

Great Barrington Housing Authority
2 Bishop Gibbons Drive
Great Barrington, MA 01230
413-274-1142

Minutes of Board meeting on January 19, 2017

Called to order at 2:17

Board members present: Nan Wile, Chair; Ann Condon Vice Chair; Veronica Cunningham, treasurer Barbara Heaphy, Executive Director.

Visitors: John Liebel, GBHA Attorney; Josh Risen; Owen Higgins, Berkshire Eagle; Heather Bellows, Berkshire Edge.

Tenants: Jane Green, Judy Carlson, Jackie Sinico her daughter Shannon, Marlene Kowalski, and Annie Bushka, and Ann Pruhenski. Polly Mann, Grace Ziebel of Claire Teague Senior Center.

Meeting is being recorded

John Liebel, Attorney for GBHA announced that there would be no Executive Session as the notice posted at Town Hall was deficient in not announcing the Executive Session. Chair and Attny. to reset date for Executive Session.

Citizen Speak: Nan set 15 minute time limit for all, discussion to be limited, and requested that tenants put concerns in writing in order to be addressed efficiently. In order to avoid future disruption of the other business of the meeting a vote to assign Citizen Speak to end of agenda moved by Ann, seconded by Ronnie and carried unanimously.

Shannon Sinico asked for emergency housing for she was at risk of losing housing, what is the criteria for emergency. She felt that she was met with condescension by the Director and that she was reduced to tears. She knew for a fact that there were openings at Flag Rock and at Dewey Court. Nan asked if she had discussed it with Barbara, and for Barbara to clarify protocol by the state regulations. She had in November, didn't like how she was treated. Nan had compassion and condolences. Barbara said there are people ahead of you. Listening won't do any good. (She spoke for at least six minutes). Nan asked for Barbara to be treated with more respect.

Concern expressed about those with crutches or walkers trying to use the heavy doors. The doors do not stay open long enough for people to manage to get through them before they close. Not handicap accessible. Senior Center has installed push button doors.

Ann Pruhenski stated that she pays her rent on time. She's been having trouble with her stove, the burners are lopsided. Marlene Kowalski had a situation involving a lawyer, and accused Barbara of giving untruths to the lawyer; also complained about the cost of replacing the carpet in her apartment. She needed her floor replaced and was told to go to Country Carpets and did so at her own \$650 expense. Marlene had gone over Barbara's head to board members and the next day, an electrician was on site and the situation was resolved. Called Barbara's office, left message with Erin, told that Barbara would call her back but did not receive callback. States communication at Flag Rock is bad. A. Pruhenski said that Stove not fixed after several attempts. Burnt hand on hot burner; what does she have to do to get a replacement: Nan states that there are work sheets made out for each complaint and she is concerned about safety. To question about how work orders, Barbara says work order is written immediately after tenants call.

Judy Carlson, not a tenant. Had emergency, went through every group for housing. Accepted at Dewey Court but didn't get housing, reduplicated applications.

Jane Green has served on many boards including GBHA. Applications for board members do not include experience in housing. Feels that Director does not inform the board of things going on. Job descriptions should be required. Nan thanked her for her remarks. Board is overseen by DHCD who will guide us.

Grace Ziebel baffled by procedures involving town boards. Ann explained that board members, who must be Great Barrington residents, are elected by the citizens of the Town and sworn in by the Town in order to maintain a degree of local control and knowledge of those who are working for the citizens of the Town. The State, via Governor's Office, appoints a member who also must be local. Board members elected for five year terms. Send suggestions to the Board. Provided her e-mail address. Ronnie raised questions as to where send requests. Leases should include a procedure for how to make complaints.

Question raised about who sets the agenda. May confer with Board but Board does not make up the agenda. Nan happy to see e-mails and suggests that they be copied to all board meetings for all to be on the same page.

Nan, in answer to a question from Marlene said that how work orders were handled was discussed five months previously. How are the properties daily chores handled with so few staff. Nan agrees healthy work-load. Shouldn't have to wait so long. Nan listening to all concerns. Rich out for how long, we have coverage. O'Brien's handling snow.

Nan closed Citizens Speak, baptism by fire.

3. Vote to approve minutes of November 2016, moved by Ronnie, seconded by Ann, approved unanimously
4. Vote to approve check register and payments for November and December 2016, moved by Nan, seconded by Ann, approved unanimously.
5. Executive Directors Report attached herewith.
Administrative Assistant, Erin, maintaining regular update of the list.
Executive Director, Barbara, requested that amount of \$2,050 rent owed by past tenant who cannot be located be written off: moved to approve by Ann, seconded by Nan, approved unanimously.
Executive Directors last full week Friday, January 20th, has agreed to work one day a week at GBHA till new director hired and assist them in transition. Administrative Assistant's last full week, January 27.
6. Old Business
Brookside roof replacement contractor in place; work to proceed in warmer weather.
Agreed Procedures Report distributed to Board members. DHCD annual audit, usually a whole day at LHA site. Will be taken up by new Executive Director.
Great Barrington Select board and GBHA joint meeting February 6, 6:30 p.m. to elect. Board candidate.
7. New Business
Berkshire Eagle reporter asked who is in charge of hiring Executive Director. Chair explained that review of applicants by a selection committee of the Board and proposed
Candidates will be reviewed and approved by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD.)
Barbara Heaphy, will be taking E.D. position at Lenox Housing Authority.
Chair reported that GBHA accountant, Sue Honeycutt, has written a temporary work plan for shared management and fee schedule based on number of units in the three locations (116.) Will review with Barbara.

Move to adjourn by Nan, seconded by Ronnie approved unanimously at 3:58 p.m.

Submitted by Veronica Cunningham & Ann Condon.