

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2019
90 Longwood Avenue
4:30 PM

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.

Board Reports

Ms. Katz said that the Steps To Success gala on April 26, 2019 was a successful and enjoyable event with over 250 people attending, impressive speakers, and a good deal of money raised.

Election of Officers

This being the Annual Meeting, Mr. Jacobs asked the Board to take up the business of electing Board Officers for the next year. **On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Dugan, Mr. Jacobs was nominated for and unanimously approved to be Chairman. On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Katz, Ms. Sullivan was nominated for and unanimously approved to be Vice Chairman. On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Cohen, Ms. Dugan was nominated for and unanimously approved to be Treasurer.**

Executive Director Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- Congratulations to the newly elected Board Officers and thank you to all BHA Commissioners for their collaborative efforts on behalf of the BHA.
- High Street Veterans Apartments exterior stairs and playground upgrades are underway.
- BHA front office work flow and safety and security upgrades are scheduled to commence this coming weekend.
- The BHA has received official notification from DHCD of a grant of \$100,000 to install bathroom ventilation fans at Egmont Street Veterans Apartments.
- The Town of Brookline has awarded an additional \$86,000 in CDBG funding to the BHA, increasing this year's grant from \$349,000 to \$430,000.
- BHA ESOL Director, Danielle Mendola, has put together the second quarterly BHA resident services report. It shows a nine percent increase in service delivery over the last reporting period. Over time, Ms. Mendola and others will continue to work on the reporting metrics.

Ms. Cohen complemented the BHA on the richness of the array of services it offers to residents. Mr. Jacobs agreed that the scope of services is impressive.

Mr. Jacobs asked about the large number of vacancies reported at Egmont Street Veterans Apartments last month.

BHA Director of Maintenance, David Perry, said that a fire at Trustman Apartments displaced two households who were relocated temporarily into vacant units at Egmont Street Apartments. These units had been prepared for occupancy. This skewed the vacancy numbers upward for a couple of months.

BHA Director of Leased Housing, Carlos Hernandez, added that selecting applications from the recently installed state centralized waiting list system (CHAMP) is proving to be a complicated and burdensome process. This has led to more lengthy vacancy periods for some state units.

Special Guest - Ian Lang

Mr. Dober introduced Ian Lang, Executive Director of the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health (BCCMH). Mr. Lang reported the following:

- He has been the Director of the BCCMH for the past year and a half. Prior to that, he had spent much of his professional career as a mental health services administrator in Rhode Island.
- The work that the BHA does is extraordinary, and the BCCMH takes a similar all-encompassing approach to serving its clients.
- The BCCMH is part in parcel of the community; not just a private mental health provider. It provides both center-based clinical work and service/case management in the field.
- Over 4,000 community members were provided services from the BCCMH last year, with clients ranging the entire age spectrum.

Healthy Lives Program

- BCCMH is thrilled to move the Healthy Lives program, which offers coordinated medical and mental health services, into the BHA resident community. The program to this point has been based in community health centers and mental health centers.
- The medical system typically addresses patient needs in a silo. Healthy Lives can address housing related concerns as well as mental health and medical health concerns.
- In this coordinated care delivery system, clients do not have to give up their medical providers.
- The hope is that the venture of the Healthy Lives program into a BHA residential based model will enable BCCMH to find additional income streams to support the program.

Mental Health Care Trends

- Mental health care provision is going through a critical period where revenue does not meet expenses.
- Approximately 50% of providers do not accept insurance, leading to more out of pocket expenses for consumers.
- BCCMH accepts all types of insurance, opening services to lower income consumers.
- For the first time in memory, BCCMH has a waiting list for services because there are not enough clinicians to meet the demand.

Ms. Sullivan asked why there is a limit of 25 BHA clients who can enroll in Healthy Lives. Mr. Lang said that the focus of the program will be on positive outcomes, which can drive funding. BCCMH will need to find new ways of measuring success, such as reduced incidents of evictions, now that the program is entering a residential based setting.

Ms. Cohen suggested that Mr. Lang might be interested in learning more about the “Housing Is” initiative of the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities. Some of their focus has to do with data sharing. Mr. Lang said that he will follow up with Ms. Cohen on this suggestion.

BHA resident, Elizabeth Warshaw, asked how Healthy Lives plans to reach isolated residents. Mr. Lang said that having staff out in the BHA resident community is key. BCCMH staff is collaborating extensively with BHA staff on referrals, which is also key.

Ms. Katz asked about the integration of BCCMH's BHA directed and Brookline Public Schools directed services. Mr. Lang said that there are regular collaborative meetings at the schools that involve Steps To Success, the BHA, the Brookline Police, etc. The goal is to collaborate to the greatest extent possible.

