

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2018
90 Longwood Avenue
4:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Jacobs at 4:30 PM. Those present included Ms. Dugan, Ms. Sullivan, Ms. Katz, and Ms. Cohen.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- Mr. Dober and Mr. Jacobs are reaching out to the two newly elected State Representatives, Tommy Vitolo and Nika Elugardo, with an offer of a tour of BHA properties.
- BHA staff has responded to concerns expressed by residents of 22 High Street about repeated short term electrical failures this summer by enlisting engineers from the utility company Eversource to help diagnose the problem and to recommend a solution.
- Mr. Dober Introduced Julia Blencowe, the new Brookline Community Mental Health Center's Service Coordinator, who will be replacing Amanda Sidman.

Ms. Blencowe said that she is excited about her new job working with BHA residents. While at Smith College, she assisted victims of domestic violence and she has experience as a case manager.

- Commissioners are invited to an event hosted by First Literacy, a funding partner for BHA's ESOL program.

Mr. Jacobs asked about filling recent unit vacancies. Mr. Dober said that an issue that makes filling vacancies difficult is the fact that there is often a long wait between the time an applicant applies and the time that a unit offer is made; during which time the applicant's circumstances can change.

BHA Director of Subsidized Housing and Applications, Carlos Hernandez, said that the small size of most BHA apartments in elderly/disabled buildings is often cited by applicants as their reason for refusing an offer.

Ms. Cohen asked if applicants are dropped from the waiting list if they refuse an offer. Mr. Hernandez said that if an appropriate unit offer is refused, the applicant is removed from the waiting list.

Ms. Dugan said that she hoped that any applicant being made an offer at O'Shea House would be apprised of the planned RAD upgrades. Mr. Dober said that all current vacancies at O'Shea House are being held vacant with the expectation that they will be utilized as apartments where residents can temporarily relocate while their apartments are being renovated. Applicants will be fully informed of RAD plans if any O'Shea House unit offers are made from now until the renovations are completed.

Mr. Jacobs asked about Springwell staffing issues. BHA Assistant Executive Director, Matthew Baronas, said that Springwell is actively advertising and interviewing for the part-time Care Coordinator position at Trustman Apartments and Walnut Street Apartments. The hot job market is making it more difficult to find qualified entry level candidates. They plan to provide temporary coverage to get the program up and running by reassigning a current Care Coordinator.

Resident Association Report

Egmont Tenant Association (ETA) President, Sean Jaynes, reported the following:

- The community mural project was completed, and the dedication block party was fun for all. Vendors generously donated food.
- The ETA recognizes the fact that the BHA Maintenance Department currently has limited staffing. BHA Director of Maintenance, David Perry, is doing a great job considering the circumstances.
- Children are enjoying the new courtyard play equipment.
- Steps To Success' back to school event and the BHA's backpack event were great successes.

Mr. Jaynes inquired about a BHA pet policy. Mr. Baronas said that the BHA has a pet policy that addresses under what circumstances pets are allowed, as well as issues of safety and sanitation.

Consent Agenda

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Sullivan, the consent agenda was unanimously approved and authorized the following: the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on August 14, 2018; Change Order #3 to the contract with Unified Contracting, Inc. for the Egmont Street Veterans Apartments courtyard renovation project, increasing the Substantial Completion date by 47 days to September 14, 2018; Substantial Completion and Final Completion of the contract with Unified Contracting, Inc. for the Egmont Street Veterans Apartments courtyard renovation project; and a contract to Lan-Tel Communications Inc. for installation of upgraded security cameras at Col. Floyd Apartments, in the amount of \$15,242.00.

Construction Report

BHA Director of Capital Improvements, Sharon Cowan, reported the following:

- The Egmont Street Veterans Apartments courtyard project has been completed.
- The mechanical and electrical upgrade project at various federal developments is progressing.
- The Col. Floyd security camera upgrades is moving into the design phase.

O'Shea House Presentation

BHA Director of Redevelopment, Maria Maffei, introduced Josh Swasey and Chris Sullivan, architects from Baker Wohl Associates (BWA), to discuss the preliminary design scope for the rehabilitation of O'Shea House.

Mr. Swasey reported the following:

- O'Shea House resident input has included two interactive meetings with residents, and a resident survey of their project priorities. Fortunately, most concerns of residents are being addressed in the project design.
- BWA is taking care to incorporate the recommendations of Enterprise Green Communities for unit and building features that will assist residents to age in place.
- The pre-design phase has been completed. Conceptual design is underway which incorporates the project's "big ideas", including resident suggestions.

Ms. Dugan said that both resident meetings were well done and well attended. Residents seem to understand what it will entail and what will result. She believes that walk-in showers will make a big difference in the quality of life for residents. Mr. Sullivan agreed, adding that central air conditioning will be another durable feature that will allow residents to live in place longer.

BHA resident, Elizabeth Warshaw, agreed that the architects have been very accommodating and understanding.

Mr. Sullivan reported the following:

- All units will be adaptable, with a higher degree of accessibility.

Mr. Jacobs asked if units for sensory impaired will be included in the plans. Mr. Sullivan said that such units will be included.

- Mr. Sullivan said that the community room will be reconfigured to include spaces for social services, television viewing, music practice, and computer stations.
- Mechanical rooms and building systems will be upgraded.
- A separate Maintenance Department room will be created.
- The lobby and the laundry rooms will be renovated.
- Apartments will not be reconfigured, but the design will include additional storage features.
- Windows and slider doors will be refurbished.
- Non-slip flooring, new ceilings, and new light fixtures will be added throughout the units.
- Kitchens will feature new cabinets, appliances, and an enlarged kitchen pass-through.
- Bathrooms will feature new toilets, sinks, and walk-in showers.

