

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 8, 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.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- The BHA is in a good position to weather the government shutdown for now. Payments to Section 8 landlords and federal public housing subsidy are secure for January and February. Capital grants are pre-awarded one to two years ahead. State public housing programs are unaffected. The BHA has healthy reserves it can utilize if necessary.
- There was a fire at Trustman Apartments on January 7, 2019. The fire was contained within a bedroom in a second-floor apartment, but two households have been temporarily displaced. BHA staff and community response was extraordinary.
- The Brookline Community Foundation fully funded the BHA's grant request of \$60,000.
- The Brookline Retirement Board sent a bill to the BHA which was calculated incorrectly. This was brought to their attention and corrected without issue.
- The BHA is hoping for a generous CDBG grant for capital repairs from the Town of Brookline this year. Last year's grant was considerably smaller than in previous years due to the Town's needs related to the Gateway East project.

RAD Program and 86 Dummer Street Update

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

- A resident meeting was held at O'Shea House in December with BHA relocation consultant Housing Opportunities Unlimited.
- Mass Housing approved Official Action Status for O'Shea House.
- A financing application has been submitted to HUD for O'Shea House.
- An RFP was sent out for a tax credit compliance and training consultant.
- Today is the deadline for Construction Manager RFP responses. The BHA hopes to enter a pre-construction contract after a Construction Manager is chosen.
- An RFP is being prepared for sub-trades.
- 100% construction drawings are due soon from the architect.
- Madison Park Redevelopment Corporation will be taking up a vote this month to become a minority member in the ownership entity for O'Shea House.
- The BHA is hoping to receive a 2019 bond allocation from the state for Morse Apartments.
- The BHA needs to apply for the Morse Apartments' RAD commitment.
- The BHA will need to apply for Town CDGB funding or other sources of funding for office space renovations at Morse Apartments, since this cannot be funded with tax credits.
- It has been a less profitable year for 86 Dummer Street in 2018 than in 2019. Issues negatively impacting the budget included: a change in site management staff; a long unit vacancy; high water and sewer costs; and expenses related to problems with the fire alarm system.

Ms. Dugan asked if all residents of O'Shea House will have assistance with moving as it relates to their temporary relocation during construction. Ms. Maffei said that anyone requesting assistance will receive assistance.

Resident Association Reports

Sean Jaynes, Egmont Tenants Association President, reported the following:

- Their Thanksgiving Day dinner at Egmont Street Veterans Apartments went very well, with 30 people attending.
- The Egmont Tenants Association has reached out to the BHA to offer help to those displaced by the fire yesterday at Trustman Apartments.

Consent Agenda

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Katz, the consent agenda was unanimously approved and authorized the following: the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 11, 2018; Final Completion of the security cameras upgrade project at Col. Floyd Apartments with Lan-Tel Communications, Inc.; a fee increase to the design and engineering contract with Nangle Engineering Inc. for the fire alarm upgrades at 50 Pleasant Street in the amount of \$5,350.00, increasing the contract amount to \$26,945.00; and Change Order #2 to the contract with Multitemp Mechanical Corp. for the mechanical and electrical upgrades project at the federal properties, by extending the Completion Date from August 23, 2018 to February 15, 2019.

Update on RAD Designs

Mr. Dober introduced Ahmed Idris and Josh Swasey from Baker Wohl Associates (BWA). Mr. Idris reported the following:

- The deadline for O'Shea House construction documents has been pushed back slightly so that the Construction Manager is on board for input.
- BWA is coordinating with their consultants on design issues.
- They will need to meet with the Brookline Planning Board on zoning issues as well as the Brookline Fire Department and Brookline Building Department.

Ms. Cohen asked if they anticipate the need for a Comprehensive Permit. Mr. Idris said that they do not anticipate such a need.

Mr. Swasey reported the following related to the O'Shea House design:

- The exterior main entry will be reconfigured with additional seating.
- The site sign will match the brick veneer of the building.
- A side patio area with seating will open to the community room.
- There will be new garden planting beds and a new recycling and waste area for residents outside the building.
- There will be new lighting and finishes in the interior common areas.
- There will be a workshop and office for the Maintenance Department.
- The community room kitchen will be updated and accessible.
- There will be a multi-purpose Meals on Wheels area and a new Springwell office.
- The lounge area will be reconfigured and will include music, computer, and TV areas.
- The units will have refurbished windows, new kitchen appliances and cabinets, a breakfast bar and pass through, and a step-in shower.
- There will be new smooth ceilings and new flooring.

- A fill-in brick wall will separate the bedroom from the living area.

Mr. Idris reported the following related to the Morse Apartments design:

- BWA has solicited input from residents and is preparing a draft report.
- They are awaiting concept cost estimates.
- They will develop both minimal and major renovation options for the first-floor common areas and offices.
- The goal is to have schematic drawings by March, construction drawings by September, and a closing by the end of 2019.

Annual Plan

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- The Board is asked every year to approve an Annual Plan for submission to HUD.
- There are no new activities to report this year. Last year, the RAD program and Section 8 project-basing initiatives were identified and approved.

