

**BROOKLINE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2020, 4:30 PM
By Telephone Conference**

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

1. Board Reports. No votes

Ms. Katz noted that Steps to Success (STS) is having a fundraiser via Zoom on 10/26 with excellent speakers and can register anyone interested in attending.

2. Executive Director Report. No votes

Mr. Alperin reported the following:

There are two new columns on the monthly Vacancy Report (units ready to rent vs. units not ready to rent). This will provide Commissioners with more visibility into vacant units i.e., if they are waiting to be turned over by Maintenance or to be leased by Leased Housing.

Mr. Lalli, Maintenance Director, asked to point out that numbers on the Vacancy Report do not reflect some recent turnover work. At state developments, the number not ready to rent in High Street Veterans is now zero. The number not ready to rent in Egmont Street Veterans is now equal to the number not ready to rent. Trustman Apartments now has three vacant units not ready to rent, down from four. That totals five units not ready to rent.

Additionally, under Sussman House and the federal developments, two units not ready to rent has become one. The total has decreased from eight to seven in the federal developments: leading to a total of 13 units that are vacant and not ready to rent while staff finishes repairs.

The same report with the added not ready to rent or ready to rent comparisons for the two RAD developments is similar, but not really applicable because those units are under construction are vacant.

Two new rows have been added to the Rent Roll vs. Rent Collected reports with data on FY - YTD to give commissioners a better idea of how rent collections are performing for the whole fiscal year, as opposed to just a snapshot of one month at a time. The update on the two RAD developments (61 Park, LLC and 90 Longwood, LLC) is similar.

Mr. Hernandez will discuss this in more detail, but new Section 8 Mainstream Vouchers are a great opportunity to bring more disabled and low-income rental resources to the town of Brookline.

A formal application has been made to FEMA for \$119,583 in coronavirus relief funds to reimburse the Authority for 75% of related costs incurred through May 31, 2020. At the next meeting, when the monthly budget to actual comparisons is discussed, the Board can delve deeper into how coronavirus costs are impacting the budget in FY'21.

The transfer to Harpers 3rd party Payroll system is now complete. Time off accruals, pay stubs, and tax forms are now on the Harper system, and direct deposits come from Harper's as opposed to the Finance Department.

The Maintenance Department's new digital work order system had some software problems but should be fully operational in two months. This will allow for tracking of when work orders are inputted or called for, when they are received by Maintenance, and when they are fulfilled, etc.

The BHA met with STARRY, a 3rd party internet provider; recommended by both the Cambridge and Boston housing authorities as the best option to provide affordable Internet to residents. STARRY is proposing two options: 1) Provide residents 30 megabits per second download and upload Internet at a cost of \$15 per month with no subscription required; 2) If the BHA can provide an operating subsidy of \$137,376 annually (the equivalent of \$12 per unit a month), STARRY can provide all residents with free Internet. Residents would have to schedule the installation of the Internet in their unit and could upgrade to a 200 megabit download or upload option for an additional cost of \$38 per month. In addition, if the BHA allows STARRY to provide some rooftop antennas (necessary to provide their service), the BHA could obtain free Internet Wi-fi at 200 megabits per second in all BHA community rooms.

If the Authority decides to go with STARRY, a procurement RFP would have to be run. STARRY would provide the Authority with the procurement and RFP that they used with the Boston Housing Authority. It isn't a perfect solution but is a real option. The BHA must figure out if it is possible to cover these costs.

The Town alerted the BHA that retirement costs are expected to increase materially. This is true for all municipal entities. At least a 7 ½% increase in retirement contribution costs is expected.

A review of the BHA mission statement is underway with a process to review, discuss and update it. Resident and commissioner feedback will be solicited.

The Authority has some legacy HUD capital funds totaling \$13,000 which will be allocated toward redesigning the BHA website and potentially a logo. It is important to redo the BHA website and have a logo for external and internal presentation reasons. Additionally, the current website host, WIX, is not a very secure platform relative to new, more modern options.

An additional interim Board meeting will be held on October 29th at 4:30 p.m., in addition to the normal monthly Board meeting to deal with additional votes in a timely manner.

A summary of proposed BOC 2021 meeting dates was distributed. They are all scheduled for the 2nd Tuesday of the month, with the exception of 1/26/2020, at the request of the BHA accountant.

A calendar of BHA 2021 closings and holidays was provided in the Board package. Mr. Alperin noted a new addition; the BHA will be closed on Friday, June 18th, in observance of the Juneteenth holiday (recently adopted by the Commonwealth).

Comments/Questions:

Regarding the relief funds for expenses due to COVID-19, Ms. Sullivan asked how the FEMA reimbursement amount was determined. Mr. Alperin explained how the FEMA process works for this pandemic relief program. The BHA must pay 25% for pandemic related costs, and FEMA will pick up 75%. He added that HUD has allocated some Cares Act HCV admin funds and some public housing operating funds, which offset 100% of pandemic related costs. The Authority intends to use those funds

next for the period beginning June 1st. It will be around December 5th when most, if not all, of those funds will be used up.

