

Brookline Housing Authority – Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

Date: August 19, 2025

Time Called to Order: 4:45 PM

Presiding Officer: Michael Jacobs

Present: Michael Jacobs, Judy Katz, Kimberley Richardson, Karen Rojas

Absent: Sue Cohen

1. Board Reports

Mike Jacobs shared Redevelopment Subcommittee Update:

Discussion continues on the CPA award for Walnut High. Community Preservation Act (CPA) committee and the Housing Advisory Board (HAB) continue to discuss the appropriate mechanism for disbursing funds to BHA for the Walnut High project. A draft agreement is underway. Bernard Greene is consulting with Town Counsel.

Fisher Hill Redevelopment: Commissioners expressed interest in participating in a potential redevelopment at Fisher Hill and proposed BHA submit a letter expressing interest in building affordable housing on site.

3. Executive Director's Ben Stone Report

- Audit: In-person portion completed with CBIZ; positive feedback; minimal or no findings expected. Board ethics training recommended, Ben Stone will share details with board.
- State Performance Management Review (PMR): Strong performance on occupancy and CHAMP measures; improvement needed in Tenant A/R, operating reserves and Board training. This year is unpublished, but this feedback helps us prepare for next year.
- Staffing: Two staff departures. Welcomed Bridget Boyle as Redevelopment Project Manager; Amelia Youngstrom promoted to Associate Director of Redevelopment.
- Policy & Communications: Surveillance Camera and Parking Policies under review. Newsletter sent August 7. Communication materials and resident notices being improved.
- Asset Management: Work ongoing to control utility costs and qualify for lower heat pump electrical rates.
- Resident Services: ROI initiative meeting goals. Partnerships and outreach ongoing. Summer wellness program successful.
- Redevelopment: Construction at 32 Marion progressing on schedule. Redevelopment team will present memo in next board meeting recommending indefinitely pausing plans for comprehensive rehabilitation of 190 Harvard Street due to cost. Walnut High Phase 1 in value engineering and preparing for fall funding application. State site planning grant application submitted to Mass Housing Partnership.

- Policy: Awaiting FY26/27 budget guidance from state, but state said per-unit non-utility budget caps will increase by 5%. Federal updates noted but no major operational impact.
- HCV Program: Projected shortfall reduced to \$1.5M. Application underway for VASH vouchers.
- Operations & Leasing: Strong improvement in vacancies. 50 move-ins YTD compared to 36 move-outs. Total vacancies in state program down from 20 in March to 6 today. Rent collection dipped slightly in July; response measures in progress.

Commissioner Judy Katz suggested hosting a training/information session for commissioners and residents about the PAYMENTUS online rent payment system.

4. Public Comment

No public comments were received

5. Consent Agenda 5A – 5F

Motion to Approve: Kimberley Richardson

Seconded by: Judy Katz

Vote: Passed unanimously

Items Approved:

- 5A. Approval of July 8, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes
- 5B. Change Order #1 – Hallway & Window Project at High Street Veterans: \$5,104 change to Scuff Tuff paint.
- 5C. Contract Award – A&E, High Street Veterans: \$13,000 to Homer Contracting for mock-up door.
- 5D. Contract Award – HVAC at 50 Pleasant, 61 Park, 90 Longwood: \$242,746.35 base contract with Northeastern Mechanical; 5-year total: \$411,925.
- 5E. Policy Approval – BHA Camera Policy
- 5F. Policy Approval – BHA Parking Policy

Commissioner Kimberley Richardson raised concerns about the cleaning work by Horgan Enterprises, noting that it has been inconsistent and not thorough. Commissioner Karen Rojas agreed, adding that the cleaning crew often doesn't go beyond the first level of the building. Chris Devoll said the cleaning schedule will be shared with staff so they can follow up on cleaning days to ensure the work meets expected standards. He encouraged commissioners to contact him directly with any concerns.

Commissioner Richardson also asked if intercoms are included in the hallway upgrade project, as some aren't working and residents have been propping doors open or buzzing in neighbors instead. Chris confirmed that intercoms are not part of the upgrade project but can be fixed and residents can submit a work order.

6. Contract Amendment – A&E, Walnut High Apartments

- Motion to Approve: Judy Katz
- Seconded by: Karen Rojas
- Vote: Passed unanimously

Approved \$238,075 contract increase for Utile for Phase 1 redevelopment at Walnut High.

7. Contract Amendment – Resident Relocation, Walnut–High

- Motion to Approve: Kimberley Richardson
- Seconded by: Judy Katz
- Vote: Passed unanimously

Affirmed prior decision to increase HOU relocation contract by \$8,500 for 32 Marion.

8. Contract Amendment – Construction Testing, 32 Marion

- Motion to Approve: Karen Rojas
- Seconded by: Kimberley Richardson
- Vote: Passed unanimously

Affirmed prior decision to increase UTS contract by \$15,000 for testing at 32 Marion.

9. Contract Award – 32 Marion Staging

- Motion to Approve: Judy Katz
- Seconded by: Karen Rojas
- Vote: Passed unanimously

Affirmed contract with Wellesley Design Consultants for up to \$25,000 to stage two model units for October tenant tours.

10. Income Exemption Waiver – Resident Opportunity Initiative

- Motion to Approve: Judy Katz
- Seconded by: Karen Rojas
- Vote: Passed unanimously

Endorsed waiver request under 760 CMR 6.00 to exempt up to \$750/month from ROI payments from state public housing income calculations through December 2026. BHA will submit this request with extract of board vote to state.

11. Tenant Accounts Receivable – FY2026 Write-Off

- Motion to Approve: Kimberley Richardson

Seconded by: Judy Katz

Vote: Passed unanimously

Authorized write-off of bad debts for federal/state housing programs and 61 Park, 90 Longwood, and 50 Pleasant LLCs.

Chair Michael Jacobs asked if this was the largest write-off to date. CFO John Kelley responded that the budget includes \$45,000 annually for bad debt and noted these apply only to inactive residents, with efforts made to collect before departure. Judy Katz and Kimberley Richardson asked about timing of previous write-off. Kimberley Richardson recalled, and Ben Stone verified that the board last approved in June 2024.

12. Other Business

None

13. Upcoming Meetings

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday September 16, 2025, at 4:30PM

14. Vote to Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn: Kimberley Richardson

Seconded by: Judy Katz

Vote: Passed unanimously

Time Adjourned: 5:33PM

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ATTEST



Ben Stone, Executive Director