



Pottstown Borough Land Bank

April 24, 2023

Ms. Penrod called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.

Roll Call: In attendance: Deb Penrod, Jamie Sanchez, Lisa Vanni, Solicitor Boell

Absent: Twila Fisher, Carol Kulp

Administration: Peggy Lee-Clark, Justin Keller, Winnie Branton, Melissa Shainline

Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 27, 2023: Ms. Sanchez made a motion to approve; Ms. Vanni seconded. Motion carried.

Financial Report:

Bank Statement 4/30/23 – Beginning balance: \$232,211.78; Two deposits came in. Four checks written in the total amount of \$3,865.51

Ending balance: \$228,346.27

Ms. Sanchez made a motion to approve; Ms. Vanni seconded. Motion carried.

Bills and Communications: Administrator Lee-Clark

- Invoice from Genesis Housing for \$17,941 for the Pottstown Homeowner Single System Rehab Program. Invoice was for new roofs for 948 Walnut and 562 Beech Street. Work was completed from December 2022 through February 2023. Ms. Sanchez made a motion to approve; Ms. Vanni seconded. Motion carried.
- One legal bill in the amount of \$1,200 to Fitzpatrick, Lentz & Bubba. Motion made by Ms. Sanchez; Ms. Vanni seconded. Motion passed.
- Two invoices from Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED) for Land Bank services rendered. March 17, 2023, invoice for \$525 at no charge to the Land Bank. Second invoice dated April 14, 2023, of the \$675 total only \$112.50 can be used from the PHARE Grant. Motion made by Ms. Vanni to pay the \$112.50 portion to PAED; Ms. Sanchez seconded. Motion passed.
- Finally, two invoices for the Borough from PAED for the \$500 monthly stipend; first one dated March 20, 2023, second one dated April 17, 2023. The Borough does pay it, but it needs to be approved by Land Bank first. Motion made by Ms. Vanni; Ms. Sanchez seconded. Motion passed.

Communications:

Senator Casey is going to be introducing Legislation known as Neighborhood and Land Bank Act – This would create two grants and allow land banks and other eligible entities to apply for \$10,000 annually. Administrator Lee-Clark will send the documentation out to the Board to look through. Motion made by Ms. Sanchez authorizing the Administrator to send an endorsement letter to Senator Casey's Office; Ms. Vanni seconded. Motion passed.

Report from Administrator and Consultant

1. Property Inquiries – There were none this month.
 - a. Follow up to 529 Beech Street: Solicitor Boell had staff run a title report. Administrator Lee-Clark reported that there are 11 municipal liens currently on the property from

years 2018 to 2021. There is a \$10,725 mortgage that is owed to a Bank. Solicitor Boell explained that if Land Bank took acceptance of property, the financial institution holding the mortgage would have the option to foreclose on the property. If you try and sell it, the mortgage would appear on the title search.

- b. Ms. Vanni suggested that Land Bank should continue to have conversations with Portnoff on this and other properties, but not pursue this property at this time.
2. Annual Report of Activities and Audit – The engagement letter was returned to Maillie LLP. Land Bank should be able to make the state’s May 1 submission deadline.

Land Bank Pre-Screening Applications

1. There was an inquiry this month. Administration followed up with the inquiry, but there are no formal applications.

Ms. Sanchez asked for a few minutes to discuss the Blighted Committee:

Currently on the Blighted list, owners are deceased for 3 properties on the list (308 ½ Union, 109 North Hanover, 57 North Hanover). Ms. Sanchez confirmed that a lot of the properties have not been County Certified Blighted. Ms. Penrod asked if the committee had interest in Land Bank pursuing these properties. Ms. Sanchez said no action at this point, this was just for discussion purposes.

Unfinished Business

1. 421 Hale Street & 439 Chestnut Street – Filed quiet title actions of the court. They are in the service process, posted on March 16. Working on the inheritance tax issue and will provide an update next month.
 - a. An issue has come up in regard to both properties being held: tax liabilities have through Montgomery County. The County is requiring the Land Bank go through an appeal process with each appeal costing \$200. Ms. Branton has looked into the process for other Land Banks in PA – there are examples across PA where Land Banks are not paying the fee or filing paperwork. Solicitor Boell suggested authorizing the Administrator to submit the applications with request to waive the fees. The exemption does not continue when the property goes to settlement. Ms. Vanni made a motion to authorize the Administrator to complete the Montgomery County tax-exempt applications for 421 Hale and 439 Chestnut; Ms. Sanchez seconded. Motion carried.
2. 948 Queen Street – The agreement is signed, and the process is moving forward.
3. Annual review of policies and procedures: Ms. Branton described the 3 major proposed changes:
 - a. 3.4 & 3.5 specific and inline with traditional real estate practices
 - b. 4.4 – deletion to language that was restricting the purchase price to be below fair market value
 - c. 4.9 – added language for special warranty deed. Ms. Vanni made a motion to approve the Policies and Procedures document as presented; Ms. Sanchez seconded Jamie. The motion was amended to state: Land Bank will publish the proposed revisions, seek public comment for 30 days and review them at next meeting. Amended motion carried. Ms. Vanni made a motion for Solicitor to publish revised policies and procedures for public comment; Ms. Sanchez

seconded. Motion carried.

4. Review of purchase application and agreement of sale: Solicitor Boell described his proposed changes to the documents:
 - a. The concept of title in these transactions through quitclaim was clarified. Title for property out of judicial sale using a quitclaim deed is exceptionally hard to get title insurance for. An application will not be a letter of intent; prospective purchaser is submitting and if awarded will need to accept these terms.
 - b. Title searches on properties – before we buy property at sale, Land Bank should make sure there is not a title issue that we would need to hold the property for an extended period. Federal liens are not discharged. Prospective end purchaser will need to verify the title search. The Agreement of Sale as revised is what we used for 948 Queen Street. The documents will be recirculated again for further discussion next month.

New Business:

Next month Conflict of Interest Policy will be discussed.

Blighted Tour is tentatively scheduled for May 17 at 4 PM, leaving from Borough Hall. Ms. Sanchez will have list of properties posted by May 8.

Next Meeting: May 22, 4:30 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned by a motion by Ms. Vanni at 5:43 p.m.