

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 22, 2019
190 Harvard Street
4:30 PM

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

Executive Director Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- The fall BHA resident services newsletter has been published and distributed to BHA residents.
- Congratulations to former BHA Receptionist, Ruth Diaz, who has been promoted to Program Representative in the Applications Department.
- Approximately sixty percent of the BHA's administrative staff are learning new procedures for tax credit financed developments. Members of the BHA Finance, Applications, Section 8, and Management Departments are exceeding expectations with respect to this transition.
- Construction highlights: the fire alarm upgrade work in occupied units at Sussman House has commenced; the Egmont Street Veterans Apartments bathroom exhaust fan project is out to bid; and the front entry door and lock replacement project at High Street Veterans and Egmont Street Veterans Apartments is on track to commence in early 2020.

Select Board Member, Raul Fernandez

Mr. Jacobs welcomed Mr. Fernandez. Mr. Fernandez stated the following:

- He has lived in Brookline for seven years and was elected to the Select Board in May after serving as a Town Meeting Member.
- He is Associate Dean for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Boston University.
- He grew up in public housing in New York City, and understands what it is like to live in under-resourced communities.
- Brookline is an affluent community. As such, he believes that those who live in Brookline have a responsibility to take down borders and to bring more diversity to the community.
- He recently learned that just 19 households with Section 8 mobile vouchers have been able to lease in Brookline. Thankfully, the BHA is making changes to correct this inequity.
- He wants the BHA to know that it has a partner on the Select Board in him who will work with them to preserve its housing and to create new housing opportunities for low-income households.

Mr. Jacobs said that such positive and supportive sentiments are good to hear. Ms. Cohen said that she is appreciative that Mr. Fernandez is invested in learning the particulars of public housing programs, as the BHA needs additional resources and strong advocacy.

Mr. Dober invited Mr. Fernandez to the next Brookline Community Foundation-sponsored meeting of community organizations. The intent of these meetings is to promote collaborations.

Section 8 Administrative Plan Amendments

BHA Director of Subsidized Housing and Applications, Carlos Hernandez, explained that new language is needed in the BHA Section 8 Administrative Plan in order to implement Small Area Fair Market Rents.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Katz, an amendment to the Section 8 Administrative Plan to allow the BHA to implement Payment Standards based on the HUD-published Small Area Fair Market Rents, as further described in the accompanying memo and attachments from Carlos Hernandez, was unanimously approved.

Section 8 Payment Standards

Mr. Hernandez explained that Section 8 payment standards are set by HUD on an annual basis. This year, the BHA is asking the Board to set separate standards for project-based vouchers and resident-based vouchers as follows:

- The regional payment standards for project-based vouchers (110% of Boston metro region Fair Market Rents).
- Separate Small Area Fair Market Rents for resident-based vouchers utilized in Brookline (100% of the standards set to Brookline zip codes).

For example, the BHA's current two-bedroom existing payment standard based on 110% of the Boston metro region Fair Market Rent is \$2,194. If adopted, the new regional payment standard would rise to \$2,542. However, if a separate resident-based voucher Small Area Fair Market Rent is adopted, it would rise to \$3,340. For households who want to live in Brookline, this new project based Small Area Fair Market Rent should offer dramatically more opportunities.

Ms. Dugan asked if the new payment standards would affect RAD rents. Mr. Dober said that the higher project-based payment standards will generate more money for the BHA's upcoming redevelopment projects and not increase resident rent payments.

Ms. Cohen praised Mr. Hernandez for coming up with the concept of separating project-based vouchers from resident-based vouchers in order to enhance opportunities for low-income households to live in Brookline without breaking the budget. It is important to remember that project-basing vouchers is another vital way to preserve and enlarge the numbers of affordable housing opportunities in Brookline.

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Katz, approval of 2020 Payment Standards for Section 8 rental subsidy: at the Small Area Fair Market Rents for resident-based assistance utilized in the three Brookline zip codes, and at 110% of the Boston Metro Region Fair Market Rents for project-based assistance, as further described in the accompanying memo from Carlos Hernandez, was unanimously approved.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Dugan asked if the scope of repairs to the balcony walkways at the Walnut Street Apartments low-rise apartments is sufficient to correct the problem. BHA Director of Capital Improvements, Sharon Cowan, said that funding should be adequate to complete these extensive repairs.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Katz, the consent agenda was unanimously approved and authorized the following: the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on September 10, 2019; an architect-engineer contract to Garofalo Design Associates in the amount of \$16,200 for the balcony walkways repairs at the Walnut Street low-rise apartments; an architect-engineer contract to Garofalo Design Associates in the amount of \$31,770 for the doors and locks replacement project at Egmont Street Veterans and High Street Veterans Apartments; and an architect-engineer contract to

C.A. Crowley Engineering in the amount of \$9,500 for the replacement of water lines at Col. Floyd Apartments.

Warrant Articles Update

Mr. Dober explained that there are two Warrant Articles proposed for the November 2019 Town Meeting that if passed would affect the BHA: a real estate transfer tax (W.A. #9); and a partial prohibition on fossil fuels infrastructure (W.A. #21). Mr. Dober, Mr. Jacobs, and BHA Director of Redevelopment, Maria Maffei, have attended public hearings during the last month and have communicated with the proponents of the two articles to recommend changes to the language of the articles that would make the articles more favorable to the BHA.