Ms. Cohen noticed that as part of the certification of the Town Administrator on the draft Annual Plan, there was no description of how the BHA's Annual Plan is consistent with the Town's Consolidated Plan. Mr. Dober said that he would coordinate with the Town Administrator to add such a description to the Annual Plan before submitting it to HUD.

Mr. Jacobs said that the box for holding units for modernization was not checked. Mr. Dober said that he will get a clarification of HUD's definition of "modernization" and will check this box if necessary.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Cohen, the BHA's 2018 HUD Annual Plan for Federal Public Housing, subject to: the addition of language related to consistency with the Town's Consolidated Plan; and clarification of HUD's definition of "modernization" with respect to holding units for modernization, was unanimously approved.

Section 8 Administrative Plan

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- Edgemere has been assisting the BHA in revising the BHA Section 8 Administrative Plan. Most of the effort is in updating the plan to make it compliant with HUD regulations.
- Some new chapters have been added relating to project-basing vouchers and the RAD program.
- BHA staff is proposing to revise the rankings and preferences for issuing vouchers.
- Limited HUD funding and rising FMRs, along with more project-basing of vouchers means that the BHA has issued minimal new vouchers over the past nine months.
- Recently, the only vouchers issued have been for emergency VAWA transfers and the mobility option for those leaving project-based housing.
- The BHA does not expect to be issuing more than a de minimis number of vouchers in the foreseeable future.
- The proposed policy change would shift emphasis from domestic violence/natural disaster (DV) priority to the maximization of local priority, so that local residents with other needs could access vouchers. A high priority for DV/natural disaster would be maintained but for local residents only.

Ms. Cohen said that the BHA can cap the number of people utilizing the mobility option to come off the project-based program if it wants to preserve vouchers for RAD. BHA Director of Subsidized Housing and Applications, Carlos Hernandez, said that such a provision has been incorporated into the proposed Section 8 Administrative Plan.

Ms. Dugan said that she has a problem with not giving priority to DV victims who are not local residents. Domestic violence is a big issue in society and she feels a DV priority should be given to any applicant for Section 8 assistance. She understands the administrative burden of offering DV priority to all applicants, but feels the need outweighs this consideration.

Mr. Hernandez said that an analysis of other LHAs practices showed that most who offer DV priority, offer it only to local residents. The proposed policy change would allow a DV priority for local residents, while also creating the possibility of local applicants with other needs accessing Section 8 assistance.

BHA Assistant Executive Director, Matthew Baronas, said that under the BHA's current Section 8 Administrative Plan, many applicants live at risk with heavy rent burden and languish on the BHA waiting list with no chance of being issued a Section 8 voucher.

Ms. Cohen said that the argument for keeping the DV priority open to all is compelling; but by offering the DV priority to all, the BHA becomes the go-to jurisdiction for area voucher applicants with domestic violence.

Mr. Dober said that every year the BHA is asked to do more with less. Staff capacity is at or beyond its limit to do consistently good work, and jobs are getting more difficult.

Mr. Dober said that the proposed policy change would continue DV preference for local applicants. Emergency VAWA transfers would continue for public housing residents fleeing domestic violence. The super preference for victims of domestic violence for applicants to BHA state funded public housing would also continue.

Mr. Jacobs asked how many DV applicants are from Brookline. Mr. Hernandez said that approximately 20% of the DV applicants are from Brookline.

Mr. Dober suggested the inclusion of a provision to approve the Section 8 Administrative Plan subject to review after 24 months.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Cohen, the revised Administrative Plan for the Section 8 program provided to the Board on January 9, 2019 ("the Revised Plan"), was approved by roll-call vote, providing the following: that sections 4.15 Local Preferences and 4.17 Order of Selection shall be in effect only through the last day of February 2021 (the "preferences Expiration Date"); that it is the BHA's intention, before the Preferences Expiration Date to review and reconsider these sections and to vote to either retain these sections or revise them; and in the event that no vote is taken by the Preferences Expiration Date, the operational effect of these two sections will revert to the applicable sections of the Administrative Plan in effect as of January 8, 2019. The votes were as follows (Ms. Katz left the meeting shortly before this motion was considered):

AYES
Mr. Jacobs
Ms. Sullivan
Ms. Cohen

NAYS
Ms. Dugan

Annual Audit

Mr. Dober reported the following very positive results:

- The BHA achieved a clean audit for FY 2018.
- The Management Letter indicated a single recommendation that the BHA maintain a copy of the choice of Flat Rent versus Income-Based Rent form in all resident files.
- The audit noted a reduction in net restricted assets, mostly attributable to the increase in accrued liability for state pension expenses. Also contributing to the reduction was pre-developments costs from the BHA unrestricted cash reserves, most of which will be reimbursed to the BHA.
- Only two exceptions were noted in the DHCD Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) review.

Other Business

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at Morse Apartments at 4:30 PM on February 12, 2019.

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Sullivan, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 PM.

**A TRUE COPY
ATTEST**



Patrick Dober
Executive Director