Mr. Lang said that as the BHA is aware they are regrettably closing the Transition to Independent Living Program, which has housed at risk young men at the Trustman Apartments for decades. The program has lost its funding due to HUD's move toward permanent housing and away from transitional housing programs. Staff is working toward relocating a small number of current program participants before October 1, 2019.

Consent Agenda

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Cohen, the consent agenda was unanimously approved and authorized the following: the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on April 16, 2019; and submission to HUD of the annual self-certification of compliance under the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP).

RAD and 61 Park Street Update

Mr. Dober said that the largest number of residents to date came to a meeting at 61 Park Street for an update on the progress of the redevelopment project. BHA staff, Baker Wohl Associates, and HOU did a fine job discussing issues relevant to the scope of work, program eligibility and resident recertification, and Section 8 and Tax Credit programs.

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

61 Park Street.

- The BHA has received HUD's official approval of the RAD Conversion Commitment (RCC).
- The full package of closing documents is due to HUD by mid-June.
- Sub-trade qualifications are being finalized.
- Construction documents are 90% complete.
- Permit applications have been submitted to the Town's Building Department and Fire Department.
- At this point in the Board meeting, Ms. Maffei gave a Power Point presentation illustrating the planned unit and common area design features.

90 Longwood Avenue.

- The schematic design is complete, and a cost estimate is pending.
- CHAP (Commitment to Enter in Housing Assistance Payments) applications for all properties have been submitted.

Mr. Dober said that the process of training BHA staff on Section 8 and Tax Credit compliance is ongoing.

Section 8 Update

Mr. Hernandez said that HUD is expanding eligibility for the designation of Small Area FMRs, which allow rent levels specific to zip codes. The Boston Housing Authority is exploring this possibility. The BHA will look to see if it might be a good fit for Brookline. The BHA wants to expand opportunities, but it does not want to dictate the market and needs to be mindful of funding constraints.

FY 2019 Year End Budgets

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- The BHA has completed its financial books for fiscal year 2019 and once completed, DHCD requires the Board to certify end of year budget results.
- The last step in this cycle is an independent auditor preparing a certified audit.
- Fiscal year 2019 essentially broke even, with a net surplus of \$348,000 across all programs. The net surplus was \$164,000 when including funds contributed to operations from earned Dummer Street fees.
- The Central Office Cost Center (COCC) was the only BHA program that did not run a surplus.
- Rental income in the federal public housing program was down due to several vacant units being held to allow for the temporary relocation of households during the upcoming RAD redevelopment work at 61 Park Street.
- Staff had some success in maximizing “other income” sources such as excess parking rental fees.
- Maintenance costs have increased as buildings have aged. Contracted costs, particularly trash and recycling, have increased considerably.
- Program reserves continue to grow and remain at an adequate level.

Ms. Cohen asked if the BHA has considered partnering with the Town to reduce trash and recycling costs. Mr. Dober said that the BHA has reached out to the Town about paying them a fee to handle the BHA’s trash and recycling needs, but the Town does not desire to increase their staff and equipment.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Sullivan, the budget results for DHCD programs were unanimously approved.

Other Business and Public Comments

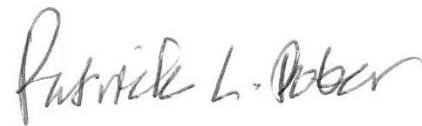
BHA resident, Tim Byrne, commended BHA staff for upgrades to the Sussman House community room. He asked if the BHA would consider upgrading the community room television, as the old one is dysfunctional, and Mr. Dober agreed to do this. Mr. Byrne asked if a picnic table located outside of the laundry room could be repositioned, and Mr. Dober said that staff would consider his suggestion.

Mr. Byrne asked about BHA policy regarding the disposition of resident owned air conditioners left in units after a resident vacates. He felt that if someone inherits an air conditioner from a previous resident, they should not be able to sell it for a profit. BHA Assistant Executive Director, Matthew Baronas, said that when residents purchase air conditioners at Sussman House, they need to be special ordered because window dimensions at Sussman House do not accept standard sized air conditioner units. This makes these uniquely sized air conditioners very expensive for residents at Sussman House and makes them valueless for standard sized windows. Considering these factors, the BHA has a policy of leaving abandoned but functioning air conditioners units in place at Sussman House and offering to transfer ownership of the air conditioners to incoming residents.

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at Trustman Apartments at 4:00 PM on June 11, 2019.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Dugan, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 PM.

**A TRUE COPY
ATTEST**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick L. Dober". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a distinct 'L'.

**Patrick Dober
Executive Director**