The BHA's suggested revisions to the real estate transfer tax article would give a priority for BHA capital projects when deciding how to spend the proceeds from the tax. Revisions to the prohibition on fossil fuels infrastructure would give particular consideration for a waiver from the prohibition to the BHA, due to the BHA's limited ability to raise capital funds.

Mr. Jacobs asked if there has been action taken to merge the real estate transfer tax warrant article with a Land Bank warrant article. Mr. Dober said that he is unaware of any explicit action in this regard.

Ms. Cohen asked if there is a continuing role for the BHA to advance these beneficial warrant article language changes. Mr. Dober said that he and Mr. Jacobs and Ms. Maffei plan to continue to advocate for the BHA's views.

RAD Update

Ms. Maffei reported the following:

61 Park Street

- Construction is a bit behind schedule due to the lead time for certain materials. She is confident that Colantonio will be able to make up time as the project proceeds.
- All change orders under consideration are indicated in the weekly reports produced by Colantonio.

Mr. Dober reminded Board Members that they previously approved a policy which allows staff to sign off on change orders totaling less than \$50,000 in between Board meetings, subject to an upcoming BHA Board vote.

90 Longwood Avenue

- A meeting to update residents on project plans will take place on November 8, 2019.
- Staff is recommending Colantonio as the Construction Manager at Risk for Morse Apartments.
- Mass Housing confirmed its support for the project's tax-exempt financing.
- RFPs have been issued for debt and equity financing.
- Staff is making progress on finding a new financial consultant.
- The BHA is initiating an internal process to relocate its Maintenance Department to 22 High Street.
- Staff plans to meet with the Chair of the Housing Advisory Board to initiate the process of requesting Town funds to support the Morse RAD project.

Construction Manager Contract Award

Ms. Maffei reported the following:

- The BHA is utilizing the MGL Ch. 149A procurement process for the renovation of Morse Apartments. As part of this process, bids were solicited for a Construction Manager At Risk.
- Four firms responded to an RFQ with statements of qualification, one of which (GWV) was deemed to be non-responsive.
- The selection committee comprised of Ms. Maffei, Ms. Cowan, BHA consultant Garrett Anderson, and project architect Ahmed Idris, invited the remaining three firms (Colantonio, Commodore Builders, and Dellbrook/JKS) to respond to an RFP.
- Proposals were reviewed and interviews were conducted.
- Colantonio's package was deemed technically superior to the others, with deeper staffing levels a major factor.
- Fee proposals were opened after the technical review, and Colantonio's price was found to be substantially lower than the other two.
- Staff is, therefore, recommending that the BHA enter a contract with Colantonio.

Ms. Jacobs asked if continuity was a deciding factor in recommending Colantonio. Mr. Dober said that Colantonio's work as part of the O'Shea RAD project was a factor only with respect to their overall experience in working on rehabilitations of occupied properties.

BHA resident, Elizabeth Warshaw, said that Colantonio's staff at O'Shea House has been fantastic. She said that BHA staff have been extraordinary as well.

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Cohen, the Construction Manager contract for the renovation of 90 Longwood Avenue to Colantonio, Inc. pursuant to MGL Ch. 149A with the amounts for pre-construction and construction period fees and general conditions as described in the accompanying memo from Maria Maffei, was unanimously approved.

Inspection Contract Award and Proactive Maintenance Task Force Discussion

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- A recent change in leadership in the Maintenance Department presented an opportunity to improve operations.
- DHCD has been encouraging housing authorities to adopt certain best practices with respect to proactive maintenance procedures: work that is driven by inspections and good follow-up.
- The BHA has been inspecting the units in all developments at one time each year. The resulting work load is difficult to manage. The BHA will now stagger inspections throughout the year.
- The BHA is proposing to contract with an inspection firm that specializes in DHCD public housing programs and who can work seamlessly with the BHA's software system to turn noted deficiencies into work orders.
- The BHA will soon be piloting a mobile device driven system for tracking and closing out work orders.
- BHA responses related to "corrective actions" noted in DHCD's recent Preventive Maintenance Review (PMR) indicate that the BHA is making progress on all fronts.
- The staff's recommended inspection contract is for state developments. It is for one year, with a two-year BHA option to extend the contract.

Mr. Jacobs asked if the BHA has a similar plan for federal developments. Mr. Dober said that the BHA will consider reprocurring inspection services for federal developments as well.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Katz, a contract for annual physical inspections of the state public housing properties to Assabet Valley Housing Inspections in the amount of \$7,398 per year for a one-year term with a renewal option for two additional years at the same price was unanimously approved.

Other Business

BHA resident, Dallas Gaughran, asked if there is a sequence in which the BHA plans to proceed with redevelopment at all federally funded properties. Ms. Maffei said that there is no specific sequence at this time. The projects started in reverse order of complexity at O'Shea House and Morse Apartments. Walnut Street Apartments and Col. Floyd Apartments are the oldest developments and have the greatest needs and most likely will be redeveloped toward the end of the cycle.

BHA resident, Ken Drummond, asked if RAD residents are eligible for Section 8 vouchers. Mr. Hernandez said that during a RAD conversion, the subsidy is automatically converted from public housing to project-based Section 8 for all residents. Ms. Maffei added that after a year, those living in a RAD development can request a mobile voucher if funds are available, instead of living in the building.

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at Sussman House at a date and time to be determined.

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Katz, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 PM.

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ATTEST**



**Patrick Dober
Executive Director**