

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.