



Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, Inc.

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Serving Counties of: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie

GREATER MOHAWK VALLEY LAND BANK - GMVLB Minutes from: Monday, August 15, 2017 @ 5:00 PM

In Attendance:

Ray Johnson – Vice Chairman, Mark Domenico – Director, Margaret Kennedy – Director, Brian Thomas - Secretary, Tolga Morawski - Interim Executive Director, Kurt Ackerman – Director, Steve Wilson – Director, Robert Albrecht – Community Outreach Coordinator, Christina Brown - Community Advisory Board, Cabryn Gurdo – AmeriCorps, Heidi Sourwine – AmeriCorps & Janine Thompson – MVEDD

On Conference Phone:

Joe Marino – Treasurer, Erik Scrivener – Director & Susan Marie Weber – AmeriCorps

Ray Johnson in the absence of Karl Gustafson called the meeting to order @ 5:04 pm.

- The documents provided for the meeting were;
 - Agenda
 - Minutes from GMVLB meeting held Tuesday, June 13th, 2017, rev.1
 - The Ayers Law Firm, PLLC – Retainer Agreement
 - MOU Worthy Partners – proposal for Community Partners
 - L. B. Berdan & Co., Inc. Appraisal Report
 - Quickbooks Online - Activity Detail Report
 - Article 19-A Presentation on Vacant and Abandoned Properties
 - Updates from AmeriCorps workers
 - Update from Bob Albrecht
 - Letter to Helene @ LISC from Karl Gustafson

Adopt Meeting Agenda: a motion was made by Meg Kennedy, seconded by Mark Domenico to accept the agenda as presented, motion so carried.

Minutes from June 13th, 2017: Ray asked everyone about the minutes from the last meeting and Tolga advised that he still had revisions and would get with Janine to finalize them. Brian also said he would like more time to review them. A motion to table approving the minutes was made by Brian Thomas, seconded by Kurt Ackerman, and so carried.

- Ray then moved to the **Electronic Votes:**
 - Appraisal of **48-54 West Main St. – Hannah’s Building, Little Falls.** Tolga advised that an electronic vote had taken place on the selection of Len Berdan to perform an appraisal on the property. The vote passed. Tolga has provided an electronic copy of the appraisal to all board members. The property was appraised at \$155,000. Tolga mentioned that from Helene’s email response @ LISC that the price seems to be higher than what they are comfortable in paying. Tolga will put together more information and possibly see about other funding. LISC is more willing to do renovations. The Newburgh Land Bank used CDBG and other small grants to purchase a building for their use and AG funds toward demo, others to renovate. Karl had asked Helene for a site visit. At this point there is another offer for the building. We are on board with the idea and go ahead with a project of this type then seek funding. If rehabbing it’s going to be our office, not rehab & sell. We would have to

get back to LISC on a case by case basis for funding. Ray asked if we could do a comparison of the property in Little Falls & the property in Herkimer. Kurt stated that we need to move quicker and if we purchased property in Little Falls it would be less of an impact taken on the tax roll than in Herkimer. Christine stated that we need to just move forward.

- Acceptance of donation of **330 North Prospect St. in Herkimer** from Chase bank CCRP, this was also approved electronically by the Board of Directors with conditions. Tolga has contacted the Village of Herkimer Chief Code Enforcement Officer about the conditions/questions (re zoning and allowable use for the property).
- Vote to pay **Spruce Ridge Trucking & Excavation** for the overage on the Wagner House Demolition. Quote was for \$21,750 for the whole project with the municipality contributing \$10K, but the overall cost came in at \$28,590. That was a \$6,840 overage. The Village is covering \$2,300 of that leaving an overage of \$4,540. The finance committee approved this amount on 8/14/17. There would be two tractor trailer loads over the initial quote. Ray Johnson made motion to pay up to \$4,540 over the initially approved amount (for a total balance of \$14,540), seconded by Steve Wilson, and so carried. Ray mentioned that we should have some kind of wording to cover overages of this type in the future.

