

Regular Meeting Minutes
July 11, 2017
55 Egmont Street
4:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Trietsch at 4:40 PM. Those present included Ms. Dugan, Mr. Jacobs, Ms. Sullivan, and Ms. Katz.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- There was a nice retirement event at the BHA central office last month for Jody Garber, who directed the BHA Family Learning Centers for 18 years. Lisa Brown has recently taken over this role after a smooth transition.

Ms. Brown stated that she grew up at High Street Veterans Apartments and has worked in the Brookline school system for 15 years.

- Amanda Sidman has been hired by the Brookline Community Mental Health Center to become the BHA Resident Services Coordinator for the Egmont Street Veterans, Trustman, and Dummer Street developments. This new position is supported by a Brookline Community Foundation grant.

Ms. Sidman stated that she earned her MSW from Boston College and completed her field work at the Brookline Community Mental Health Center.

- Congratulations are due BHA ESOL Director, Danielle Mendola, who recently procured a \$10,000 grant for the BHA from Eastern Bank.
- Woman and Girls Thriving produced some excellent domestic violence education and emergency contact materials for distribution throughout Brookline. BHA staff has placed these materials in bathrooms and common areas throughout the developments.
- HUD recently completed their scheduled inspection of all BHA federal developments. The BHA scored at a high level, which will allow the next HUD inspection to occur in two years rather than one year. Credit goes to BHA Director of Maintenance, George Lalli, along with his staff and others at the BHA who assisted in preparing for the inspection.

Construction Report

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

- The Egmont Street Veterans Apartments masonry wall replacement work will proceed once executed contracts are received from DHCD.
- The architect is continuing to advance the design of courtyard renovations at Egmont Street Veterans Apartments.
- Demolition has begun for the office and community space renovations at Trustman Apartments. Further work will begin once a building permit is obtained from the Town.
- The Trustman Apartments Amory Street building roof replacement project is expected to go out to bid next month.
- The work on the fire alarm upgrades at Kickham Apartments is going well.

- The High Street Veterans Apartments sewer line replacement work has been delayed due to a subcontractor issue. It is expected to get back on schedule soon.

Resident Association

Brookline Housing Town Wide Tenant Association Officer, Shawn O'Neal, said that things are going well at the developments. A concern for some residents of 22 High Street is windows in need of repair.

Ms. Dugan said that there is an increase of rodent activity on the Walnut Street Apartments site. She believes this is due to a major construction project across the street. Mr. Dober said that the BHA is aware of this issue and is working closely with the BHA exterminator to control the problem.

Consent Agenda

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 June 13, 2017; and a contract for HUD MIS consulting services to Seabrook Solutions at a rate of \$90.00 per hour, for an initial two-year term and up to three one-year extensions at the BHA's option pursuant to the memo in this month's BHA Board package.

Egmont Tenant Association

Mr. Dober congratulated the newly elected officers of the Egmont Tenant Association (ETA), and introduced Misti Jaynes, ETA Community Liaison. Ms. Jaynes said that the ETA met on June 22, 2017 and elected the following slate of officers: Sean Jaynes, President; Chanda Jones, Vice President; Natasha Clouden, Treasurer; Erica Fricke, Secretary 1; Paula Torres, Secretary 2; Misti Jaynes, Community Liaison; Barbara O'Brien, Member; and Tina Brazzo, Member. The ETA will strive to get more residents involved in supportive community programming. They hope to have their first meeting in August.

Mr. Trietsch said that the BHA Board is thrilled with their efforts and will be happy to support them.

Sean Jaynes said that they want residents to feel invested in where they live, and they have ideas such as a community cleanup day and a partnership with Brookline Arts Center to create murals on the property.

Mr. Jaynes said that the ETA has noted some issues on the site needing attention after the long winter, including: fences in disrepair, dead shrubs, dead grass, etc. Another issue is dog owners not picking up dog waste on the property. Mr. Dober invited the ETA to join the BHA's social service table at the upcoming cookout for residents of the Egmont Street Veterans and Trustman Apartments.

Affiliate Bylaws

Mr. Trietsch explained that the BHA is planning to establish an affiliated non-profit for the purpose of attracting private social service funding, since much of this type of funding is only available to housing authorities once such a non-profit is established.

Mr. Dober introduced Anne Rosenthal, attorney with Hurwit and Associates. Ms. Rosenthal explained that Hurwit and Associates is a small firm located in Newton which only represents non-profits. She believes that the proposed non-profit will be a benefit to the BHA and that it will reflect the BHA's goal of transparency.

Mr. Dober said that the non-profit will be called Brookline Housing Authority Corporation. The plan is to file papers in Massachusetts to establish the corporation and then to apply for a Section 501(c)(3) designation with the IRS.

