

**BROOKLINE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2021, 4:30 PM
By Telephone Conference Call**

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. Call to Order

2. Board Reports. No votes or reports.

3. Executive Director Report. No votes.

Mr. Alperin said March was another great month at the BHA. Sheila O'Flaherty and Connor Clark facilitated successful vaccine clinics, in conjunction with BHA partners at the Town Health Department and the Emergency Department. Up to 600 1st and 2nd doses were administered, and approximately 80% of residents in BHA senior buildings received a vaccine. About 10 % received the vaccine elsewhere.

There has been real traction on leasing up vacant units; both in the BHA's state and federal developments said Mr. Alperin. Collaboration between the Property Management and Maintenance departments helped resolve the large vacancy backlog (due to the onset of the pandemic when leasing was halted).

Mr. Alperin then welcomed new BHA staff: Jacky Lara, Self-Sufficiency Coordinator/Coach; Bishnu Tamang, Resident Outreach Assistant in Resident Services; Vanessa Ortiz-Lora, Leased Housing Manager and William Fegan, Receptionist. Ms. Katz requested a new organization chart.

As of March 31st, construction at 61 Park Street reached substantial completion. Mr. Alperin noted this is a significant milestone where architects certify the project is substantially complete and create a punch list of remaining items to be completed. It also allows the BHA to apply for the next tax credit equity installment for the project, which should be received mid-May.

BOC Chair, Michael Jacobs, is co-sponsoring with Kathleen Scanlon a Town Meeting warrant article on behalf of the BHA. This would allow the Select Board to: 1) move a home rule petition exempting the Colonel Floyd project from Chapter 149 public bidding procedures; 2) allow better coordination between contractors to build a more energy efficient building; 3) it is important in the State's competition for affordable housing funding resources.

Lastly, Mr. Alperin noted that normally in April at the end of the BHA's fiscal year, Commissioners would vote on rent delinquencies and bad debts for the prior year. He recommended not to vote on that as the state is putting together a program called the Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance Program. He believes that the BHA will be eligible to apply on behalf of its residents for any rent arrearages that occurred between April 1st of 2020 and March 31st of 2021 and could recoup the balances through the state program.

4. Resident Association Report. No Votes or Reports.

5. Resolution Supporting Asian American Community

Resolution by Brookline Housing Authority Condemning Hate, Condemning Violence, and Supporting Asian American Community.

In the wake of ongoing hateful acts toward Asian Americans across the country, Mr. Alperin said the BHA felt it important to condemn such hateful acts and support their Asian American residents. Any residents experiencing related trauma should reach out to their property managers or Brookline Center social workers with concerns.

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

6. Resolution by Brookline Housing Authority supporting the Community Preservation Act.

The BHA requested the Commissioners and public to endorse Question 2 on the Town's spring 2021 ballot related to the Community Preservation Act. Mr. Alperin said passage of this Act will provide a strong source of funds to redevelopment state-of-the art BHA housing and create new affordable housing throughout Brookline. The Act would levy a 1% surcharge on annual property tax assessed on real property starting in 2022, and will enable the Town to acquire open space, acquire and preserve historic properties and create affordable housing. The surcharge is expected to raise \$2.6M annually from Brookline, and over \$3M annually after State matching funds.

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

7. Walk and Talk Program.

Continued comment from BHA Residents related to Walk and Talk Program.

Mr. Jacobs said the Commissioners felt it was critical to receive input on this program from BHA residents who live in properties where this program is in effect. Several residents expressed support and praise for many aspects of the Walk and Talk Program. They noted there are many domestic and mental health issues amongst residents in affordable housing, and it would be detrimental to lose this critical program. These officers in this program know residents, have a good relationship with them, know how to pick up on potential problems and how to calm down a situation. Residents against this program are afraid they are going to get caught doing something wrong. Mr. Alperin said this topic can be an uncomfortable one for residents to discuss publicly and he invited residents to call or email him privately on this topic.

8. Consent agenda. Vote to approve Consent Agenda, Items 8.A. through 8.F.

8A. Approval of Minutes. **Vote to approve minutes of the Board Meeting held on March 9, 2021.**

8B. Contract Award. **Vote to approve a contract for the doors and locks replacement project at Trustman Apartments to New England School Services Inc. of Medford, Massachusetts in the amount of \$57,000.**

8C. Contract Award. **Vote to approve a contract for the courtyard renovations project at Egmont Street to Ronald A. Marini Corp. of Auburndale, Massachusetts in the amount of \$324,000.**

8D. Fee increase. **Vote to approve a fee increase to the architecture and engineering contract with MacRitchie Engineering in the amount of \$9,300 for the steam trap replacement project at 22 High Street.**

8E. Final completion. **Vote to approve final completion with One Source Construction, LLC for the replacement of doors and locks at Egmont and High Street Veterans Developments.**

8F. Final completion. **Vote to approve Final Completion of the contract with South Shore Generator for the replacement of the emergency generator project at 22 High Street.**

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

9. Contract Award. **Vote to approve a contract for the boiler replacement project at High Street Veterans to Industrial Burner Systems Inc. of Quincy, Massachusetts in the amount of \$264,046.**

Ms. Cowan said the engineer divided the bid package into a base bid (replacing 11 boilers in six of the buildings) and an alternate (including replacing remaining 3 boilers in a final building). She recommends accepting both the base bid and the alternate for economies of scale. The project is funded by CDBG FY 2021, but there is insufficient funding from CDBG to accept the alternate bid. Ms. Cowan requested the Board allow the Authority to use internal funding from internal real estate funding reserves to make up the shortfall in case DHCD does not provide any additional funding.

