meeting but it seems that everyone agreed to the Citizen Speak rules of order that were passed out at the start of the meeting. If questions or concerns can be answered briefly, they will be addressed at this meeting.

Deborah stated that it was mentioned in one of the letters written to the board members that someone was offended by the way she held on to her leg in a meeting. Deborah stated the reason being that she has a painful arthritic condition making it necessary at times to sit a certain way and did not mean to offend anyone.

Jane Green spoke about how Rich does a fantastic job preparing for and cleaning up after a snow storm. Jane wants the board to know this.

Marlene asked when the mold testing at her daughter's apartment will take place. She said that when her daughter's rug was put down, a hole by the heater was noticed and there is mold all inside it. Barbara stated that Rich could take a look. Marlene said that Jayne Smith, health inspector was coming the next day. Marlene said her daughter is looking to find another place to live because it is a very unhealthy situation. Marlene is concerned about her daughter and grandkids.

Nan Wile said she couldn't attend the BOH meeting for personal reasons and it was not out of disrespect.

Ronnie also stated that she got very short notice of the meeting and had a prior commitment she could not miss.

Jackie Sinico – Maintenance policies and procedures:

Jackie stated that she wondered if the policies adopted in 2006 had gone by the wayside over the years.

She said that almost everyone's main concern is the elevator. She stated that the elevator needs cleaning, it is appalling. Rich has attempted to clean the floor but it doesn't come clean. It needs to be replaced. The door was cleaned last spring and needs it again. The maintenance policy states it will be cleaned weekly.

Barbara said that she and Rich went over the policy. Rich cleans the elevator regularly but it is probably time to replace the floor. It was heavily damaged by a previous tenant's motorized chair and the stainless steel is very difficult to clean. Barbara said Rich will clean it in the spring and on a more regular basis.

Jackie said the deck needs stain and paint. She states it has never been done and is starting to rot in places.

The state will have to replace it if it doesn't get done which will be very expensive. Also, some of the shingles need painting.

Barbara mentioned that maintenance has been tied up the last two years with a very high amount of vacancies. Parking lot needs sweeping and lines need repainting. Stairwells don't get swept. Barbara said that Rich does go around and sweep the cobwebs. Jackie claims that when Anthony is sent to clean the cobweb, he does an inadequate job. She claims that Anthony needs constant supervision. Barbara disagreed. Anthony is

inexperienced in some areas and is learning from Rich. One of his strengths is cleaning. Jackie disagreed and gave an example of a bathroom that was not clean when new tenant moved in. Deborah stated these kind of situations should be brought to Barbara immediately so they can be addressed. Jackie spoke about other examples of poor cleaning and tenants being dissatisfied. Maintenance are not professional cleaners and the apartments in between tenancies should be professionally cleaned. Richard stated that professional cleaners aren't necessary if apartments are cleaned properly with adequate tools and cleaners and are inspected by Barbara before move in. Jackie said it is important to look closely at ovens, kitchen cabinets, bathroom floors around the toilets and other areas that may need more attention after someone has lived in that apartment for several years. A steam cleaner was suggested along with other kinds of tools and supplies. Also, a very thorough walk through inspection at move-in is of utmost importance.

Jackie suggested using a leaf blower for cobwebs in stairwells. Tenants need to be asked not to feed birds who build nests on top of the lights. Barbara will send a notice to all tenants before April.

Jackie said she will be redoing the gardens around the building with perennials she is bringing in.

Jackie's other suggestions: trim hedges and shrubs. Split pear trees along the parking lot. Dim courtyard lights.

Minutes:

Ronnie noted that Deborah was listed as present and absent. Barbara will correct that. Richard commented on the deck at Flagrock needing preservative every other year. It doesn't necessarily need stain. Ann asked that Barbara use title of member who calls meeting to order, whether it be Chairman or Vice-Chair. Nan stated that we need to be conscientious of the time at Citizen's speak or with an agenda item.

Motion made by Ronnie, seconded by Ann to accept the December minutes. All members voted in favor.

Check Register:

After Barbara answered questions about the check register, motion was made by Nan, seconded by Ronnie to accept the December check register. All members voted in favor.

Executive Director's Report:

There is one vacancy at Brookside that will be filled this month.

Erin has been working on the elderly waitlist updates and it has decreased by a few names. The accounts receivable balance has gone down somewhat since this report was done on the 15th. One elderly and seven family still owe. Two of the families involved with chronic dampness issues are withholding rent.

