

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2017
90 Longwood Avenue
4:30 PM

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

Board Reports

Mr. Jacobs said that the Housing Advisory Board was briefed on two large hotel proposals: the Waldo Street Garage, a Chapter 40B project which includes a hotel, apartments and condominiums; and the Holiday Inn which includes a hotel and apartments. Public hearings have been scheduled.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- The BHA is nearing final completion of three capital improvement projects valued at \$1.4 million: the Trustman Apartments façade and foundation repairs; the High Street Veterans and Egmont Street Veterans Apartments storm drain repairs; and the Morse Apartments roof replacement.
- The next round of capital improvement projects includes: the High Street Veterans Apartments sewer line work; the Trustman Apartments community room and office space improvements; and the security camera upgrades at Sussman House, O'Shea House and Kickham Apartments.
- Proposals for FY 2018 CDBG funds will include: hot water heaters and tanks at Kickham Apartments; hot water heater at Morse Apartments; sprinkler head replacements at Kickham Apartments, O'Shea House, and Morse Apartments; and courtyard renovations at Egmont Street Veterans Apartments.
- Personnel highlights include: the hiring of Orrin Davis as a Maintenance Laborer and Sugei Paz as Receptionist/Program Assistant; the promotion of Flor Nieves to Applications Manager; and BHA Capital Improvement Director, Sharon Cowan, taking a family leave to care for a family member.
- An all-staff training on social bullying in senior housing presented by Jewish Family and Children's Services has been scheduled for next month. BHA social service partners will attend, including staff from Brookline Community Mental Health Center and Springwell. Follow-up trainings will be conducted for residents at BHA senior housing developments.
- The BHA is negotiating with the Coolidge Corner Branch Library to open a mini-library at Sussman House during renovations to the library planned for early next year. A similar arrangement took place several years ago and was well received by Sussman House residents.
- One of the requirements of the 2014 state public housing reform legislation is the requirement that public housing Board Members complete an on-line training by June 19, 2017. Information regarding this training is included in the Board package.

Resident Association

Brookline Housing Town Wide Tenant Association President, Jaymmy Colon, was unable to attend the meeting today. Mr. Trietsch said that the BHA has asked Ms. Colon to arrange for an alternate

representative when she is unable to attend Board meetings, and has asked that she provide the BHA with a schedule of BHTWTA meetings and agendas.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Sullivan said that she would like to abstain from the vote approving the minutes of the January 17, 2017 Board meeting, since she was not present for the meeting.

On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Katz, the consent agenda was unanimously approved and authorized the following: the minutes of the regular meeting held on January 17, 2017 (with Ms. Sullivan abstaining from voting on the minutes); Change Order #5 to the Storm Drains Repair project with Aqualine Utility Inc., in the amount of \$16,543.92, increasing the contract period by three days, with the value of the contract increasing to \$549,412.94; Change Order #2 to the Trustman Apartments Masonry Repairs project with MJS Construction, Inc., in the amount of \$11,432.76, increasing the contract period by seven days, with the value of the contract increasing to \$749,364.52; a contract to install security cameras at three BHA properties to Lan-Tel Communications, Inc., in the amount of \$173,344.00; a contract to Riverdale Plumbing & Heating, Inc., for the Sanitary Sewer Line Replacement project at High Street Veterans Apartments in the amount of \$283,000.00; a contract to APC Development Group, Inc., for the renovation of the Trustman Apartments community room and offices, in the amount of \$137,000.00; an architect contract for wall replacement and courtyard improvements at Egmont Street Veterans Apartments to BSC Group, Inc., in the amount of \$34,900.00; and the BHA's 2017 HUD Annual Plan.

86 Dummer Street

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- All that remains to be completed by the contractor is about \$5,000 worth of warranty landscaping work this spring.
- There were no findings in the first year's annual audit.
- Tax returns were completed and sent to investors.
- The BHA will receive payment on its deferred redevelopment fee this year from cash flow generated from 2016 operations. Projections indicate that the remainder of the fee will be paid off at the end of 2017.
- As revenues are currently in line with expenses, there is no rent increase planned.

Mr. Jacobs said per unit electricity costs seem high. He also asked about the 5% bookkeeping fee. BHA Director of Real Estate, Janet Haines, said that one thing that pushes up the electricity costs is the fact that the garage is heated by electricity. She will continue to monitor the electrical expense. Ms. Haines said that the bookkeeping fee is in line with the fees in similar tax credit property budgets.

Ms. Katz said that administrative salary expenses seem high. She also asked about the \$2,000 in accounts receivable. Ms. Haines said that the administrative salary costs include some start-up expenses. She said the accounts receivable balance pertains to a single rent delinquency which is being repaid under the terms of an agreement with the resident.

Consultant Contract Award

Mr. Dober said that the BHA is considering the possibility of hiring a law firm to look into the advantages of creating a non-profit corporation. If the BHA decides that it would be worthwhile to create such an entity, the law firm could then prepare an application to the IRS on the BHA's behalf. Jenny Amory, Brookline Community Foundation Executive Director, has strongly encouraged the BHA to form such a non-profit. For guidance, she also referred Mr. Dober to Brookline Community Foundation Board Members who are in the foundation business.

Mr. Trietsch said that the purpose of such a non-profit would be to raise funds for the BHA in order to support social service programming.

Mr. Dober said that other housing authorities have formed such non-profits and have had success raising money.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Dugan, a contract with the law firm Hurwit & Associates, to prepare a preliminary assessment of establishing a not-for-profit affiliate of the BHA, and (optional) to prepare an application to the IRS to create such an affiliate, for an amount not to exceed \$10,000.00 for an initial two-year term, renewable for up to two additional years, was unanimously approved.

DHCD AUP and DHCD Resident Survey

Mr. Dober said that the state passed reform legislation in 2014 which contained requirements for DHCD review of Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP). Therefore, during the BHA's most recent annual audit, the auditors were tasked with reviewing 86 AUP items. The BHA is pleased with the results of this review. Of the 86 line items, only seven were noted as needing improvement. The most significant of these tasks is the establishment of a new inventory tracking system.

As part of the reform legislation, DHCD conducted an anonymous satisfaction survey of state public housing residents. About a third of BHA residents replied to this 2016 survey. Staff was surprised by some of the results, particularly the relatively high numbers of residents who gave low grades to the BHA regarding responses to heating problems and who said they had problems with building and outdoor space maintenance.

Mr. Jacobs said that the results of the survey are concerning. Ms. Katz said that surveying residents about apartment heat can be difficult. Residents can feel uncomfortable even though the building heating systems are operating efficiently; particularly during the change of seasons. In addition, the way a question is phrased can sometimes produce misleading results. Mr. Trietsch said that he would like to better understand the survey results. The results might indicate a problem or not.

BHA resident, Jackie Wright, said that sometimes drafts from the sliding door to her balcony make it uncomfortable in her Morse Apartments unit. She has been told that the patio doors are planned to be replaced and wondered when this might happen.

Ms. Katz and Mr. Trietsch suggested that further surveying of residents could be helpful.

Ms. Wright complained that someone has been smoking on her floor in violation of the BHA's smoke-free housing policy. Mr. Dober said that such complaints should be made to her BHA Property Manager.

Miscellaneous Issues

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at Morse Apartments on March 14, 2017 at 4:30 PM.

On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Sullivan, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 PM.