

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Board Meeting
August 18, 2016
Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Richard Needelman, Ann Condon, Ronnie Cunningham, Nan Wile

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

OTHERS PRESENT: Executive Director Barbara Heaphy,
Tenants: Jackie Sinico, Marlene Koloski, Annmarie Bushka
Others: The Berkshire Record reporter

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richard Needelman at 2:21 p.m.

Citizens Speak:

Marlene Koloski stated that after reading the minutes, she asked Barbara if she was talking about her in regards to the tenant who was harassing Anthony. Barbara responded, "Absolutely". Marlene said that Rich told her he was talking about another tenant named Sam who was harassing Anthony. She said the days she saw Anthony down street were May 24th and 25th. She had been to a bank and lawyer's office. She says she is being harassed. She handed a written statement to Richard and Barbara. Marlene stated she is being targeted because of what is going on at her daughter's house. Barbara stated she was talking about the statement Anthony made back in February. Marlene asked why it was in the minutes that were recently posted. She said that there is definitely miscommunication. If it took place in February, why is it brought up in June minutes? Barbara stated it was brought up at Citizen's Speak by Rich in May and was in the May and June minutes that were just posted in August. Richard stated there is a communication issue between Barbara and Marlene, and recommended a neutral person be present at any meeting between Barbara and Marlene moving forward. Marlene asked if there will be a tenant representative. Once the tenant organization is formed, a tenant representative will be elected.

Annie has done research on LTO's and there have to be bylaws and other criteria to be met. Annie's concern is participation of enough tenants.

Minutes:

After a few grammatical corrections, motion made by Ronnie, seconded by Nan to accept the July Minutes. All members voted in favor.

Check Register:

Annie asked if tenants could have copies of the check register. Richard said he didn't know but wanted to clarify that there is no truth to comments being made about savings accounts with extra money in them that Barbara oversees. Our funds come directly from the state. There are no slush funds.

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

Ann talked about the check register being available to tenants. If a tenant wanted to look at it after it has been accepted by the board, this could be possible. It will be looked into.

Executive Director's Report:

Barbara reported on applications on file. There are two vacant one-bedroom units at Flagrock. Another one bedroom will become vacant at the end of this month. The accounts receivable is still high because tenants are withholding rent. Barbara said we are working to resolve the issues.

Dewey Court:

There is a three bedroom unit vacant at Dewey Court. All elderly units have been upgraded to digital by Time Warner Cable at no cost.

Barbara answered questions asked at Citizen's Speak:

Marlene Koloski spoke about her daughter's high electric bills in #13 since the dehumidifier was installed. The tenants were asked to save their electric bills through August and the utility allowance will be reevaluated.

Jackie Sinico asked to meet with Barbara at the last board meeting. We met the following day, discussed the issue and came to a resolution.

Kay Lord, a new tenant at Brookside Manor spoke about how happy she was in her new apartment.

Health Department Update:

A written report from Jayne Smith was received by Barbara after Michael Maitelin's reinspection of the three apartments with chronic moisture. Apartment 11 is still pending because tenant refused entrance to install dehumidifier. Apartment 13 has been completely satisfied. Apartment 15 will be reinspected due to a mildew smell in the laundry room. No high levels of moisture, no mold issues were found.

Recently, there were concerns from tenant in 13. Jayne Smith inspected the bathroom last Tuesday and noted the new fan was working properly. She suggested the old fan be sealed off to prevent outside air from getting in. Jayne notice a few little spots on the wall that were dry. She said she didn't know if they were old from before dehumidifier was installed. Wall will be cleaned. We will wait to see if it reappears.

Annie Bushka wrote a letter to Barbara with a few issues. She asked why minutes didn't get posted on the GB Town website in a timely matter. Barbara stated she takes full responsibility for that and is working on getting in the habit of putting the minutes up on the website the day after the board meeting. Barbara welcomes any reminders from anyone if they don't see the minutes posted in a timely manner.

The stairs at Flagrock were treated but on humid days they might get slippery. The elevator is an option on those days.

There is capital funding available to replace the sidewalks at Flagrock in the summer of 2017. Unfortunately there isn't money available now. Rental revenue doesn't completely support the operation of the housing authority. A capital budget is submitted every year based on priorities. This fall, two roofs are being replaced at Brookside that won't stand another winter. Sidewalks at Flagrock are next.

Motion made by Nan, seconded by Ronnie to accept the Executive Director's report. All members voted in favor.

Old Business:

Trees at Brookside: Nan spoke with an arborist regarding trees at Brookside that need pruning or to be taken down. This can be done one day in October next year or the year after as part of Arbor Day, at no cost.

Nan also discovered that Great Barrington is a tree city of America which means it might be possible to get some shrubbery as insulation and privacy for the buildings at Brookside that are the closest to Rte. 7.

Cable update: Within 30-60 days, Charter will officially have merged with Time Warner and we can revisit getting an affordable bulk WIFI rate for the tenants.

Jackie mentioned that weighted down cans need to be put in lights early spring to avoid birds from nesting in them.

Electric: The town is looking into brokerage rates that would be cheaper. The Housing Authority might be able to benefit from this as well.

New Business:

Annie Bushka spoke about the letter she sent to Barbara last week regarding a few issues:

She asked if the minutes and agenda could be sent out sooner. Barbara stated that she will email the minutes to the Town Clerk after they have been approved, the day after the meeting in most cases. Barbara stressed that if they aren't posted for some reason, to call the office and remind her. Annie stated that they don't get to see the minutes of a meeting for thirty days. Ann stated that no one sees them until the next meeting at which they are approved.

The deck that was recently stained is slippery. Annie stated that even on days that aren't humid, it is still dangerous. Getting to the elevator would be still be walking on the slippery deck. The preservative used has an

oil base. It was suggested to add grit to the preservative and go over the deck floor walkway. Barbara will get some professional advice.

Annie spoke about the sidewalks and the tragedy that occurred and said it was the Housing Authority's negligence. Annie recently hit a crack in the pavement with her grocery cart and almost toppled over. Richard explained how difficult it is to replace one strip of concrete. Repairs can't be made to sections of the sidewalks. The entire site has to be replaced at the same time and there is funding in the capital budget for 2017. There is funding in place for this project.

End of the driveway at Flagrock there is a rut. It looks as though it is in the town road. It has to be determined whether it is private or town road.

Motion made by Ronnie, seconded by Ann to adjourn at 3:29 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Next meeting is September 15, 2016 at Flagrock.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Heaphy

Secretary