Dewey Court:

We are 100% occupied at Dewey Court. The heating system project is complete and everyone has adequate heat. M&W did an outstanding job.

Deborah asked if we receive any complaints from tenants about the maintenance conditions at Dewey Court. Barbara answered, "no". We do get the occasional maintenance call that is always taken care of in a timely fashion.

689 Special needs Bathroom Upgrade:

The job is just about complete. It looks very nice. There are some materials the electrician is waiting for. The bathroom will most likely be done by early next week which is January 25th or 26th.

Roof Replacement at Brookside – Buildings 1 & 4:

The roof were replaced in five days. The weather cooperated and the job went very smoothly.

Citizen Speak Issues:

Tenants were upset about the time limit given to speak.

Jackie Sinico asked if Nan is the tenant representative on the board. Nan was elected to the Board of Commissioners in May. She is a tenant representative who resides at Brookside. DHCD has always encouraged

tenant representation on the board. DHCD will be mandating a tenant on the board in the near future who will be elected by the tenants, not the Town and will be a tenant advocate.

Marlene asked why there were only two board members at the BOH meeting in December. Barbara explained that members had prior commitments.

Jane Green didn't like the time limit for Citizens Speak.

Susan Morris asked if she could bring harassment issues to the board. Barbara said she should come to her first and she had. She received a letter written by another tenant and felt it was harassment. She agreed she would feel safer with a peep hole installed in her front door. The Housing Authority installed a peep hole and purchased several more to be installed later on.

Health Department Update:

On December 21st the Executive Director requested a hearing with the BOH regarding the chronic dampness issue. I spoke with Jayne Smith and we talked about having a working meeting before the hearing at the February meeting. In order to keep the meeting private, no more than two of our board members can attend. Atty. John Liebel will be present as well. The pending law suit will not be discussed, only the chronic dampness concerns in three family apartments and bringing in an expert. Deborah and Ann have agreed to be the two board members attending the meeting. Ronnie said she would be the alternate. Jayne Smith, Health Agent and the Chairman of the BOH will be in attendance as well. Meeting will be held in Jayne's office.

Fire and Safety Meeting: Barbara attended the Triad meeting at the Senior Center on January 13th. Chief Burger spoke and made several helpful recommendations for the two elderly properties. We are required to have fire drills.

We will plan a fire drill at both properties in the spring. Chief Burger stated that the best way tenants can be prepared is to always respond when an alarm goes off. Barbara will write up a flyer with all fire and safety information and pass it out to every tenant.

Old Business:

Solar Energy, Sun Edison:

Barbara spoke with Barrett LaChance who sent her the contract to bring to the meeting. He said there is a project in Grafton that we could sign on with. It will be up and running by this summer. Lee Housing Authority signed on with Sun Edison and was approved by DHCD. Nan has contacted the local solar company that is servicing the Berkshire Hills Regional School District. Deborah would like to explore what the town is doing. Nan will continue to explore this.

New Business:

Smoke Free Property:

The board agreed that smoking is a problem and needs to be addressed. The grandfathering should be stopped. We would start with a survey and then decide when we should put the policy in place. Should we wait a year, six months? How much time do we give tenants to adjust to living in a completely smoke free property?

Barbara will be meeting with Allison Hope from Tri-Town Health for some guidance.

Deborah made a motion to start the process of putting the smoke free policy in place. Ronnie seconded it. All in favor.

Biennial Recertifications:

Elderly tenants are receiving no social security increase. Barbara is requesting a waiver from rent recertifications in 2016. Motion made by Nan, seconded by Ronnie to waive the recertification process for elderly in 2016. If a tenant's income has decreased substantially an individual recertification can be requested.

Since Jackie Sinico spoke about Anthony's work, Ronnie asked Barbara how she felt about this. Barbara stated that Anthony does have weak points. He is not as experienced as Rich. He is always willing to learn. Rich is

always checking his work. Barbara finds him to be a hard worker, consistent, reliable. He's always here on time and works extra if needed. Tenants like him, especially in Sheffield where he is three days a week. There haven't been any complaints about Anthony since he has been at Dewey Court. Richard suggested creating a detailed apartment checklist that Anthony signs off on.

Motion made by Nan, seconded by Deborah to adjourn at 4:07 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Next meeting is February 18, 2016

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Heaphy
Secretary