

Brookline Housing Authority – Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

Date: October 14, 2025

Time Called to Order: 4:35PM

Chair: Michael Jacobs

Present: Michael Jacobs, Sue Cohen, Judy Katz, Kimberley Richardson, Karen Rojas

2. Board Reports

No board reports were presented.

3. Executive Director's Report, Ben Stone

Staffing:

- Two employees in their probationary period departed this month.
- One replacement position has been posted.
- The Assistant Director of Property Management position will be posted this week, focused on state public housing programs.
- Congratulations to Joyce Tien and Sugei Ramirez on their promotions from Occupancy Specialist to Leased Housing Manager.
- Associate Director of Redevelopment, Amelia Youngstrom, will be on leave for three months after the birth of her baby boy.

Parking Policies:

- BHA will reclaim parking spots previously leased to SIS Property Management, effective December 8.
- These spaces are expected to help alleviate resident parking issues once a current capital project is complete.
- Loss of approximately \$30K in annual revenue to BHA

Policy Updates:

- BHA staff presented two policies for board approval: an updated procurement policy and a new transfer policy.
- A resident handbook is being developed to summarize all policies in a resident-friendly format.

Resident Engagement:

- Resident meetings were held across properties in September, with varied attendance.
- Efforts are underway to improve participation by adjusting meeting times and notices.

Emergency Preparedness:

- Sheila organized an emergency planning workshop at Town Hall, hosted by MAPC and Emergency Management Services.
- A new resident messaging system for emergency notifications (via text, email, and voicemail) was successfully tested during a recent fire alarm outage. Some residents mistook the alerts for scams; better communication and education are planned.

Resident Services:

- Official launch of the collaboration with BCF and UpTogether for the Guaranteed Income Pilot.

- Strong enrollment progress in the FSS and SSP economic mobility programs.
- Upcoming collaboration with MassHire on November 3 to connect residents to career opportunities.

Modernization:

- BHA staff finalized draft state capital plan and will be reviewed by public and board in December, with approval planned for January.
- Fewer projects were funded due to reduced matching funds from HLC.

Two CPA grant applications are being submitted for roof and window replacements. Redevelopment:

- *32 Marion Street*: Project delayed due to Eversource not completing power work. Construction and lease-up will be delayed by 2–3 months. This delay may impose substantial costs.
- *Walnut High Street*: Value engineering completed; costs have been reduced, and the project is moving forward toward a state funding application.

Federal Funding:

- Section 8 funds continue to flow despite a federal shutdown.
- Shortfall funding remains uncertain, with partial funding received for the mainstream program.
- The total funding gap has decreased but remains significant.

Operations:

- Rent collections remain steady, with large payments received through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program to reduce arrears.
- Vacancy rates remain low.
- Reporting on maintenance work orders has resumed: approximately 1,200 work orders were generated in September, 270 of which were resident related.
- Average closure times: under 2 days for routine work orders and under 1 day for emergencies.

Discussion:

Judy asked for clarification regarding staffing changes. It was confirmed that the part-time property manager position is being replaced with a full-time Assistant Director of Property Management.

Discussion was held about the need for an Assistant Director of Property Management to provide middle management support given the number of properties and staff being supervised. Budget constraints within the state programs have made this challenging. The proposed position would cover Trustman properties for approximately 2.5–3 days per week and supervise other state property managers the rest of the week. Currently, coverage at Trustman is maintained by Ana (3 days/week) and Kiki from Resident Services (2 days/week).

4. Public Comment

BHA High Street Veterans Resident

Raised concerns about the policy requiring young adults who have graduated high school or college to pay the “head of household” charge when living with parents. Argued this policy is unfair and prevents young adults from saving money and breaking the cycle of poverty. Requested board review of the policy, which is set by state law and regulation.

Egmont Resident

Described an issue involving parking sticker issuance by staff. Reported inconsistency between verbal guidance and the written parking policy. Requested more accessible resident meeting times and hybrid options (Zoom). Suggested moving public comments to the end of meetings. The board agreed to discuss under "Other Business."

