

Brookline Housing Authority
Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2020
By Teleconference
4:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Jacobs at 4:35 PM. Those present included Ms. Katz, Ms. Sullivan, and Ms. Cohen.

Board Report

Mr. Jacobs reported the following:

- Due to the coronavirus health emergency and Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order pertaining to the state's open meeting law, this meeting is being conducted by teleconference.
- Fourteen resumes are being forwarded by the consulting search firm to the BHA Executive Director Search Committee. The Search Committee is planning to meet on April 22, 2020.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- Town elections have been postponed until June 5, 2020. If the 90 Longwood Avenue RAD closing occurs before the election takes place, the BHA will need to amend the BHA's Certificate of Incumbency to indicate that Barbara Dugan remains a BHA Commissioner and a Member of 61 Park Manager LLC as a "holdover" office holder given the delay of the spring town elections in which she is running for re-election as a Housing Authority Commissioner.
- Personnel issues include the promotion of Jim Collins to temporary Maintenance Foreman, and Garrett Anderson coming onboard in a part-time capacity at first to work on special projects.
- BHA staff members are spending much of their time on developing and implementing health and safety protocols for residents and staff, and on adjusted service delivery to residents.
- No BHA staff have thus far tested positive for COVID-19. The BHA is aware of only a small number of BHA residents who have tested positive or are under quarantine.
- Gloves and masks are now in good supply for BHA staff.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Katz asked if the 61 Park LLC redevelopment work overlaps with the maintenance landscaping contract proposed for approval at today's meeting, and if so, would it conflict with the landscaping guarantees within the redevelopment project's scope of work. Mr. Dober said that the scope of work as routine maintenance under the landscaping contract falls outside of the redevelopment project's warranty issues.

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 meeting held on March 24, 2020; Change Order #6 to the construction contract with Colantonio, Inc. for the renovation of 61 Park Street, in the amount of \$13,385.54, increasing the total contract amount to \$16,731,578.21; and a contract to Horgan Enterprises, Inc. to provide landscaping service at all BHA properties in the annual amount of \$59,054 for an initial term of three years and two additional one-year extensions at the BHA's discretion.

Resident Services Update

BHA ESOL Director, Danielle Mendola, reported the following:

- BHA resident services staff and partner agencies have shifted away from face to face meetings to remote meetings with residents.
- The Brookline Food Pantry opened its High Street Veterans Apartments location last month and is already serving more than 70 residents each week. The Pantry's total number of clients served has more than doubled during the coronavirus pandemic. Fortunately, they have been able to meet the expanded need so far.
- The Brookline Safety Net received a \$175,000 contribution from the Town, which more than doubles funding for this important resource. The Safety Net is a small cash grant program run by the Brookline Center, and the majority of recipients are BHA residents.
- The Brookline Center's Healthy Lives program is continuing to interact closely with many of BHA's most vulnerable families.
- BHA's communications with residents include postings within buildings, informational letters distributed to all residents, COVID-19 information and listings on the BHA website, and resident email notifications to over 250 residents who have provided email contact information.
- Social service partner agencies are systematically checking in with BHA residents by telephone.

Ms. Katz asked if access to the internet is a concern for residents. Mr. Dober said that the BHA is circulating Comcast and RCN discount offers to residents. Ms. Mendola said that Steps To Success staff are examining barriers to home learning and looking for solutions.

Mr. Dober said that BHA public housing and Section 8 staff have either completed or are processing over 120 rent recertifications for residents who have lost wages due to the health emergency.

Mr. Jacobs asked about the efforts of Springwell in BHA senior buildings during the pandemic. Ms. Mendola said that Springwell's home delivered meals and congregate meals programs are continuing. Springwell is calling all residents in BHA senior buildings to check on their well-being. They are delivering bi-weekly newsletters to residents as well.

Amendment to ACOP

BHA Assistant Executive Director, Matthew Baronas, said that staff is recommending an amendment to the BHA's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) to allow state and federal public housing residents to self-certify their income. Many BHA residents have recently lost income and are eligible for an interim rent adjustment to lower their monthly rent share. Self-certification will expedite this process for residents who are struggling to produce third party verification in the midst of the public health emergency. The language in the proposed ACOP amendment is adapted from the BHA's Section 8 Administrative Plan.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Cohen, an amendment to the BHA Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan (ACOP) for Public Housing to allow self-certification for income redeterminations, was unanimously approved.

Redevelopment Report

BHA Director of Redevelopment, Maria Maffei, reported the following:
61 Park Street

- The Brookline Building Department issued a construction suspension order on the basis that the project does not meet the “essential services” criteria of the Governor’s emergency order. This suspension will result in additional costs to the project.
- Staff has touched base with Mass Housing to consider additional bond funding.
- The Town has expressed a willingness to possibly provide more resources if needed.
- Coronavirus related supply chain issues are occurring, such as slower than expected delivery of cabinets.
- The BHA is now compensating the architect and OPM on an as needed basis versus monthly payments.

