



**Bennington Housing Authority
Minutes of Meeting of the Board
Monday, October 22, 2018**

Location: Willowbrook Community Room, 22 Willowbrook Drive, Bennington

Board Members Present: Sharyn Brush, Sandra Bessette, Nancy Messina, Paul Walden

BHA Directors Present: Jonathan Ryan- Executive Director
Dack Lauzon- Director of Maintenance
Penny Taylor- Director of Section 8 Program

Absent: Lindsey Vajda- Director of Public Housing

Staff Present: Laticia Gordon- Administrative Assistant

Residents: None

Board Member Sandra Bessette called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

Motion: To accept the minutes of the September meeting. Motion by Sandra, second by Nancy, approved unanimously as printed.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Action Plan for Recovery and Sustainability-** Summarization of the activity and pending completion of Governances and Program items through January 31, 2019, as printed in Director's report.
- **Staffing and Operations:** Hired an Administrative Assistant to help in the front office and with Public Housing needs. New hire to begin on November 5, 2018.
- **Policy & Administration Review:** Asked the board to review the new Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy; ACOP approved unanimously.
- **Risk Management:** Suggested to increase insurance coverage across the board (auto, buildings, etc.); will work on in the next couple of weeks. Sharyn would like to talk to local insurance agencies for BHA's needs. Jonathan will ask Paul Dettman who he recommends with experience on PHA insurance needs.
- **Camera Deployment:** Dack used a Google map to explain the placement of the cameras around the Willowbrook campus. Sharyn questioned the coverage at one corner of the campus, suggesting a bigger camera or an additional one. The work will be contracted outside of the BHA.



- **Rails To Trails Lawsuit:** It is not clear if the BHA owns the land wanted for the trail. Sharyn stated that the railroad has not been forthcoming with information of property ownership. There is no clear information on the subject of ownership vs. the government having an easement for the property. Jonathan will research this issue further.
The conversion for eminent domain is believed to be historically \$80 per sq. ft. There was also discussion on how the cleanup done for the trail could be beneficial to the aesthetics of Willowbrook.
- **Management financial audit:** will be reviewed on December 10, 2018. Only a couple of months will be under Debbie's management.
- The **Resident Advisory Board** has been formed. \
- **Dream Program:** Their first report was submitted for the board meeting. Their ratio has been 16 mentees / 12 mentors.
- **Brookside:** BHA is in the process of suing the contractor who built the balconies. Investigation shows that the contractor changed the system approved and did not use all of the materials needed to weatherproof the balconies and keep them safe. The BHA may need to port money from the Capital Budget for the repairs, which is slated for Spring 2019. Jonathan is confident that we have a strong case and will win the suit.
- **Food Bank:** The Willowbrook Community Room would be a drop off center for the Foodbank. Volunteering would be an opportunity for public housing tenants to do their required community service, noting that anyone on the Food stamp Program is exempt from Community Service. Once set up it will be held once a month with the hope the program will eventually expand beyond a food drop. Dale will clean out the garage for freezer space. Nancy Messina talked about a program where locally grown vegetables are cooked and frozen; thought it may be an addition for the food drop program.
- **Beech Court Playground:** Bridget Walden has been researching materials and pricing for the new playground at Beech Court. She meets with Mary Gerisch and Jonathan once a week to update and talk about safety. The idea is to have one playground for children 3-6 years, another for 6-12 year olds, and rehabilitate the basketball court.
- **Capital Fund:** Capital Fund for FY 15-16 is closed. Capital Fund for FY 2017 will be closed once the new bathroom fans in Willowbrook are installed. The Capital Fund for 2018 is completed. All activity is exempt from the review processes because the work is being done on existing buildings.
- **Capital Flow:** Can the population withstand any type of rent increase?
 - ❖ Should the BHA status be changed as has been done with other PHA?
 - ❖ It may be good for Paul Dettman to attend a board meeting to educate the members.

There were no further questions from the board.



Section 8:

- There are 184 vouchers given to date, with 1 voucher left. This voucher should be filled by the end of the week.
- Leland Burdick retired after being the Section 8 HQS inspector for over 20 years. Dale from the Maintenance Department is the new inspector. Inspections are now done Tuesday, Wednesday, and half day on Thursdays. Dack also did the HQS training and can do inspections.
- There have been some issues with the internet while trying to do the online trainings. It is hoped that using a wired internet instead of WiFi will solve the technical problems.
- Thanks to Paul Dettman's help, Penny has access to the EIV software.
- Jonathan, Penny, and Laticia met with two delegates from the Vermont State Housing Authority to discuss how the two agencies can work together. There are similar issues when working with landlords and both Section 8 directors will meet with the landlords, as needed, to solve problems.
- There has been good attendance for the CRJ movie night which is held once a month.
- The Homework Club in Beech Court began at the beginning of October.

Facilities Report:

Dack expressed concern about how clear the picture will be with the new cameras. Sharyn questioned the placement of the cameras for the Willowbrook campus; suggesting either an additional camera or a larger one in a certain area. The cameras can be watched with a smartphone. The bids for the work will go out on November 1 and need to be back by November 15. There are some concerns about the environment the equipment will be installed in. Dack needs to talk to the network about the policy on how long video time is stored.

Public Housing:

- There were 5 - 6 interviews conducted for the Administrative Assistant position with 2 finalists called for second interviews. The new assistant will start November 5, 2018.
- Mary Gerisch agreed to be hired as a part-time staff member instead of per-diem.
- The tenant annual reviews have been sent with 7 termination letters sent.
- The amount of delinquent accounts are down.
- Mary will research getting computers donated for the Willowbrook Community Room. The plan is to have a small Tech Center for tenants to research paths to self-sufficiency.
- **Monthly check register:** Sharyn suggests writing one check for a vendor that has several accounts with the BHA.



Public Housing Con't:

- **Green Mountain Power:** Jonathan has been researching what seems to be an irregularity with the accounts. He is now tracking spending in this area. One check is issued for all accounts.

Sharyn motioned, Nancy second; passed unanimously.

Resolution #468: Sharyn moved, Nancy second; passed unanimously.

Resolution #469: Motion to approve. Sharyn moved, Nancy second; passed unanimously.

Resolution #470: On page 4 policy take the word "and" out. Sharyn moved, Paul second; passed unanimously.

The next BHA Board meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2018 in the Willowbrook Community Room.

There were no public questions or concerns.

Other business:

- Nancy Messina likes having the Public questions at the end of the meeting.
- Nancy suggested having 1 delegate for each project on the Resident Committee Come to the board meetings as a spokesperson for their project.
- It may be possible to attain a grant to fund tenant groups to help them facilitate events for the residents.
- Mary Gerisch will help with tenant advocacy issues.

Sharyn moved to end the meeting, Nancy second; Meeting ended at 6:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Laticia Gordon, Administrative Assistant

