

Brookline Housing Authority – Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

Date: September 16, 2025

Time Called to Order: 4:30 PM

Chair: Michael Jacobs

Present: Michael Jacobs, Sue Cohen, Kimberley Richardson, Karen Rojas

Absent: Judy Katz

2. Board Reports

No Board Reports

3. Executive Director's Report – Ben Stone

Staffing Updates

- Ruth Diaz resigned as of September 3rd.
- Internal candidates are being reviewed for the Police Housing Manager position.

Policies

- Updated camera and parking policies have been posted on the website.
- New parking stickers rolled out at Egmont and Trustman.
- BHA plans to reclaim parking spots on Denver Street from SIS Property Management to accommodate redevelopment contractors.

Resident Services

- The Resident Opportunity Initiative has exceeded enrollment targets (50+ participants across federal and state programs).
- SSP graduation event scheduled for September 25th.
- Positive community engagement noted—one Single Hooks participant logged approximately 800,000 steps in a month.

Modernization and Capital Planning

- Window and hallway entry projects have begun at Egmont and Trustman.
- State capital plan is in development; due by end of October.
- CDBG matching funds application was denied—future plans are being revised accordingly.

Redevelopment Pipeline Overview

All timelines are estimates due to funding uncertainty. Goals: preserve and modernize affordable housing, ensure financial sustainability, and expand unit availability.

Current Projects:

- 32 Marion Street: On track for January completion; utility coordination may cause minor delays.
- Walnut/High Phase 1: ~\$3M in cost savings identified through engineering review. Funding application planned for Fall 2025; financing may close in 2027. Anticipated occupancy: 2029–2030.
- Walnut/High Phase 2: Plans to demolish 22 High Street and build 81 new family units. Funding challenges due to Section 8 voucher scarcity—mixed-subsidy approach may be required.
- State Sites: Early-stage planning with Mass Housing Partnership; kickoff meeting scheduled for early October. Full redevelopment expected to take 7–10 years.
- 190 Harvard Street: Staff memo recommends deferral. Property to remain in federal public housing for 10–15 years; future rehabilitation will be reevaluated.

Policy and Budget Updates

- State operating funding to increase by 5%.

- Federal funding remains uncertain; possible government shutdown is being monitored.

Section 8 Program and Inspections

- HUD inspection protocol changes delayed by 18 months.
- Memo projects a \$1.5M shortfall for 2025 (HUD expected to cover it).
- 2026 funding remains uncertain.

Rent Collection

- Increased collection rate: overall arrears have decreased.
- Slight dip in total rent collected due to a smaller rent roll.
- Three rent clinics were held; multiple residents received emergency assistance.

Vacancies

- As of August 31: 11 vacancies (1.6%).
- Most units are maintenance ready.
- Maintenance staff recognized for strong performance.
- Plan to include additional performance stats in future reports.

FY2026 Payment Standards Proposal

- HUD Fair Market Rents rose ~4% in Metro Boston.
- Proposal: Reduce payment standards outside Brookline from 110% to 105% (effective ~1% decrease).
- Brookline payment standards remain unchanged.
- Public comment required; board vote scheduled for next meeting.

Discussion: High Street Redevelopment Funding Structure

- Clarification requested on “mixed funding” model.
- Current plan relies on ~\$3,000/month/unit in Section 8 vouchers.
- Alternatives discussed: state subsidies, tax credits, Faircloth-to-RAD, and other tools.
- Consensus: Stay flexible, prioritize deeply subsidized models.
- Section 8 projected shortfall reduced from \$2M to \$1.5M due to market softening and cost control.

4. Public Comment

Resident Question: Why are modernization efforts focused on exteriors when interiors are outdated?

Response:

- Prioritization: buildings be watertight, warm, and structurally sound.
- Current windows at Egmont apartments are not efficient - drafty and get cold in winter.
- Hallways at Egmont significantly damaged; Trustman issues are more cosmetic.
- ARPA and CPA funding is restricted to exterior work.
- Interior work (e.g., kitchens) only occurs during unit turnover due to relocation costs and logistics.

5. Consent Agenda 5A – 5I

Items Approved:

- 5.A. August 16, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes
- 5.B. HILAPP Application to EOHLC (matching CPA funds)
- 5.C. CO #1 – Kickham Windows (\$4,160 – trim work, Aegean Builders)
- 5.D. CO #2 – Trustman Basement (\$42,734.56 – sewer main, NE Builders)

- 5.E. PCO #128 – 32 Marion Siding (\$8,103.20)
- 5.F. PCO #139 – 32 Marion Accessibility Revisions (\$21,458.99)
- 5.G. PCO #147 – 32 Marion Elevator Electrical (\$2,322.83)
- 5.H. Contract Amendment – WDC Services for OAC Meetings (up to \$2,500)
- 5.I. Contract Amendment – Callahan Construction, Walnut/High Phase 1 (\$15,000)

Motion to Approve: Sue Cohen

Seconded by: Kimberley Richardson

Vote: Passed unanimously

6. Change Order #144

- Amount: \$67,338.25
- Purpose: Add roof solar panel attachment points for wind resistance.

Motion to Approve: Karen Rojas

Seconded by: Sue Cohen

Vote: Passed unanimously

7. Change Order #150

- Amount: \$60,098.00
- Purpose: Purchase updated inverters for energy storage code compliance.

Motion to Approve: Sue Cohen

Seconded by: Karen Rojas

Vote: Passed unanimously

8. Change Order #155

- Amount: \$81,298.34
- Purpose: Install integrated Building Management System (BMS) to monitor HVAC, water, and electric systems.
- Note: May also be considered for Walnut/High.

Motion to Approve: Sue Cohen

Seconded by: Karen Rojas

Vote: Passed unanimously

9. Bad Debt Write-Off

- Amount: \$36,714
- Applies only to former tenants (deceased, relocated, etc.).
- Improvement from last year's \$113,000 write-off.
- Reflects increased collection rate (~85%).

Motion to Approve: Karen Rojas

Seconded by: Kimberley Richardson

Vote: Passed unanimously

10. Redevelopment of 190 Harvard Street

Motion: Vote to defer the redevelopment plan.

Reasons for Deferral:

- High cost per unit (\$1.2M)

- No increase in unit count
- Funding gaps
- Recent capital investments already made

Recommendation: Pursue phased modernization instead.

Board Discussion Summary:

- Concerns over high per-unit cost and long-term operating expenses.
- Recent changes in federal tax credit policy complicate financing.
- Board recommends presenting this case at NAHRO.
- Exploring alternate financing options (e.g., "taxable tail").

Motion to Approve: Sue Cohen

Seconded by: Karen Rojas

Vote: Passed unanimously

11. Other Business

None discussed

12. Upcoming Meetings

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 14, 2025

13. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: Karen Rojas

Seconded by: Kimberley Richardson

Time Adjourned: 5:15

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ATTEST



Ben Stone, Executive Director