

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 11, 2009
226 High Street
5:15 PM

The Meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Trietsch at 5:25 PM. Those present included Ms. Dugan, Mr. Jacobs and Ms. Sullivan. Mr. Trietsch complimented the BHA Maintenance Department on how good the development looks.

Mr. Cloonan reported that the family 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom waiting lists have been opened from June 1, 2009 through June 30, 2009. The BHA is receiving 60 to 80 applications per day. It is interesting to note that applications downloaded from the internet are being returned at a rate of 2 to 1 compared to the applications picked up or disseminated from the central office.

Mr. Cloonan said that the occupancy of St. Aidan's is an ongoing effort. Six of the units will receive BHA Section 8 assistance. Three of these units will house Mass Rehab clients. Five of the tenants have already been selected.

Mr. Cloonan explained that a lot of attention is going to job creation in the HUD stimulus grants. Brookline is served by ABCD in Boston as well as the state employment office in Norwood. The BHA is working to bring those training and career development resources to our residents. The Town is also preparing to fund the Next Steps program so that among other enhancements, the coordinator can become a full time position.

Mr. Cloonan added that the Brookline Foundation will be granting the BHA \$2,500 to expand its computer access program at the elderly high rise buildings.

Mr. Trietsch said that there seems to be an unusual number of management issues this month. He asked if this was a recurring trend in the summer. Mr. Cloonan said that there are always challenging management issues to be dealt with ranging from illegal pets to violent incidents.

A Trustman resident asked if any of the stimulus grant education assistance money could help her in getting a special license. Mr. Cloonan said that she should contact Carol Lynch from the Next Steps Program.

Agnes Rogers, the Town-Wide Resident Association President, said there was nothing to report. She said it has been the quietest period she has seen at the developments in years.

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Mr. Jacobs, the consent agenda: to adopt the minutes of the regular meeting held on May 6, 2009; to adopt the minutes of the executive session held on May 6, 2009; to adopt the amendments to the BHA Pet Policy, including reasonable accommodation language; to adopt the electronic poll that authorized the Chairman to sign 6 CDBG contract time extensions; to

authorize the Chairman to sign 2010 CDBG contracts with the Town of Brookline for roof replacement at 1057 Beacon Street and entry windows at the Col. Floyd Apartments; and to authorize the payment in lieu of taxes to the Town of Brookline per various development agreements in the amount of \$75,200.36 as per attached, was unanimously approved.

Ms. Dugan reported that negotiations with AFSCME went fabulously. There were 2 negotiating meetings. She felt the union was very reasonable with their requests and they understood that the BHA was doing the best it could to accommodate them.

Mr. Jacobs asked for details about the structure of a 2 year contract with a wage reopener. Mr. Cloonan explained that he prefers full union contract negotiations every two years with provisions for annual wage negotiations. In this way, the BHA can evaluate the financial impact of wages on an annual basis and negotiate more responsibly.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Mr. Jacobs, the contract with AFSCME Council 93 as outlined was unanimously approved.

Mr. Cloonan said that a couple of months ago, the Board approved \$22,500 in funding each year for 2 years to the Steps To Success Program from the management improvement section of the stimulus capital improvement grant. The plan was submitted on May 2, 2009. HUD later rejected it because they didn't find it consistent with the questions and answers that were posted on their web site on May 15, 2009.

Mr. Cloonan said that he would like to protest HUD's decision, but he doesn't want to hold up the \$788,000 stimulus grant which needs to be obligated by mid March, 2010. The BHA is ready to go with some of the work items and has other work items in the design stage. He recommends amending the grant to zero out the management improvement items, while pushing forward work on the low rise buildings at the Walnut Street Apartments. In this way there will be an approved plan to get started with. The BHA could prepare an appeal and go in with a revised budget at a later date.

At the same time, Mr. Cloonan would like to honor the BHA's commitment to the School Committee to provide financial support to the Steps To Success Program. Since the year end fiscal statements show that the BHA is doing better than expected, the \$22,500 for Steps To Success can come from other federal accounts showing a surplus. **On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Sullivan, adoption of the amended 2008 Annual Plan and a change to the contract proration of the Steps To Success Program effective July 1, 2009, was unanimously approved.**

Mr. Cloonan explained that the Board last month was presented with the narratives of the 2009 Annual Plan, but wanted to see it in its original document format. It includes sections on finance, administration, as well as the capital plan for 2009 and a 5 year capital plan covering 2009 through 2013. There is fungibility within the plan, so that work items can be moved forward or back depending on changing needs.