Mr. Dober said that the challenge will be how to safely restart construction once approval to resume is given by the Governor and the Brookline Health Department.

Ms. Maffei continued her report:

- Colantonio submitted a thoughtful plan for resuming construction operations.
- There are a healthy amount of contingency funds in the budget, as well as an expected LEAN program award for the high efficiency HVAC system.

Mr. Dober said that the goal, as always, is to earn the full developer fee. The LEAN program reimbursement should help to mitigate the extra costs related to the construction shut down, including: legal; architectural; construction; and resident relocation costs.

Mr. Jacobs asked if there is flexibility on the deadline for permanent financing. Ms. Maffei said the investor can trigger repurchase on September 1, 2021 if the project is not closed out by July 22, 2021. Staff is looking at this closely and communicating with the investor.

Mr. Dober said that he is hopeful that there will be relief on tax credit deadlines from Congress. Although this legislation it won’t change the BHA’s obligation to meet the projected rates of return for tax credit investors, the BHA should be in a strong negotiating position with its investor.

Mr. Dober said that the 90 Longwood Avenue closing is expected to be completed by mid-June. More capital will need to be put in reserves in the development budget due to potential coronavirus delays.

Ms. Maffei said that 90 Longwood sub-contractor bids came in with good prices and essentially as expected.

Ms. Cohen said that increased allowable RAD rents could be forthcoming from Congress due to the coronavirus.

Change Order Policy

Ms. Maffei said that staff is recommending that the Board adopt the same change order policy as utilized for 61 Park LLC, allowing change order approval prior to Board affirmation when the value of the change order is less than \$50,000 or when the timing of the change order work is urgent.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Sullivan, a policy authorizing the Executive Director to approve change orders for the renovation of 90 Longwood Avenue in advance of Board affirmation under certain limited circumstances, was unanimously approved.

Affirmation of Change Orders

Ms. Maffei said that Board affirmation is requested for the following three change orders related to 90 Longwood LLC: a consulting contract with Code Red Fire Protection as required by the Brookline Fire Department; demolition in a unit to examine underlying conditions; and a consulting contract with a traffic management firm to coordinate alternative parking for BHA residents and staff during construction.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Katz, affirmation of Change Orders #1, #2, and #3 to the construction management contract with Colantonio, Inc. for the renovation of 90 Longwood Avenue, in the combined amount of \$30,730.93 as further described in the memo from Maria Maffei, increasing the pre-construction fee to \$130,229.93, was unanimously approved.

Construction Contract Award

BHA Director of Capital Improvements, Sharon Cowan, said that this proposed change order is for office renovations at 190 Harvard Street relating to the relocation of the BHA Maintenance Department administrative office from 90 Longwood Avenue to 190 Harvard Street.

On a motion from Ms. Katz and a second from Ms. Cohen, a contract for the BHA offices reconfiguration project at 190 Harvard Street to Unicon, Inc. in the amount of \$113,200, was unanimously approved.

Construction Contract Award

Ms. Cowan said that this contract will address the spalling of balcony concrete and the deteriorated paint on balcony railings at the two senior buildings at the Walnut Street Apartments.

On a motion from Ms. Katz and a second from Ms. Sullivan, a contract for the balcony repairs at the Walnut Street Apartments low rise buildings to Drizos Contracting, LLC, in the amount of \$97,000, was unanimously approved.

Construction Contract Award

Ms. Cowan said that this contract will address ongoing underground leaks from water pipes at Col. Floyd Apartments. The recommendation is to contract with the second low bidder. The low bidder was deemed unresponsive due to poor references, the BHA's bad past experience with the low bidder; and the engineer's bad past experience with the low bidder.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Katz, a contract for the underground water pipe replacement project at Col. Floyd Apartments to Araujo Brothers Plumbing, Inc. in the amount of \$144,900, was unanimously approved.

Services Contract

Mr. Dober said that staff is recommending that emergency procurement procedures be invoked to transfer the BHA payroll function to a third party. Several BHA staff who are involved in the payroll function need to work remotely due to the health emergency. The BHA has been planning such a move to a payroll contractor for some time. The opinion of the state Inspector General's office is that this streamlined procurement approach by the BHA is appropriate. Staff is asking for a vote of affirmation.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Sullivan, authorization for the Executive Director to solicit and enter into a contract under the emergency procurement provisions of MGL Ch. 30B with a firm to provide payroll services for a term of not more than one year, in an amount not to exceed \$30,000, subject to the conditions further described in the attached memo from Patrick Dober and Garrett Anderson, was unanimously approved.

Other Business

Board Members complemented the entire BHA staff for their coordinated response to the health emergency, their hard work, and their accomplishments.

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held by teleconference on May 12, 2020 at 4:30 PM.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Sullivan, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 PM.

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ATTEST



Patrick Dober
Executive Director