

LAND BANK AGENDA  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2019, 4:30 P.M.  
POTTSTOWN BOROUGH HALL  
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM



1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of minutes
  - a. June 24, 2019 meeting

Documents:  
[2019-06-24.pdf](#)
  - b. July 22, 2019 meeting

Documents:  
[2019-07-22.pdf](#)
  - c. August 26, 2019 meeting

Documents:  
[2019-08-26.pdf](#)
4. Bills and Communications
5. Report of the Executive Director or other appropriate staff
6. Unfinished Business
  - a. Update on Blighted Property List and coordinating with Blighted Property Review Committee
  - b. Update on Sheriff, Upset & Judicial Sales
7. New Business
  - a. Webpage Content
8. Adjournment

# **POTTSTOWN BOROUGH LAND BANK BOARD MEETING**

**June 24, 2019**

**4:30pm**

**Council Meeting Room**

## **1. Call to Order**

Chairman Penrod called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

## **2. Roll call**

Members Present: Debra Penrod, Cheryl Chiarello, Carol Kulp, Michael Mauger (arrived late)

Members Absent: Twila Fischer

Others Present: Justin Keller (Borough Manager), Winnie Branton (consultant to the Land Bank), Peggy Lee Clark (PAID), Craig Way (Mosaic Land Trust)

## **3. Public Comment**

None

## **4. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of minutes for April meeting were tabled until the next meeting. Andrew Monastra, Board Secretary, resigned at the end of the April meeting. Ms. Penrod will follow up with Mr. Monastra to see if minutes were taken.

## **5. Bills and Communications**

None

## **6. Report of the Executive Director or other appropriate staff**

Borough Manager Justin Keller informed the Board that Borough Council had approved the agreement for consulting services to be provided to the Land Bank by Branton Strategies LLC.

Peggy Lee Clark, Executive Director, Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID), advised the Board that, on advice of counsel and for other reasons, PAID was no longer interested in administering the Land Bank. Ms. Clark identified capacity, fiscal and other reasons for PAID's decision. Ms. Clark suggested that the Land Bank engage in discussions with the County Redevelopment Authority and County Commissioners on using the Land Bank as a pilot project and for longer-term collaboration. Chairman Penrod thanked Ms. Clark and PAID for considering this project and invited them to return in the future if position changed.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

- a. Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement (ICA) - ICA has been signed by the Borough, the Pottstown School District, and the Land Bank. Ms. Branton reviewed the ICA in general terms. The County is not a party to the ICA; any discharge or release of county taxes on property acquired by the Land Bank would need to be approved by the Commissioners.

- b. Grant Opportunities – Ms. Branton provided an overview of two state grant programs that could benefit the Land Bank: (1) Keystone Communities grants; and (2) the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency PHARE/RTT grants. Ms. Branton advised that the Westmoreland County and Schuylkill County Land Banks had received grants under both programs, and that other land banks also had success getting funding through these state programs. Ms. Clark and Mr. Keller reported that PAID and the Borough were exploring submitting a Keystone Communities grant application for this year. Ms. Branton suggested then that the Land Bank focus on considering applying for a PHARE/RTT grant from PHFA. The application deadline for that grant is November 2019. A request for proposal setting the deadline and providing other guidelines is expected to be released in August.

For property donations, Ms. Branton will follow up with Wells Fargo and other sources to see if there are any bank-owned properties that might be donated to the Land Bank as has been done in other places in Pennsylvania.

- c. Insurance –Tabled until next meeting.
- d. Blighted Property List – Discussion on how the Land Bank can work with the Blighted Property Review Committee. Ms. Clark suggested focusing on streets with multiple properties on the Blighted List. Ms. Chiarello noted that there are several properties in the 600 block of Walnut. Experienced developers are more likely to be interested multiple residential properties are available for acquisition and redevelopment. Ms. Penrod mentioned 566 High Street, next to the Historical Society’s building as a property for consideration by the Blighted Property Review Committee. Further discussion needed.
- e. Sheriff, Upset & Judicial Sales – No report.
- f. Record Retention Policy – Tabled until next meeting.

## **8. New Business**

- a. Election of Officers – Tabled until next meeting.
- b. Right to Know Policy – Tabled until next meeting.
- c. Public Education and Engagement – Ms. Penrod addressed the need to inform the public about the Land Bank and its mission. She suggested Hobart’s Run Investors Conference and Community Leaders Conference as opportunities to share the work of the Land Bank. Other opportunities include the Council Committee of the Whole meetings, Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission meetings.

## **9. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.

# **POTTSTOWN BOROUGH LAND BANK BOARD MEETING**

**July 22, 2019**

**4:30pm**

**Council Meeting Room**

## **1. Call to Order**

Chairman Penrod called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm.

## **2. Roll call**

Members Present: Debra Penrod, Cheryl Chiarello, Michael Mauger

Members Absent: Twila Fischer, Carol Kulp

Others Present: Justin Keller (Borough Manager), Winnie Branton (consultant to the Land Bank), Peggy Lee Clark (PAID), Craig Way (Mosaic Land Trust)

## **3. Public Comment**

None

## **4. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of minutes for April and June meetings were tabled until the next meeting.

## **5. Bills and Communications**

None

## **6. Report of the Executive Director or other appropriate staff**

Ms. Branton shared information on a possible process for acquisition and disposition of properties by the Land Bank. Sources for possible property acquisition include: municipal transfers, judicial sale list, donations and the blighted property list.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

- a. Insurance – P&G Brokers quotation was the lowest of the three quotes received. P&G provides this type of insurance to several other PA land banks.

