

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2019
90 Longwood Avenue
4:30 PM

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

Board Reports

Ms. Katz said that the Steps To Success fundraising gala will take place on April 24, 2019.

Ms. Dugan said that she had her income taxes prepared for free at the Walnut Street Apartments by the tax experts from the Allston/Brighton Community Financial Management Program. The staff was wonderful.

Ms. Dugan went to a File of Life program discussion at the Walnut Street Apartments. It was very well done, but only two residents attended. She would like to see Springwell outreach efforts continue.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- Two Maintenance Department positions have been filled after considerable effort by BHA Director of Maintenance, David Perry, and Mr. Dober. This Department is now close to being fully staffed.
- The well-regarded Springwell Supportive Housing Program Care Coordinator, Sarah Williams, has accepted a position utilizing her skills at a large property management company. Springwell has hired a new employee to succeed Ms. Williams.
- Staff is pleased that the CDBG Advisory Committee has recommended a grant of \$360,000 to the BHA this year. There is also the possibility that the BHA could receive some additional as yet uncommitted funding. This grant will go towards new front doors and locks at the two BHA Veterans developments.
- Staff was disappointed to learn that the Transition To Independent Living Program run by the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health (BCCMH) at the Trustman Apartments for more than 20 years will be closing as of October 1, 2019 due to the loss of funding. The BCCMH and the BHA explored options for a replacement organization to no avail.
- Next month the BHA will need to reapply for a waiver to opt out of DHCD's Regional Capital Assistance Team program which was set up to provide technical help to small public housing authorities manage capital improvement programs.
- Former BHA Commissioner, Frank Moroney, was honored at a big event this weekend for his many years of service to AFSCME.

Consent Agenda

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Cohen, the consent agenda was unanimously approved and authorized the following: the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on February 12, 2019; an amendment to the BHA's smoke-free housing policy, to adjust the minimum distance from BHA buildings for smoking from 20 to 25 feet, in order to comply with HUD regulations; Final Completion of the contract with Multitemp Mechanical Corporation for mechanical and electrical upgrades at federal properties; a contract to Garofalo Design Associates for architecture and engineering services, in the amount of \$5,720.00, for the exterior stairs repair project at 1057 Beacon Street; a contract to Atkinson Carpets, in the amount of \$8,990.00, to install a new carpet in the community room at 50 Pleasant Street; and a contract to Company Management Services, such services to be provided by the Brookline Housing Authority to 86 Dummer Manager LLC, in the amount of \$35,000.00 per year, accruing and increasing annually at 3% as further detailed in the attached memo from Maria Maffei and Patrick Dober and the Resolutions prepared by the BHA's law firm Nolan Sheehan Patten LLP.

Ms. Katz asked about the variance between the Multitemp cost estimate and the actual cost. Mr. Dober said that the cost estimate was an early number, and the cost increased as the scope of work expanded.

Ms. Dugan said that the BHA smoke-free housing policy reduced smoking but did not eliminate smoking in BHA buildings. Ms. Cohen said that complications in the enforcement of smoke-free housing policies is a big problem for all public housing authorities. Enforcement is a long process of education, encouragement, and lease action.

Women Thriving Presentation

Mr. Dober welcomed and introduced Women Thriving staff members Ann Brackett, Andrea Johnson, and Judith Stroum.

Ms. Brackett reported the following:

- Women Thriving began in 2012 under the umbrella of the BCCMH, and with funding from the Brookline Community Foundation.
- They are in the process of establishing a non-profit 501C3 called Women Thriving, Inc.
- They collaborate with over 30 organizations.
- Several working groups were established following a 2014 needs assessment.
- They collaborate closely with BHA social service providers, including Grace Watson, Danielle Mendola, and Megan Smith.
- Their mission is to promote learning, leadership development, and community involvement.

Ms. Stroum said that she is a BHA resident and was recruited by Women Thriving to work on planning and outreach, to work as a focus group leader, and as the newsletter editor. She has observed many BHA women, like herself, gaining skills and self-confidence through involvement in Women Thriving.

Ms. Cohen asked about participation levels. Ms. Brackett said that they have conducted 23 workshop series. 75 women have participated in at least one series, with many taking part in multiple series.

Ms. Cohen asked if they have established metrics for outcomes. Ms. Brackett said that they distribute questionnaires and conduct focus groups at the end of each workshop series. There have been many success stories emerging from their workshops and collaborations.

Ms. Johnson said that Women Thriving spearheaded the Thrive Guide, a comprehensive online guide to community resources.

BHA resident, Elizabeth Warshaw, asked if Women Thriving has considered programming for seniors. Ms. Johnson said that she would love to get a focus group going to discuss options for seniors.