Ms. Maffei reported the following:

- There was an excellent turnout for the O'Shea House resident meeting on Tuesday.
- There has been a good response to the RFPs for equity and debt.
- Rough cost estimates for the repairs have been received from two sources, and it appears that the resources necessary to complete the priorities for the project are likely to be available.
- Springwell has been consulted on aging in place design features. Springwell CEO, Ruth Beckerman Rodau, feels that improving air quality and lighting are keys to aging in place.
- A ground lease structure is being worked on for the Board's consideration in October.

Application for Supplemental RAD Assistance

Ms. Maffei reported the following:

- Supplemental RAD assistance in the form of Section 18 project-based vouchers is a way to bring additional income into the project.
- Section 18 vouchers can be utilized in 25% of the projects' units. The income for these units will be set at 110% of the HUD Fair Market Rent for Brookline; a much higher level of funding than standard RAD units.
- An additional five units can utilize BHA Section 8 vouchers, leaving 69 standard RAD units.
- The rents for residents in the Section 8 units and the standard RAD units will be determined using essentially the same rent formula for public housing.

Ms. Cohen asked if a plan for disposition of units must be included in the proposal. Ms. Maffei said that such a plan is required.

Ms. Cohen asked about the public process. Mr. Dober said that a public process is required and that the recently held RAB meeting is part of the process.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Katz, authorization for an application to HUD for additional Section 8 operating assistance in the form of Section 18 “Disposition” project-based vouchers and to approve the accompanying Resolutions prepared by the BHA’s law firm Hawkins Delafield, was unanimously approved.

Consulting Contract

Ms. Maffei said that Garrett Anderson has worked for 14 years in the planning and development department at the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) and has offered his services as a consultant on the design and construction aspects of the BHA’s RAD redevelopment projects. The terms of a proposed contract offer great value to the BHA. Consultants with experience overseeing RAD projects in public housing is a rare commodity. Ms. Cohen said that she has worked with Mr. Anderson in her capacity at the CHA, and she regards him as one of the finest professionals in the field.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Cohen, a contract to Garrett Anderson for construction-related consulting assistance in relation to the RAD redevelopment projects, at the rate of \$105 per hour, a maximum contract amount of \$50,000.00, and an initial contract term of two years with up to three one-year renewals at the BHA’s option was unanimously approved.

Design Contract Amendment

Ms. Maffei said that the construction budget estimate for the O’Shea House RAD redevelopment project has risen from the \$50,000 range per unit to over \$90,000 per unit. The Baker Wohl Associates (BWA) design contract is based significantly on construction costs, and as such a fee increase is warranted. A provision within the design contract provides that if construction costs exceed \$75,000 per unit, BWA will reduce their fees as a percentage of construction costs. The proposed contract amendment incorporates a reduction in their fees as a percentage of construction costs. Ms. Cohen said that BWA has provided excellent services to the CHA.

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Sullivan, an amendment to the contract with Baker Wohl Associates for the architectural and engineering work at 61 Park Street, increasing the total projected fee by \$233,500.00 to \$620,000.00, while reducing the overall fee as a percentage of construction costs was unanimously approved.

Union Contracts

Mr. Dober said that the BHA has a good collaborative relationship with the unions representing both the BHA administrative staff and maintenance staff. Ms. Dugan joined in the negotiations with both unions. One new feature that resulted from the bargaining sessions is a financial incentive for staff to use public transportation.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Cohen, Collective Bargaining Agreements for Fiscal Years 2019, 2020, and 2021 between AFSCME Council 93 and the BHA and Teamsters Local 122 and the BHA as detailed in the attached memo from Patrick Dober dated September 11, 2018 were unanimously approved.

Section 8 Payment Standards

Mr. Hernandez said that there was a big increase in the newly published HUD Section 8 Payment Standards for Brookline, particularly for one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. In Brookline, the highest payment standard (110%) is needed to support rents for tenant-based Section 8 Vouchers.

Ms. Cohen said that she has learned that the Greater Boston area Section 8 Administrators Association plans to conduct a rent survey. This has the potential to raise the Fair Market Rent (FMR) levels for the area as well as an inflation factor for funding. Regulations require that HUD be notified of the intent to conduct such a survey.

Mr. Dober said that the BHA would support such a survey.

Ms. Cohen recommended that the vote to approve the new Section 8 Payment Standards incorporate language stating that the BHA will consider pursuing a rent survey and take the necessary action to implement revised FMRs.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Dugan, 2018-2019 Payment Standards for Section 8 assistance administered by the Brookline Housing Authority, at the rent levels recommended in the attached memo from Carlos Hernandez and dated September 7, 2018, and further, authorization for the Executive Director to investigate the possibility of a reevaluation of the applicable Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and to take any steps necessary to preserve the BHA's options to seek an increase in the September, 2018 HUD-published FMRs were unanimously approved.

Public Comments

BHA resident, Ann Stitt, said that there seems to be one resident disturbing other residents at the Morse Apartments. She has sought advice from Protective Services and Springwell. She is encouraged to find that the BHA is pursuing a close collaboration with outside agencies, including the Brookline Community Mental Health Center, to help resolve the situation.

Mr. Jacobs said that it appears that the parties involved are consulting with the right people. Mr. Dober said that the BHA takes Ms. Stitt's concerns seriously. BHA Assistant Executive Director, Matthew Baronas, said that the BHA has met with individual residents, and has consulted with Brookline Community Mental Health Center, Springwell, Brookline Police, Jewish Family and Children's Services, and others in an effort to improve the situation.

Miscellaneous Issues

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at Kickham Apartments on October 9, 2018 at 4:30 PM.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Dugan, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 PM.

A TRUE COPY

ATTEST



Patrick Dober

Executive Director