

GREAT BARRINGTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Board Meeting
February 21, 2013
Minutes

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Barbara Heaphy

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

Minutes:

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

Check Register:

December:

Deborah asked how the snowplowing is working out. Barbara mentioned that on February 11th, Rich fell snow blowing down at Brookside and received a concussion. The walks had been done by Gary O'Brien but the wind had blown snow back on them. Rich and Anthony were going over them when Rich was injured. He was out of work the rest of the week per doctor's orders and returned the following Tuesday. I spoke with Gary O'Brien and he agrees that he has to keep a closer eye on his employees and was very apologetic. Motion made by Ariane, seconded by Deborah to accept the December check register. All members voted in favor.

January:

Deborah had a question about a payment to the Berkshire Eagle. Barbara said it was the invitation for contractors to bid on the site work job at Brookside. Ariane asked about a payment to Apex. Barbara said it was for an oil change. Mt. Everett Sanitation payment of \$150 was for a clogged drain that needed a heavy-duty snake. Motion made by Ariane, seconded by Bill to accept the January check register. All members voted in favor.

Ann Condon had questions about the monthly financials/balance sheet prepared by Sue Honeycutt, our accountant. Ann asked what the difference between 4001 and 689 was. Barbara explained that 4001 is the elderly/family housing combined and 689 is special needs housing. Ann asked about a negative number (deficit) that Barbara was unsure of. She will ask Sue Honeycutt. Also, Ann wanted to know why we pay taxes to the town when we are a public agency. Barbara said we pay a portion in lieu of taxes that Sue calculates each year.

Executive Director's Report:

Quite a few apartments (4) opened up at the same time over the last few months. Rich and Anthony did a great job turning over these apartments as quickly as possible. We are now 100% occupied. Accounts receivable is high due to the amount owed by a family. This will be paid with tax return received next month. An elderly tenant has entered into a repayment agreement and continues to pay back rent owed. Families that still owe will be dealt with accordingly. Past tenant who still owes, I will

be seeing in court at a payment review in March.

Brookside Manor Sitework:

The project went out to bid and on January 23rd bids were opened. The low bid came in at \$161,500.00 from DelSignore Blacktop Paving of Troy, New York. All references were checked and they are in good standing in Massachusetts. DHCD awarded DelSignore the job and they now need board approval. The job will begin this spring. Motion made by Ariane, seconded by Bill to approve Delsignore Blacktop Paving as the contractor awarded the Brookside Manor sitework job. All members voted in favor.

Dewey Court Update:

Brad Gordon's Management Contract was approved by DHCD. We will use that along with the memorandum of understanding between Great Barrington HA and BCRHA. The MOU lists the responsibilities of each party in greater detail. We are looking at a July 1, 2013 start date. Deborah asked about the charter and Barbara has not found it yet. Ann checked at Town Hall. Bill stated that Dewey Court management would be under Berkshire County Regional's bylaws, not ours. However, Bill's concern is that the property is in another town, Sheffield. However, Sheffield doesn't have a housing authority and Dewey Court is part of BCRHA. We are not taking over ownership at this point but might in the future if this management agreement works out. Barbara will report on the progress at monthly board meetings.

Regionalization:

Barbara recently attended a meeting at which Tom Connolly spoke on Regionalization. He talked about the Governor's proposal and how he didn't know of any politician who endorses it. He gave an overview of the NAHRO counter proposal. Also, The Public Authorities Directors Association's article about the two proposals is an excellent summary of both proposals.

Tom Connolly believes the governor would never have come up with such a radical proposal, eliminating all housing authorities, if it weren't for the Chelsea incident. The NAHRO proposal keeps housing authorities intact but requires mandatory collaboration of small, (fewer than 100 units) with larger housing authorities. Once we begin to manage Dewey Court in July, we will have 116 units which puts us in a better position.

Tom mentioned that there are a few small HA's in trouble financially and/ or have vacancies they can't turn over. They need assistance. On the other hand, Gt. Barrington is currently receiving zero subsidy. We are managing and operating solely on rents. Still, we are funded by DHCD for capital improvements: sitework at Brookside, new bathroom exhaust fans at Flagrock etc.

Town Resolution:

Kevin O'Donnell, Town Mgr. has offered to propose a resolution to the selectmen that would oppose regionalization. He asked the Housing Authority to come up with five or six bullet points stating why we are opposed and he would write a resolution to be presented at the next selectmen's meeting. They would vote on it. This kind of local support is encouraged by NAHRO.

The board agreed they would all write a few bullet points for discussion at the next meeting to be addressed at the April Select Board Meeting.

Motion made by Deborah, seconded by Ann to adjourn at 3:50 p.m.

All members voted in favor.

Next meeting – March 28, 2013