RAD Update

BHA Director of Redevelopment, Maria Maffei, reported the following:

- Mass Housing has confirmed their bond commitment for 61 Park Street.
- Pre-construction meetings with Colantonio are going well.
- An RFQ has been issued for trade subcontractors.
- Construction drawings are expected to be substantially complete by mid-April.
- A design review meeting was held with the Planning Department, and a similar meeting is scheduled with the Fire Department.
- A kickoff meeting is scheduled with Beacon Residential Services and BHA staff regarding Section 42 compliance.
- Staff met with the Housing Advisory Board (HAB) this week to gain support for a waiver of building permit fees associated with this and future redevelopment projects.
- A lottery was held for residents who have expressed an interest in receiving a Section 8 voucher to help free up additional unit vacancies that will be necessary during construction.
- The line of credit provided by HAB for pre-development costs has been fully drawn down. This money will be repaid once the BHA received its developer fee.
- Ongoing meetings are being held with project financiers.
- Staff from the relocation consultant, HOU, are on site and have been meeting with residents.
- The BHA is anticipating a June or July closing followed by construction soon thereafter.

- The architect, BWA, is working on a preliminary scope of work for 90 Longwood Avenue.
- A bond allocation from Mass Housing is in the pipeline for 2020.
- An application has been submitted to the Attorney General for Construction Manager At Risk status.

Mr. Dober said that there has been impressive collaboration regarding the RAD plans among a team of staff from various BHA departments.

Ms. Warshaw said that building entry locks at 61 Park Street are often in disrepair due to heavy use. She asked if the installation of the planned key fob system could be timed so that it occurs at the beginning of the RAD construction schedule. Ms. Maffei said that she would investigate this possibility.

Section 8 Contract Award

BHA Director of Subsidized Housing and Applications, Carlos Hernandez, said that staff recommends that the Board approve the project basing of five units at 61 Park Street as part of the RAD redevelopment project. The BHA can project base up to 20% of its 955 vouchers. These project based vouchers are especially valuable at 61 Park, as they will bring in higher rents than other types of Section 8 assistance.

Ms. Cohen said that HUD area Fair Market Rents are going up by almost 22% due to a recent adjustment. These rents will also rise with regular annual adjustments.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Katz, the award of a 5-unit Section 8 Project Based Voucher contract, from the Brookline Housing Authority to 61 Park LLC, to support the renovation and operation of 61 Park Street under the RAD program, was unanimously approved.

Approval of FY 2020 Operating Budgets

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- The BHA attempts to be conservative in its budget projections, which are largely based on the first 10 months of the current fiscal year.
- The BHA budget for FY 2019 is expected to break even or end with a slight surplus.
- Payroll expenses were lower in FY 2019 due to staff variances in the Maintenance Department.
- The projected contribution of \$200,000 in 61 Park developer fee to the operating budget may be delayed until FY 2020 because the 61 Park project has not yet closed. Funds to substitute for this source of funds will be borrowed temporarily from the 86 Dummer Street developer fee account.
- The FY 2020 budget does not include the 61 Park Street RAD project. The BHA should have budget projections for 61 Park by mid-year and at that point a separate budget will be created for 61 Park LLC.
- Income for federal public housing is projected to be down in FY 2020 due to the vacant units being held for the RAD projects.
- Section 8 administrative fees should increase.
- Overall costs are steadily increasing, particularly contributions to the state retirement system which have been rising on average by 7%-8% per year.
- The BHA consolidated budget projects a \$198,020 deficit, with \$194,317 of this deficit accountable to federal public housing.
- Unrestricted reserves are projected to be \$4,581,272 by year end 2020.
- The creation of a BHA Director of Asset Management position is part of the staffing plan to support operational changes occurring with the RAD conversions. This new position will take a lead role in staff training and compliance with respect to RAD and tax credit regulations.

BHA resident, Valencia Sparrow, asked if the BHA needs to return its program reserves to its funding agencies. Mr. Dober said that the BHA holds these reserves.

Ms. Sparrow asked if utility cost increases are covered in the budgets. Mr. Dober said that utility costs are fully reimbursed in the public housing programs.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Katz, the BHA's FY 2020 operating budget projections were unanimously approved.

Public Comments and Other Business

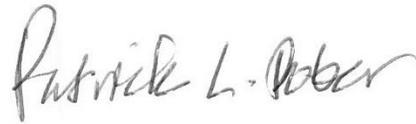
BHA resident, Eleanor Finn, asked if a housing authority owning its properties is a precondition for the RAD conversions. Mr. Dober said that the BHA owns its properties, which factors into RAD.

Ms. Sparrow brought up issues related to her apartment and Mr. Perry said that he would follow-up.

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at the Morse Apartments at a date to be determined.

On a motion from Ms. Katz and a second from Ms. Dugan, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 PM.

**A TRUE COPY
ATTEST**



**Patrick Dober
Executive Director**