Executive Director, Ben Stone confirmed receipt of her email and will review the situation and respond.

Walnut Apartments Resident

Asked about the impact of 32 Marion Street construction delays on a planned November 4 apartment tour.

Executive Director, Ben Stone, confirmed tours would proceed as planned, with model units staged despite lack of permanent power.

5. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

September 16, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes.

B. Final Completion – Trustman Apartments final completion with New England Builders Contractors, Inc. for the basement settlement project at Trustman Apartments (Amory Street building).

C. Substantial Completion – Basement Settlement Project the Amory Street basement settlement project.

D. Potential Change Order #157 – 32 Marion Street Change Order #157 for 32 Marion Street in the amount of \$98,604.80.

E. Potential Change Order #142 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #142 in the amount of \$1,597.12.

F. Potential Change Order #145 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #145 in the amount of \$32,464.00.

G. Potential Change Order #148 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #148 in the amount of \$3,796.50.

H. Potential Change Order #149 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #149 in the amount of \$14,194.23.

I. Potential Change Order #151 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #151 in the amount of \$45,811.49.

J. Potential Change Order #152 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #152 in the amount of \$10,317.38.

K. Potential Change Order #153 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #153 in the amount of \$2,942.98.

L. Potential Change Order #154 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #154 in the amount of \$7,858.23.

M. Potential Change Order #159 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #159 in the amount of \$4,744.43.

N. Potential Change Order #160 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #160 in the amount of \$17,617.15.

O. Potential Change Order #161 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #161 in the amount of \$5,739.98.

P. Potential Change Order #162 – 32 Marion Street Potential Change Order #162 in the amount of \$4,148.29.

Motion to Approve: Karen Rojas

Seconded by: Sue Cohen

Vote: Passed unanimously

6. Section 8 Payment Standards

Approved new payment standards for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, effective January 1, 2026. Adjustments align with 90–110% of HUD’s fair market rent guidelines. Tenants in active leases will not be affected by reductions.

Motion to Approve: Sue Cohen

Seconded by: Karen Rojas

Vote: Passed unanimously

7. Walnut High Redevelopment (10 Walnut – Phase 1)

Approved acceptance of a \$3.75 million CPA grant for Phase 1 of the Walnut High redevelopment (10 Walnut). Funds will be loaned from BHA to the project’s LLC entity for tax purposes. Phase 2 at 22 Walnut planned for future development.

Motion to Approve: Kimberley Richardson

Seconded by: Sue Cohen

Vote: Passed unanimously

8. Updated BHA Transfer Policy

Policy formalizes transfer priorities (over housed, under housed, medical, and domestic violence). BHA to pay moving costs for over housed transfers.

Discussion raised equity concerns about rent penalties and family displacement; board agreed to revisit the policy after implementation.

Motion to Approve: Kimberley Richardson

Seconded by: Sue Cohen

Vote: Passed unanimously

9. Updated BHA Procurement Policy

Aligns with 2025 thresholds set by the MA Inspector General. Allows Executive Director to approve procurements and change orders up to \$50,000 without a board vote but subject to review. Clarifies change order and redevelopment procedures.

Motion to Approve: Kimberley Richardson

Seconded by: Karen Rojas

Vote: Passed unanimously

10. Other Business

The board agreed to move the Public Comment section to occur immediately before "Other Business" in future agendas.

11. Upcoming Meetings

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, November 18 (rescheduled from November 11 due to Veterans Day).

Executive Session

- The board voted to enter executive session to discuss potential litigation related to federal public housing operating subsidies.
- It was stated that the board would only return to open session to adjourn.
- Roll-call vote: Unanimous approval.
- Entered Executive Session: 5:27 PM
- Ended Executive Session: 6:09 PM

Returned to Regular Board Meeting: Vote to Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn: Kimberley Richardson

Seconded by: Karen Rojas

Time Adjourned: 6:10 PM

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ATTEST



Ben Stone, Executive Director