Motion made to submit the application to P&G Brokers for liability insurance to cover Land Bank board members. Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Blighted Property List – Ms. Chiarello reported that Borough Solicitor Chuck Garner is updating the List, and that she will provide a copy of the updated list to the Board when it's available.
- c. Sheriff, Upset & Judicial Sales – No report.
- d. Record Retention Policy – Tabled until next meeting.

## **8. New Business**

- a. Election of Officers – Tabled until next meeting.

b. Right to Know Policy – Tabled until next meeting.

**9. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.

August 26, 2019 minutes of the Pottstown Borough Land Bank Board

Meeting called to order approximately 4:05 by Chair, Ms. Deb Penrod.

In attendance:

Board:	Others:
Deb Penrod	Winnie Branton (PBLB Administrator)
Twila Fisher	Peggy Lee-Clark
Cheryl Chiarello	Justin Keller
Michael Mauger	

Absent: Carol Kulp

Agenda Items:

- 1.) Minutes for April 22, June 24, and July 22 meetings could not be approved because they have not yet been submitted. Previous Secretary had resigned prior to April 22 meeting, and minutes for the April, June, and July meetings are still being prepared and reviewed for accuracy. Board intends to submit these minutes for approval at September meeting.
- 2.) No bills submitted or discussed.
- 3.) Election of officers. Chair Penrod calls for nominations for all officer positions: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, beginning with Chair. No new nominations for Chair. Chiarello moved to nominate Penrod for another term as Chair. Penrod calls for nominations for Vice Chair. No new nominations. Fisher moves to nominate Chiarello for another term as Vice Chair. Penrod calls for nominations for Secretary. Mauger nominates self for Secretary. Penrod calls for nominations for Treasurer, and subsequently nominates Fisher as Treasurer. Mauger moves for a vote to approve the new officers as follows:

Chair: Deb Penrod  
Vice Chair: Cheryl Chiarello  
Secretary: Michael Mauger  
Treasurer: Twila Fisher

Fisher seconds. Board votes by voice, and motion passes unanimously.

- 4.) Chair Penrod invites discussion on the PBLB's Right to Know Policy, on agenda as unfinished business. Fisher moves to approve the attached Right to Know Policy, and to appoint Ginny Takich as the PBLB's Right to Know Officer. Chiarello seconds. Motion passes by unanimous voice vote.
- 5.) Branton brings the Blighted Property List up for discussion. Branton and Fisher discuss the need for a single spreadsheet as a reference of various properties scheduled to be available at Judicial, Sheriff, Tax, and Upset sales.

Keller says he will work with L&I to compile accurate information on disfavored property owners, owners who are current or repeat violators of Borough codes. Says he will discuss this with Keith Place.

It is noted that Montgomery County does not notify the Borough and update the Borough when a property settlement occurs. Mauger asks what affect a real estate transfer has on a property's designation on the Blighted Property List. Chiarello says that nothing *automatically* changes. The new owner will receive notices of code violations, but there will be a delay so as to allow new owner to remedy violations they likely already know exist.

6.) Record Retention Policy brought up for discussion. It is noted that PBLB Solicitor Hovey had advised the Board that it is not necessary for Board to adopt an official record retention policy. Based on this, no policy is adopted.

7.) Discussion held on when a new PBLB policy must be approved by Borough Council. Noted that Solicitor Hovey advised that *not every* PBLB policy needs to be approved by Borough Council, only the initial "Policies and Procedures". Mauger disagrees. Notes that the language in the Borough Ordinance states that "The initial policies and procedures of the Land Bank and any subsequently adopted policies and procedures shall be approved by resolution of the Council." Mauger says he believes this means any formal policy adopted by PBLB needs to be approved by Council, but he is not the Solicitor, and so it is up to rest of Board how they want to proceed, and if they want to proceed as advised, there's nothing he can do about it. No action taken.

Mauger raises that Borough ordinance also requires the Policies and Procedures to be published on the Land Bank's website. Keller says they will work on that.

8.) Branton invokes discussion on ways to acquire properties for nominal consideration, namely Judicial sale, potential donations, and even banks/lenders.

Branton discusses the potential application for a grant via the PA Housing Affordability Fund's PHARE (PA Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund) Program. Advises that PBLB should seek out other groups/orgs/entities who are working to rehabilitate properties in our area and seek a collaboration for the grant application so that PBLB could act as conduit.

Grant application is due in November, and we need to start working now, but because PBLB is still young and getting off the ground, it would be helpful to work with a more established organization for purposes of obtaining grant funds.

Branton says grant applications generally do not need to identify specific properties, but should be able to give specifics on a budget.

Fisher asks what kind of funds are available through this grant. Branton responds that, in the past, it was \$25 million, but believes it *may* be increasing to \$40 million, although she is not sure when that goes into effect.

Fisher asks who would be writing grant. Keller responds he will work on this, potentially Courtney could do it.

9.) Board seeks public comment from those in attendance. Thomas Hylton in attendance. Seeking information on the operations of the Land Bank. Information Q&A about PBLB operations held for a couple minutes.

10.) With no further public comment or business, Mauger moves to adjourn. Fisher seconds. Meeting adjourns approximately 5:00 PM.