Ms. Katz asked if there is any negotiating room on the \$137,000 with STARRY. Mr. Alperin said the next step is for STARRY is to come and tour the buildings to provide a more exact cost. If it is possible to extend the term of the rooftop antennas, the BHA would probably receive a little further discount from STARRY by guaranteeing that they could be on BHA roofs for a period of time longer than five years.

Resident Association Reports No votes, no report

Consent Agenda Vote to approve Consent Agenda, Items 5.A. – 5.G:

- A. Vote to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting held on September 15, 2020.
- B. DHCD Funding Award Vote to accept DHCD Emergency Reserves funds in the amount of \$136,000.
- C. Vote to approve change order #1 to the contract with Woodall Construction Co. in the amount of \$5,430.80 for the High Street Veterans retaining wall project. This will increase the contract from \$33,998.00 to \$39,428.80. We also recommend the Board approve substantial completion of the project.
- D. Vote to approve Change Order #2 with Thomas E. Snowden, Inc. in the amount of \$25,650.41 for the installation of the bathroom fans at Egmont Street and extend the contract by 136 days. The contract with Snowden will increase from \$455,472 to \$481,122.41.
- E. Vote to approve Change Order #1 in the amount of \$12,360 for the gutters, downspouts and snow rails project and extend the contract completion date by 56 days to November 13, 2020 at the ADA units at High Street Veterans and Egmont Street Veterans Apartments. The contract with S.I. Services, Inc. will increase from \$26,600 to \$38,960 and extend the contract completion date to November 13, 2020.
- F. Vote to approve Change Order #1 for the fire alarm upgrades at the Sussman House. This change order increases the contract amount by \$246.13 and adds 317 days to the construction contract. The contract with Levangie Electrical will increase from \$448,000 to \$448,246.13.
- G. Vote to approve a one-time server expense of \$22,395.28 and new monthly technology service fee in the amount of \$3,570.00 plus annual Microsoft licensing fees in the amount of \$10,440.00 to Terminal IT Solutions.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Katz, the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Sec. 8 Payment Standards

Vote to approve Section 8 Payment Standards for the 2021 calendar year as shown in the tables provided, at 100% of the HUD FY 2021 Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRs) for resident-based assistance utilized in Brookline and at 110% of the HUD FY 2021 Fair Market Rents (FMRs) for project-based units in Brookline.

Mr. Hernandez explained this is an annual process which must be brought to the Board for approval. Payment standards need to be set to reflect the levels of the newly revised FMR for both the current calendar year and the upcoming calendar year. Mr. Hernandez asked the Board to approve the revised payment standards for the maximum amount of rental assistance the BHA can provide based upon unit and family size.

This agenda item was unanimously approved on a motion by Ms. Sullivan and a second by Ms. Cohen.

Application for additional Mainstream Vouchers

Vote to approve the application for additional Mainstream Vouchers on a non-competitive basis. Mainstream Vouchers serve households that include a non-elderly person(s) with disabilities.

Mr. Hernandez said the BHA has a great opportunity to apply, in a non-competitive process, to increase the voucher program. HUD recently published a notice that said housing authorities can now apply for mainstream vouchers and vouchers that target people with disabilities (e.g., non-elderly, disabled households). These vouchers will work the same as Mobile Sec. 8 vouchers, and the BHA can be awarded up to 75 of them. Mr. Hernandez asked the Board to approve to the application.

This agenda item was unanimously approved on a motion by Ms. Cohen and a second by Ms. Katz.

Resident Services Report Director of Resident Services Danielle Mendola. No Votes.

Ms. Mendola reported that family engagement continues to be strong across the BHA partners. The BPS Food Services Department continues to provide free breakfast and lunch to three family developments, and there has been record breaking participation. This program has been approved by the USDA to continue through the school year. Additionally, Brookline Thrives, a service of the Brookline Food Pantry, distributed additional bags of snacks to families corresponding with the public schools' food distribution schedule.

Resident Services is working closely with the Brookline Center and STS to distribute thermometers, masks, and a second round of backpacks and school supplies to children preschool to grade 3. Approximately 100 children have been served this month.

The Resident Services' Fall newsletter was distributed electronically, with information on how to request and submit election ballots and vote in person. Residents were also encouraged to respond to the U.S. Census through Oct. 31st. The Census Bureau reports Brookline's response is on par with other communities nationally.

Springwell continues to send out monthly newsletters and make regular phone check ins with seniors.

Resident Services started promoting upcoming technology education classes. Approximately 50 residents are interested in participating so far. Classes will proceed once the backordered Chromebooks arrive. They are also working with STS to work on any access related needs that BHA students may have.

Development Report Director of Development Maria Maffei. No Votes.

61 Park LLC-There have been many discussions with the OPM and Colantonio regarding the project being behind schedule and over budget. Some progress is being made, and the rehab process is picking up. Colantonio now has 28 vacant units that they can work on, which helps them pick up the pace. The project is expected to be completed in late March/early April, which mostly reflects the COVID delays. Landscaping, work on the front lobby, and furnishings are now underway. Ms. Maffei had a positive call with Boston Financial and is hoping for some improvement in the pricing adjustment.

