

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2017
90 Longwood Avenue
4:30 PM

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

Miscellaneous Executive Director's Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- The thoughts of BHA staff are with George Lalli, BHA Director of Maintenance, after it was learned that his sister passed away over the weekend.
- At the last BHA Board meeting, a resident of O'Shea House asked if something could be done to make it easier for residents from her building to mail letters and packages. O'Shea House is the only BHA senior housing development without a mailbox in front of the property or an internal mailroom that accepts outgoing mail. BHA staff is following up with the US Post Office regarding this concern.
- At the last BHA Board meeting, an O'Shea House resident complained of bullying behavior by a neighbor in her building. In order to learn more about how to effectively respond to such concerns, BHA Assistant Executive Director, Matthew Baronas, and O'Shea House and Morse Apartments Property Manager, Carol Porcari, plan to attend a training session in January presented by Marsha Frankel of Jewish Family and Children's Services. Staff will continue to collaborate with Springwell and BCMHC on coordinated approaches to such issues.
- The BHA hosted a retirement party last week for Carole Brown, former BHA Director of Subsidized Housing and Applications.

Carlos Hernandez, new BHA Director of Subsidized Housing and Applications, introduced himself. He thanked everyone for being so welcoming to him since his start at the BHA last week.

- Springwell is continuing their efforts to hire a full time Care Coordinator for the Supportive Housing Program (Morse, Kickham, and Col. Floyd Apartments). They have recently increased temporary staffing for this program from eight hours per week to 15.5 hours per week.
- BHA Director of ESOL, Danielle Mendola, is starting her third semester of classes. She has expanded her efforts to reach out to Spanish speaking parents, and is creating more opportunities for one-on-one tutoring. She is now also including adult basic education in her curriculum.
- A second year of free tax preparation session will begin later this month at two BHA family developments.
- Mr. Dober has arranged to give a tour of BHA properties to the new Superintendent of Brookline Public Schools, Andrew Bott.
- BHA staff frequently attends professional training and career development programs. This past month was particularly notable for the high level of staff participation in such trainings.

Construction Report

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

- The High Street Veterans Apartments sanitary sewer replacement project is out to bid.

- The Trustman Apartments community room and office improvement project is out to bid.
- Design services are being sought through DHCD for the Egmont Street Veterans Apartments courtyard upgrade and wall replacement project.
- The Brookline Board of Selectmen tonight is set to vote on a CDBG grant of \$173,000 to the BHA for further upgrades to security cameras. The money became available to the BHA when it went unused after being allocated to other Town projects.

Resident Association

Jaymmy Colon, Brookline Housing Town Wide Tenant Association President, said that things are going well at the developments. Some issues have been brought to her attention by residents, and she is making progress with BHA Assistant Executive Director, Matthew Baronas, on resolving any outstanding matters.

Mr. Trietsch asked if Ms. Colon could provide the Board with a schedule of her upcoming meetings, her agendas, and sign in sheets.

Consent Agenda

On a motion from Ms. Katz and a second from Mr. Jacobs, the consent agenda was unanimously approved and authorized the following: the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 13, 2016; and Change Order #4 to the Storm Drains Repair Project with Aqualine Utility LLC in the amount of \$46,378, increasing the contract period by nine days, with the value of the contract increasing to \$532,868.16.

Contract Award

When the last three-year contract was negotiated with the Teamsters Union, the BHA agreed to review and revise as needed all job descriptions, and to conduct a compensation comparability study. Two strong proposals for such services have been received by the BHA. Although their fee proposal is slightly higher than the second firm, BHA staff is recommending Human Capital Initiates for this work. Unlike the second firm, Human Capital Initiatives has extensive experience working with housing authorities. They also had very strong references.

On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Katz, a contract to Human Capital Initiatives in an amount up to \$20,500 to conduct a compensation comparability study of BHA staff positions, a review of job descriptions, and related tasks; for an initial one-year term, renewable for up to two additional years was unanimously approved.

Contract Award

Mr. Dober said that with government revenues are not keeping up with costs, it is the fiduciary responsibility of the BHA to investigate new sources of revenues. Other LHAs have set up non-profit organizations allowing them to attract grants and money from charities. Such additional revenue could potentially help the financial position of the BHA.

Mr. Trietsch said that he would like this idea to be put on a list of possible strategies for the BHA to think about and that the Board will likely consider the contract award at an upcoming meeting.

Audited FY 2016 Financial Statements

Mr. Dober said that the BHA received a 'clean' audit of its financial statements. In addition, this year DHCD gave auditors the task of reviewing a set of 86 different criteria. The BHA received only seven comments related to these new criteria.

For several years, the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has required all government agencies to book Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) which reflect the cost of future retiree health insurance premiums. Starting this year, GASB 68 has been implemented. GASB 68 requires public agencies to book a liability for the cost of all future retirement pension payments.

The 2015 net assets of the BHA were determined to be approximately \$1 million. Due to the new GASB 68 accounting requirements for 2016, a liability of \$6.5 million has been added to the BHA's books, bringing unrestricted net assets to a negative \$5.5 million.

It should be noted that GASB 68 is an accounting change which has no effect on programs, staffing, or financial projections for next year. All government agencies are now reflecting these additional liabilities.

Mr. Trietsch said that it is important to note that the BHA's 2016 audit ends by stating that the financial position of the BHA is in accordance with accounting principles of the United States.

Miscellaneous Issues

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at Morse Apartments on February 21, 2017 at 4:30 PM.

On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Katz, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 5:10 PM.