

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 18, 2017
90 Longwood Avenue
4:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Trietsch at 4:35 PM. Those present included Ms. Dugan, Mr. Jacobs, Ms. Sullivan, and Ms. Katz.

Board Reports

Ms. Katz said that Steps To Success (STS) has faced some significant challenges in the past year. One of the greatest challenges has been the need to redefine its partnership with Brookline Public Schools. Fortunately, STS has made some real progress in this regard recently.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- The Town has generously granted the BHA \$380,000 in CDBG construction funding for FY 2018.
- After hosting a "Social Bullying in Senior Housing" full-staff training by Jewish Family & Children's Services (JF&CS) in March, BHA staff is rolling out similar JF&CS training sessions for residents at each BHA elderly/disabled housing development. The first of these was held at O'Shea House earlier this month.
- With the newly hired full-time Care Coordinator for the Supportive Housing Program sites starting in May (Morse, Kickham, and Col. Floyd Apartments), all Springwell site-based positions will be filled.
- Lisa Brown has been hired as the new BHA Learning Centers Director, to replace Jody Garber. She brings a strong skillset to the job, and will have an opportunity to work directly with Ms. Garber during a transition period.
- Congratulations are due BHA resident, Misti Jaynes, for the well-deserved honor of Brookline Woman of The Year, presented to her by the Brookline Commission for Women.

Leased Housing Update

BHA Director of Subsidized Housing and Applications, Carlos Hernandez, said that because of funding cuts proposed for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program by the new Administration, the BHA is putting on hold the issuance of new Section 8 vouchers and is holding back on rent increases requested by landlords. The BHA has informed Winn Management that a reduction in the level of HUD funding for the Section 8 program could impact their rents in January of 2018.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Dugan asked why the BHA is changing its extermination service provider. BHA Director of Maintenance, George Lalli, said that there were concerns raised by another extermination company regarding technical procedures related to the procurement of Page Exterminators last year. After consulting with BHA legal counsel, the BHA decided to reformat the bid specifications and bid again. B&B Pest Control won this bid. They have significant public housing experience and very strong references.

On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Sullivan, the consent agenda was unanimously approved and authorized the following: the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on March 21, 2017, and the minutes of the Executive Session of the same date; contracts for grounds maintenance to

Horgan Enterprises, Inc., for the state properties in the amount of \$31,329.00 per year and for the federal properties in the amount of \$30,384.00 per year, both contracts for a one-year term with a one-year renewal option; and a contract for pest management to B&B Pest Control in the amount of \$16,287.90 per year, for a one-year term with three one-year renewal options.

Steps To Success

Shoma Haque, Steps To Success (STS) Director, reported the following:

- She started full-time as the STS Director in January of this year. Prior to that, she worked in the field of community and economic development in Boston.
- STS programming is focused on BHA students from fourth grade through college, and includes: extended day at five public schools; After Hours U; Teen Advantage; Homework Center at Brookline High School and college preparation guidance.
- Summer programs include: camp guidance/scholarships; Summer Connections work experience for 8th and 9th graders; and Work Connections for Youth internships for high school students.
- 332 students are currently enrolled in STS. Over 4,000 students have participated since 2001.
- STS has an 18 member Board of Directors chaired by Judy Katz; eight staff members; and ten part-time After Hours U and Teen Advantage staff members.
- Short term goals include: the completion of a strategic plan; encouraging active participation by parents; and enhancing marketing and communications.
- Long-term goals include: creating a more robust college access curriculum; establishing data-driven decision making; and reaching more families through non-academic wrap-around supports.
- Collaborations with the BHA include: Next Steps programming for high school students; outreach to families through regular meetings and events; and assisting the BHA in publicizing BHA events that could benefit parents to STS parents.

Mr. Jacobs asked if STS would start with students prior to fourth grade if funding were not an issue. Ms. Haque said starting prior to fourth grade would be ideal.

Mr. Trietsch asked if STS would continue after college if possible. Ms. Haque said that employment assistance post-college is in the discussion.