Mr. Trietsch pointed out that the word “current” in the “draft July 7, 2017 Bylaws of Brookline Housing Authority Corporation, Inc., Article 3, Section 3.2 Composition” is ambiguous. Ms. Rosenthal agreed, and suggested substituting “then serving”. All Board Members supported this change.

Ms. Sullivan asked if the indemnification and conflict of interest provisions in the non-profit’s draft bylaws are aligned with similar provisions in the BHA bylaws. Ms. Rosenthal said that the non-profit bylaws follow Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 180.

Mr. Jacobs asked if officers of the non-profit are insured. Mr. Dober said that the non-profit will be added to the BHA’s existing insurance policy. In addition, the indemnification laws under Chapter 180 are similar to the limited liability of public housing authorities.

On a motion from Ms. Katz and a second from Ms. Dugan, the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation dated July 7, 2017, as amended, for the purposes of establishing a non-profit affiliate corporation of the BHA under Ch. 180 of the Massachusetts General Laws, and applying for tax-exempt status for the corporation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, was unanimously approved.

Section 8 Inspection Services

BHA Director of Subsidized Housing and Applications, Carlos Hernandez, said that the BHA issued an RFP in May for inspection services for the Section 8 program. It received four bids. After an extensive review of the proposals, BHA staff is recommending McRight & Associates. McRight & Associates had the best proposal, the best price, and good references.

Mr. Dober said that the ability to automate inspection reporting in the format that HUD prefers was a big factor in favor of McRight & Associates. Another big advantage of choosing McRight & Associates over the other bids is the fact that their inspection costs are less than the BHA’s current costs.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Mr. Jacobs, a contract to McRight & Associates for Section 8 inspection services for an initial two-year term with total payment not to exceed \$75,000.00 and up to three additional one-year extensions at the BHA’s option, not to exceed \$40,000.00 per year, was unanimously approved.

Energy and Water Efficiency Studies

Mr. Dober said the BHA is in the early stages of exploring options for rehabilitating BHA developments. In order to be eligible for HUD RAD (Rental Assistance Demonstration) funding, the BHA will need to collect basic statistics on utility use. This information will be used to explore potential capital costs associated with installing utility systems upgrades, as well as associated operating cost savings. Such a study will require the services of a specialized firm.

BHA consultant, Peter Roche solicited bids in conjunction with BHA staff. New Ecology, Inc. was found to be at the leading edge in these types of evaluations. Their list of clients is impressive.

Ms. Dugan asked if there would be any inconvenience for BHA residents of public housing related to this study. Mr. Dober said that there would be no such inconvenience.

On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Katz, a contract for energy and water efficiency studies at the BHA federal properties to New Ecology, Inc., in the amount of \$36,800.00 for a one-year term, was unanimously approved.

Miscellaneous Issues

BHA resident, Tim Byrne, thanked the BHA for installing key fobs at Sussman House. They are very convenient and work well. Mr. Byrne asked if there is a policy statement relevant to security cameras at the BHA. He thought that it would be helpful to have a sign that informed residents that the building was equipped with surveillance cameras.

Mr. Trietsch said that the BHA has such a policy statement and will get him a copy.

Mr. Byrne said that BHA resident, Bruce Wolff, asked him to bring up the issue of the cost of air conditioners for residents of Sussman House. Because of the casement window design at Sussman House, a specially sized air conditioner is needed and the cost of purchase and installation can approach \$800. Mr. Wolff believes that there should be some kind of subsidy to help Sussman House purchase air conditioners.

Mr. Trietsch said that Mr. Wolff has a legitimate issue. He wished the BHA had the resources to provide such a subsidy to Sussman House residents. The BHA will continue to look for a solution. If a resident has a serious health issue requiring air conditioning, BHA staff should be made aware of it.

BHA resident, Chanda Jones, said that she applied years ago to the BHA for both public housing and Section 8. She was offered and accepted a public housing unit, but she is frustrated that the wait for a Section 8 voucher is currently estimated at 15 years. She feels that there are maintenance issues in her unit that have not been addressed. Mr. Dober asked Ms. Jones to submit to the BHA Maintenance Department a list of items in her unit needing attention.

Ms. Jones asked about the last time the BHA conducted major capital upgrades to the units at the Egmont Street Apartments. Mr. Trietsch said that the BHA has been unable to address some of the needs in her building because the BHA does not have access to the necessary funding. Ms. Dugan said that BHA staff work extremely hard to keep the buildings in as good shape as possible.

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at Walnut Street Apartments on August 8, 2017 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 5:45 PM.