This agenda item was unanimously approved on a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Sullivan.

10. Fee increase. **Vote to approve a contract increase with BWA Architecture for design services associated with the Morse Apartments Renovation Project in the amount of \$8,900.**

Mr. Anderson said it is a relatively small increase to the BWA contract; less than 1 % of their total contract value. Because the project work is about a quarter of the way done, the project team has looked at the amount which is obligated for the remainder of the project. Approximately \$600,000 of funds are available and not yet obligated. The design services fee is for some additional design work required to create drawings and documents to issue to the contractor to get prices to see if the Authority can do all of these things or most of them.

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

11. Soft Cost Contract Policy. **Vote to approve a policy permitting staff approval of non-construction cost changes to the development budget of financed redevelopment projects. This policy would authorize staff to approve certain change orders in advance of Board affirmation.**

Ms. Maffei said this request was related to the prior one and asks that there be a policy to permit staff approvals for non-construction related increases. There is a similar policy in place for staff approval of construction costs. This would allow Category 1: non-construction costs under \$10,000 or 5% of the contract value (whichever is less) to be approved either by Ms. Maffei or whoever the serving director of redevelopment is, and Category 2: non-construction costs in excess of \$10,000 but less than \$25,000 or 25% of the contract value (whichever is less) can be approved by the Executive Director.

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

12. Contract Award. Vote to approve a contract in the amount of \$10,500 to SH Events for event planning services related to a ribbon cutting ceremony for 61 Park Street.

Ms. Maffei hopes to have the ribbon cutting in September or October. Construction is wrapping up (except for punch list items) and they are finishing up the parking lot and landscaping. S&H Events is local, woman-owned firm available to do the job. They have coordinated similar events for the Rose Kennedy Greenway and Temple Israel. Mr. Alperin noted that holding such events and inviting locally elected and Mass housing local officials to attend is important to the success of the BHA getting future redevelopment projects financed.

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

13. Section 8 Administrative Plan Amendment. Vote to approve an amendment to the BHA's Section 8 Administrative Plan to change the order of selection for Project-Based Vouchers for developments under a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with the Brookline Housing Authority.

Mr. Hernandez said the BHA's Section 8 Administrative Plan's policies govern the administration of the Section 8 Program, project-based units and now the Mainstream Voucher Program. Occasionally changes must be made to the Plan, which is posted on the BHA website. The Board was asked to allow additional language to be added to Chapter 21, project-based vouchers which includes the relocation of public housing families in connection with the redevelopment of public housing development and the conversion of public housing development to project-based assistance under the Rental Assistance Administration (RAD) program. It applies to 61 Park, 90 Longwood, the Village of Brookline, Beacon Park and other project-based properties.

This agenda item was unanimously approved on a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Sullivan.

14. Federal and RAD Lease Revision. Vote to approve minor technical changes to the BHA federal lease and the BHA RAD lease.

Mr. Baronas and BHA Attorney, Jonathan Driscoll, completed a comprehensive review of various tenant leases and felt a few minor technical updates are needed. The recommended changes do not approach the HUD significant amendment threshold that would require public process and incorporation into the BHA Annual Plan, but similar changes to the RAD leases that they recommend will need investor, lender and DHCD approval. Some examples of the recommended changes to the federal and RAD leases include: removing references to security deposits, removing citations to the code of federal regulations, and adding some general language clarifying obligations for residents to comply with the established rules and policies, including Town ordinances and bylaws.

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

15. Contract Award. Vote to award the Rooftop and Internet Services RFP to Starry, Inc., and that the Executive Director be authorized to negotiate the final contract on substantially the same terms and conditions as outlined in the RFP.

According to Mr. Alperin said the Authority wants to do everything possible to provide residents with broadband or broadband equivalent Internet at a reasonable cost. As of now, HUD and DHCD do not recognize Internet as part of its part of utility allowance calculations. After an RFP was advertised, though many bids were received, the only one that met the criteria of the RFP was from Starry. Starry is becoming a leader in providing broadband equivalent Internet to affordable housing in public housing settings. After placing small rooftop antenna equipment on a few BHA buildings, they will provide residents with an option of purchasing Internet for \$15/month with no monthly or contract commitments. Though the BHA will continue to work with Town to see if they can provide Internet to residents at no cost, this is a great new resource for residents. No new wiring will be needed, but residents need to set up an appointment.

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

16. Other business.

17. Upcoming Meetings. May Board Meeting: May 11th at 4:30 PM.

Mr. Alperin noted the possibility that a second Board meeting may be needed in May to vote on FY 2021 close outs if they are not ready to vote on by the next meeting.

18. Adjournment Vote

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Cohen, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 5:47 PM.

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Michael Alperin, Executive Director