90 Longwood, LLC-Construction is proceeding nicely, and progress is being made on office furnishings. Ms. Brown is working with Terminal to bring the right technology to staff desktops most effectively. Resident relocation continues, and the Authority is about to relocate the last household to whom they have offered Section 8 assistance (to free up vacancies).

Col. Floyd- A good brainstorming session was held with senior housing representatives regarding what needs there are in the community. Ms. Maffei plans to bring a recommendation for a development consultant to the interim meeting later in the month. There are two strong candidates and the RFP for relocations services has been extended for one week.

Ms. Cohen wanted to clarify the pricing with Boston Financial at 61 Park Street LLC to make sure all the Commissioners are on the same page. The tax credit investor and 61 Park Street, LLC were anticipating being able to take tax credits in this calendar year. However, because of the COVID-19 delay, they won't be able to take tax credits until next year. In the operating agreement, this results in a downward adjustment on the tax credit equity pricing. The BHA is working with Boston Financial to see what can be done with Santander as an investor. Their current proposal is a 2.1 cent downward adjustment, which has a value of a little north of \$250,000. The BHA is awaiting updated pricing.

Ms. Cohen asked if Colantonio can expedite their construction schedule in some way. Ms. Maffei replied that delays were also due to the project's OPM. Mr. Anderson explained the construction industry is struggling in Boston to find additional laborers and must get by with existing crews. Colantonio would probably push back on any claims that they were responsible for delays, saying there were external conditions for which they are not responsible.

Change Order Vote

Vote to approve Change Order in the amount of \$50,064.65 for an alternative shower enclosure product to be used at Morse Apartments due to the COVID-related discontinuation of the specified and approved product.

Mr. Anderson explained that the BHA had previously used a shower enclosure that was fiberglass, but the factory that made them shut down due to COVID-19. Instead, an alternate, slightly more aesthetically pleasing shower enclosure product will be used at an additional \$500/unit must be used.

This agenda item was unanimously approved on a motion by Ms. Sullivan and a second by Ms. Katz.

Contract Award

Vote to award hourly fee contract, not to exceed \$10,000, to Noble, Wickersham & Heart LLP (NWH) for an initial two-year term, renewable for one one-year extension, to assist the BHA in negotiating and drafting Phase One of the architectural contract for the redevelopment of Col. Floyd Apartments with Davis Square Architects.

Ms. Maffei said this is a new contract and proposed this is not simply for Phase One with Davis Square Architects, but also to help negotiate any construction contracts for any Section 18 project. Their rate is a blended rate of \$275/hour and Ms. Maffei estimates five to seven hours of their services will be needed, at most, for the architectural contract for Colonel Floyd. The engagement will be broader than just Phase One of their services for. An amendment to make it broader was made by Ms. Cohen.

This agenda item was unanimously approved on a motion by Ms. Cohen and a second by Ms. Sullivan.

Contract Award

Vote to approve an hourly fee contract, not to exceed \$5,000, to Nixon Peabody LLP (NP) for an initial two-year term, renewable for one one-year extension, to assist the BHA in drafting a Home Rule Petition to exempt the Colonel Floyd project from the Chapter 149 Public Procurement Law.

Mr. Alperin agreed to the fee proposal. The hope is to exempt Colonel Floyd from this law because it will enable the BHA to have greater confidence that a more energy efficient building could be built; where the Authority can control all the subcontractors on the project in a more holistic manner and perhaps even save on construction costs. The BHA needs NP to help them draft this petition to the State legislation.

This agenda item was unanimously approved on a motion by Ms. Sullivan and a second by Ms. Cohen.

Contract Award

Vote to approve a contract for architectural services to Richard Alvord Architects in the amount of \$15,300 for the roof replacement project at Walnut Street low-rise Apartments and roof repairs at the Colonel Floyd Apartments.

Ms. Cowan said that staff would like to do roofs for economies of scale; only making repairs to Col. Floyd since it will be demolished in a few years. Two firms responded, Alvord was ranked #1 and Garafalo Design was ranked #2. Ms. Cowan recommended awarding the contract to Alvord Architects.

The agenda item was unanimously approved on a motion by Ms. Cohen and a second by Ms. Katz.

Other Business

N/A

Interim Board Meeting

An interim board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 29, 2020, to focus on the Col Floyd project. The regular BOC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday November 10, 2020.

Move to Executive Session

Mr. Alperin said it is necessary to enter Executive Session to discuss negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Katz, a roll call vote was taken to move to Executive Session to discuss negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions, as holding such discussion in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect upon the negotiating position of the BHA, and to reconvene the public meeting at the conclusion of the Executive Session in order to adjourn. The motion was approved. The votes were as follows:

Ayes	Nays
Mr. Jacobs	none
Ms. Dugan	
Ms. Katz	
Ms. Sullivan	
Ms. Cohen	

At 6:17 the Commissioners reconvened the public session.

Adjournment Vote

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Sullivan, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 PM.

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ATTEST



Michael Alperin

Executive Director