Redevelopment

A. Presentation on Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)

Mr. Dober said that the BHA Board's Development Committee recommended the hiring of Peter Roche to look into redevelopment opportunities at the BHA. Mr. Roche has begun to investigate the viability of using HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program to preserve BHA developments for the long term.

Mr. Roche reported the following:

- HUD is promoting RAD Section 8 funding as a more viable platform for operating stability than public housing funding.
- The BHA portfolio sits on valuable land, but public housing operational and capital funding is continually shrinking, putting the developments at risk. CDBG funding from the Town of Brookline has become a big source of funding for the BHA's capital programs, however, future CDBG funding from Washington is uncertain.

- RAD allows private debt/equity investment to occur in these developments while maintaining local control.
- RAD converts public housing funding to project based Section 8 funding, guaranteeing annual cost of living increases in operating income while at the same time potentially leveraging private funds.
- Although RAD converted developments are no longer technically public housing, the new housing authority controlled developments include similar covenants for long term affordability and protection. The RAD use agreement assures that the developments serve low-income residents in perpetuity.
- Advantages of RAD converted developments over conventional public housing developments include: access to inflation-based federal funding; access to private equity; ability to build replacement reserves; a simpler regulatory framework; one for one replacement of affordable units; the rent determination formula for residents is the same as that for public housing; and residents may be able to use a Section 8 voucher to move elsewhere a year or two after the conversion.
- Different ownership entities are allowed, but HUD requires public housing authority control.
- The RAD program started slowly, but Cambridge Housing Authority and others have demonstrated how it can work.
- The BHA recently sent a Letter of Intent to HUD, which was accepted. The application process is lengthy and competitive.
- Public hearings are required.

Ms. Katz asked about the RAD program in light of federal budget uncertainty. Mr. Roche said that the Administration's budget proposal significantly cuts public housing but not Section 8 funding.

Ms. Sullivan asked how regulations are simplified after a RAD conversion. Mr. Roche said that fewer approvals are needed from HUD after a RAD conversion.

Ms. Dugan said that the BHA must think about this plan carefully. Residents will be concerned and will have to be convinced of the need to do this. The BHA will have to thoughtfully communicate with residents along the way.

BHA resident, Kenneth Drummond, said that this concept could be confusing for residents and create anxiety. BHA resident, Bruce Wolff, said that privatization is a frightening concept for residents.

Mr. Trietsch said that the BHA will devote considerable energy to a public education program.

Mr. Trietsch said that the BHA Board wants its residents to know that it is pursuing redevelopment options because the federal government is inadequately funding public housing. HUD believes that public/private partnerships are the future of low income housing. Redevelopment will allow BHA to continue to provide quality low income housing in Brookline. The BHA is looking to eventually expand this effort to all BHA properties.

B. Reorganization Plan to Support Redevelopment

The Board then discussed the proposed BHA Reorganization Plan that includes several initiatives to build the BHA's capacity to successfully undertake redevelopment of its buildings

Ms. Sullivan said that this is a well-conceived plan.

Mr. Jacobs said that this plan is critical to the preservation of BHA's low income housing in the future.

Ms. Katz said that the BHA is not voting tonight for a redevelopment project; rather, it is voting for a staffing change that will help it to respond to opportunities to improve BHA housing in the future.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Katz, the BHA Redevelopment Reorganization Plan was unanimously approved.

Miscellaneous Issues

Mr. Wolff asked about the BHA policy on private use of community rooms. He is opposed to the private use of a community room to the exclusion of others. BHA Assistant Executive Director, Matthew Baronas, said a resident can reserve their community room for a private gathering by coordinating the event with their Property Manager.

Mr. Trietsch said that the BHA would review this policy.

Mr. Wolff said that there is a need for access to national news in every resident's apartment. Mr. Baronas said that the BHA has cable television hookups in all apartments, but it does not pay for a resident's cable television service.

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at Morse Apartments on May 9, 2017 at 4:30 PM.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Katz, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 PM.