Ms. Sullivan asked if there were any areas of inflexibility in an approved annual plan. Mr. Cloonan said that if significant change was desired in the plan, resident comment would have to be solicited and an amendment request would then be forwarded to HUD.

A Trustman resident said that Section 8 has a self sufficiency program where money is put aside for buying a house. She wondered if public housing has such a program. Mr. Cloonan said that the BHA does not have a public housing self sufficiency program. He suggested that a Trustman resident contact the Brookline Planning Department, as it has programs to assist in affordable homeownership. Mr. Jacobs added that a Trustman resident could find out more about greater Boston affordable homeownership lotteries at the website www.chapa.org.

On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Sullivan, authorization to submit the 2009 Annual Plan to HUD and to authorize the Chair to sign the PHA Certificate of Compliance was unanimously approved.

Mr. Cloonan said that he will be asking John Marotto to attend a future meeting to discuss the 2009 fiscal close. It was a better year than expected on the federal side, aided by the drop in utility costs. This was also the first time the BHA accounted for the central office cost center where it earned income through charge offs. The central office cost center funds are unrestricted.

Mr. Cloonan said that state reserves increased as well, although they are still woefully low. Mr. Cloonan does not expect an increase in operating budget funding.

Mr. Cloonan explained that there is a 120 page guidebook for the competitive stimulus grant. A revision to the guidelines was released last week. He is recommending that the BHA apply to the Town for CDBG money to expand the Next Steps program. The Town has indicated that it would be willing to give the BHA up to \$25,000 for this effort. Under the CDBG energy efficiency category, the Town likes the ideas of: replacing the heating system at 11 Harris Street; replacing windows at the Brown Street condominiums; and replacing windows at 1057 Beacon Street.

Mr. Trietsch said that it is important that the money being offered by the Town meets the priorities established by the BHA for capital needs.

Mr. Cloonan said that the capital needs money from the Town would fund priority work in state public housing that the BHA would not otherwise be able to fund in the next 10 years. The employment training money from the Town would enhance the Next Steps program services beyond what the BHA is capable of offering today.

Mr. Cloonan said that he hasn't quite figured out how to approach the other two stimulus grant categories, particularly with respect to dollar matching. CDBG funding might be able to support window replacement at the Sussman House in a dollar match fashion, in combination with an energy performance contract. In the elderly/disabled accessibility

category, ideas include ramping, curb cuts; grab bars, wheel-in showers and automatic doors.

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Sullivan, authorization to submit grants under the HUD competitive stimulus funding program was unanimously approved.

A Trustman resident said that she had a sizable rent credit on her BHA rent account; however, it was diminishing because her son was not paying his portion of the rent. She felt that her rent portion should be treated separately from her son's portion of the rent.

Mr. Trietsch explained that the Board deferred to Mr. Cloonan for an answer to this issue.

A Trustman resident complained that her son was being unfairly barred from entering BHA property because of a criminal case against him for attacking a tow truck driver on the property. She said that her son went to court and pleaded to misdemeanor assault, and received probation. She said that she disputes the facts relevant to the case and feels that racism played a part in the charges brought against her son.

Mr. Cloonan said that he conducted an extensive investigation regarding a Trustman resident assertions and concluded that the BHA should not revoke the no trespass notice against her son. He advised a Trustman resident that she could go to court if she wished to pursue the matter further.

Mr. Jacobs told a Trustman resident that the Board reviewed her letters and that it backs Mr. Cloonan's decisions regarding her issues.

Mr. Cloonan reported that the Trustman Apartments comprehensive modernization job has been put on hold by the state. The BHA has been working on this project for about 10 years and expected it would be going out to bid at this time. However the state is contemplating a cut to its bonding cap of between 5% and 20% and it is reprioritizing funding for 2010. This project is not on their list for 2010 and Mr. Cloonan doesn't know how it will fare in 2011.

Mr. Jacobs asked how DHCD makes determinations regarding its capital funding priorities. Mr. Cloonan said that the state will probably be able to take on an additional \$30 million worth of projects that are not already in the pipeline. They are prioritizing about a hundred small projects, with large projects being pushed to the back of the list.

Mr. Cloonan said that he is assembling a strong case to justify going forward with the entire Trustman Apartments modernization package. The BHA anticipates it will be invited to DHCD sometime in the next couple of weeks to discuss this issue. If necessary, the BHA could suggest alternatives such as phasing the work or cutting out some of the work items.

Mr. Jacobs confirmed that the next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 14, 2009 at 4:30 PM at the Egmont Street Veterans Apartments.

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Sullivan, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.