



Land Bank Board Agenda  
October 28, 2019, 4:30 p.m.  
Pottstown Borough Hall  
Council Meeting Room

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of minutes - September 23, 2019

Documents:

[2019-09-23.pdf](#)

4. Bills and Communications
5. Report of the Executive Director or other appropriate staff
6. Unfinished Business
  - a. PHARE Grant Application
  - b. Update on Blighted Property List and coordinating with Blighted Property Review Committee
  - c. Update on Sheriff, Upset & Judicial Sales
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

## POTTSTOWN BOROUGH LAND BANK BOARD

Meeting Minutes – September 23, 2019

4:32 Chair Deb Penrod calls meeting to order.

### Board Members Present:

- Deborah Penrod (DP)
- Cheryl Chiarello (CC)
- Mike Mauger (MM)
- Twila Fisher (TF)

### Board Members Absent:

- Carol Kulp

### Also Present:

- Winnie Branton (WB)
- Justin Keller (JK)
- Peggy Lee Clark (PC)

### Board Discussions & Actions:

- Three sets of minutes for prior months' meetings presented for Board Approval
- June 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes
  - o TF moved, CC seconded, approved unanimously
- July 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes
  - o CC moved, TF seconded, approved unanimously
- August 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes
  - o MM moved, CC seconded, approved unanimously
- Bills & Communications
  - o JK presents PBLB expenses by month/year since 2/20/17; notes recent payments re Professional Gov. Underwriters & Public Officials Professional Liability Insurance payments; notes will be one more payment added for September, approx. \$2,300 for services of Branton Strategies; notes Borough paying Branton consulting fees.
  - o TF asks – Any anticipated large expenses for Nov/Dec?
    - JK – No, and Branton expenses should start to dwindle unless we acquire properties.
  - o WB – What's Borough's plan for budget?
    - JK – To present initial budget in October, have talked about creating separate line item for PBLB b/c previously lumped into general legal expenses so this will help Borough track expenses associated.
    - TF – will it be same amount?

- JK – didn't really have PBLB in Borough budget previously, but legal was substantial b/c litigation unknown, etc., but will be based on previous years, plus still initial funding of \$20/25k for initial property transaction.
    - JK – will continue to look for ways to get property into LB to start getting revenue, couple prospects right now.
      - WB – PHAIR Grant – request for dollars for acquisitions. If properties are out there that would benefit Borough or fit within the P&P about sources of transfers, requests by borough, and if properties on blighted list and can't get in touch with owner, or owner wants out, those are opportunities if cost is known, can be used to apply for grant. Doesn't have to be specific property by property, but if there are some on there that are really hurting borough, can focus on these two or three and include them in the grant request.
- Discussion of specific properties for possible acquisition
  - DP – Potts Drive, not blighted yet.
  - TF – why are Pink houses on Grant not blighted?
    - DP – they are
    - TF – had been listed for \$18k
    - DP – high need
    - JK – will cost \$30k to clean them out.
  - DP – 566 East High in name of same woman since 1940 something since her death 40 years ago – goes in and out of tax delinquency & one on 207 Potts Drive which hasn't been blighted b/c BPRC hasn't been seen by all committee members. DP will encourage BPRC members to see it to get going with it.
  - C – property on Beech street ready to fall over
    - JK – we're prepping for that demolition.
- JK – revamped website, will be putting Policies and Procedures on the website
  - MM – something on webpage for property owners who may be interest?
    - WB – Definitely, sent document to DP and JK for website structure, should be one person coordinating website. Discusses implementing the website. Ask citizens to take photo and send property info to get data on blighted property committee
      - DP – Has Blighted Property Review Committee done something like this?
        - C – No.
    - TF – We'd need someone regularly checking these, and getting back to them that report was received.
    - WB – And remember, is there a County role here. Would need a R/E expertise.
  - DP – Does Borough get offers to donate now?
    - JK yes sometimes
      - DP – Do you?

- JK – rarely.
    - DP – and you don't solicit?
      - JK – No, but was hoping for LB
- TF – Community Development Block Grants used for demo of properties?
  - JK - yes but must be weighed against other projects like stormwater arches and rickets center, etc. Very competitive internally.
  - TF – Could we go to HUD for more CDBG funds now with this LB?
    - JK – Groups like Habitat also seek and receive awards for projects within Pottstown. Could LB apply on its own?
  - WB – Group applications are ideal for certain Grants. If not using CDBG for demo, then Borough should identify properties that *would* be demo'd if they could.
    - TF – Exactly, if we could show those as the value for CDBG funds.
    - JK – we do have SOME, but it's limited, and in a way it's easier to come up with money for demo as opposed to streetscape or arch project, which is why it's used less for demo.
    - DP – And for many the only hope for future use is demo
    - JK – Like one with tree growing through it on Grant street.
    - PC – From commercial – theory is rather start with two walls than no walls, and that is the type of development they do, they prefer a structure w/o demo
    - TF – but residential is different, they typically like to demo ahead of time.
- List presented to LB Board – list of potential properties, created w/ help from L&I, but it has been tedious, time consuming to get info from L&I. Question arises about L&I updating list of potential properties for LB
  - DP – L&I hasn't had much of a priority, but now that we have BPRC and LB, which is new to their L&I process, it gives them more motivation.
  - TF – what about the ones that say check for progress
  - DP – feel like it's not my role to check in with L&I, maybe JK can do this.
  - TF – we have to be able to give answers. There needs to be a process so that we can tell people we're working on it.
  - DP – can we sit down with Keith, I know they're busy, but we need to work on it.
  - JK – Now that we have this list, this is the first step.
- WB – Judicial sale is where LB has power; LB can be assigned liens, we wouldn't even have to bid.
  - Discussion ensues about judicial/sheriff sale process – seems to be inconsistencies in understanding of county procedure.
  - WB – Will talk to Janice about tax collection process. Want county to publish notice that LB can bid on these properties. Cautionary language b/c law isn't totally clear when they post the bid list. In case someone who is an owner may see their property listed and motivates them to pay up. Other reason is just cover LB b/c law isn't clear.

- WB – Need to also talk to Tax Claim Bureau about December Judicial/Upset sale list and figure out what County would require.
- JK – also want County to be aware of people who bad property owners who may be bad property owners.
- WB – want to set up meeting w/ Bill Caldwell in Treasurer’s office. One LB member to attend that meeting with JK

#### New Business

- DP – Webinar on Wednesday and October 2<sup>nd</sup> – email to be sent by WB. WB participating in Wednesday’s call. Guidelines to see what’s necessary. Thru PHFA. Lots of PHARE grants given to LB. LB want money for acquisitions. Money for acquire and demo. Don’t need to have control of them to actually apply for the grants. If connected/near other projects, it helps.
- DP – Who’s doing grant writing? Courtney or WB?
  - JK – Depends on Courtney’s workload.
  - WB – I have a partner who is good at this and I can talk to him about it.
- MM – offers to handle whatever is needed for website, suggests liaison between L&I.
  - DP says she’s basically serving that role right now.
  - JK – Presentation given to Borough previously about LB should be on website.
  - WB – will look into own previous presentations to see if they should go on there.
- WB – had done blight to light breakfast

5:29 – meeting adjourned.