Old Business:

- **Monthly Meeting Schedule:** discussion was held on trying to get all directors to reply to meeting dates and that Heidi had been reaching out to each to determine good days of the month for future meetings. Decided to move forward with a schedule with the 1st Thursday of every month and alternate the time from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Then the committee meetings to be held the on the 4th Thursday of the month with the time up to the Committee Chairman. Motion to accept this schedule was made by Kurt Ackerman, seconded by Mark Domenico and so carried. The next meeting will be September 7th @ 5:00 pm and then October 5th @ 1:00 pm.
- The meeting was then moved ahead on the agenda to **Finance** as Joe has to leave the meeting early.
 - Tolga mentioned that Finance Committee meetings have been held to discuss policy & procedures and the budget. There had been a "Draft Budget" sent out to all directors back in June. Joe spoke about the draft and that we need to move forward with a vote so that we can proceed with the policies, procedures, hiring, etc. A motion to accept the "**Draft Budget**" was made by Ray Johnson seconded by Kurt Ackerman and was approved by all present except for Steve Wilson as the budget was not present to view. Tolga will forward another copy of the draft budget to all directors via email.
 - Christine asked that we table the Policies & Procedures until the next meeting as we are waiting on some to be completed and/or approved by committees.
 - Ray had suggested simply hiring Tolga for the Executive Director versus not knowing what you're going to get in the process and with continuing to go with one or two month extensions. Joe countered that saying we should continue the search for the ED position for transparency sake, since we have advertised the position widely, and in fairness to find the best candidate. Should we go through the process and give Tolga a 2 month extension to give the search committee time to go through the process, Christine mentioned offering Tolga a contract through the end of the year. Tolga mentioned that he preferred just a 2 month extension and that if we don't get someone here soon, he will leave as he needs assistance. Joe Marino made a motion to extend Tolga's contract to 2 months, Meg Kennedy seconded the motion, and was so carried.
 - We need to get an administrative assistant first. Interviews should happen within the next week or two so that we have a few select candidates to vote on at the next meeting. Heidi is to forward the resumes' to the board for the 3 positions. Heidi stated that there were about 20 resumes for Project Manager, 60 for Administrative Assistant and 20 or less for Executive Director.

- Joe Marino left the call at 6:47 pm
- The meeting was then moved back to **Old Business:**
 - **48-54 West Main Street, Little Falls, Hannah's Building** – Tolga asked if the board would like to move forward with acquiring it, tabling it or what, should we make an offer on the building. All agreed that they liked the building and thinks it's a good idea. The community foundation \$100,000 grant was for rehab only. Need the use of the capital to move forward. The land bank needs to show sustainability to LISC. Bob had stated that Helene may feel the board may not have the ability to make these decisions in their resumes, experience, and finance. Tolga is looking for a motion to make an offer for sustainability on the Hannah's Building contingent on the future space of Land Bank office and income. Christine mentioned she had a conversation with the realtor and they advised her that they had a full price offer of \$165,000. Steve mentioned that maybe if we wrote a letter stating why we are capable and what we are looking for that it may help and that we have the skills & capacity to do this project. Tolga stated that we need to be careful as she controls the settlement/grant monies and is reportable for the Land Bank's work. We should have a symbolic motion for board support to Helene @ LISC towards the sustainability on the Hannah's Building. Motion was made by Ray Johnson, seconded by Kurt Ackerman and so carried.
 - **Progress on a MOU/MOA for partner groups for an attorney** – Bob passed out a hand-out on Worthy Partners and GMVLB: A proposal Community Partners Scope of Service. Bob spoke about the handout and asked the Board members to look at and get back to Bob with any feedback. Tolga then mentioned that John Sidd does not do Municipalities Law. Reach out to Ken Ayers – max 5 hrs – up to \$1,500 max. A motion to hire Ken Ayers for a maximum of 5 hours and up to a maximum of \$1,500 to do a Memorandum of Understanding template for partner groups, motion made by Kurt Ackerman, seconded by Ray Johnson, and so carried.
 - **Required ABO training for BOD members** – Tolga mentioned that the board members that have not completed this need to do so as soon as they can. Erik, Kurt, Steve and Meg are the remaining directors to do this.
 - **Report of Committees** – All committees must have three (3) board members on them. The committees can meet in person or on the phone. Discussion held on which committees need volunteers, the following was the outcome:
 - Hiring Committee: Ray Johnson, Kurt Ackerman, Brian Thomas
 - Finance & Audit Committee: Joe Marino, Steve Wilson, Kurt Ackerman, along with the Executive Board
 - Project Selection Review Committee: Brian Thomas, Erik Scrivener, Mark Domenico
 - Governance Committee: Steve Wilson, Meg Kennedy, need an additional member
 - Policy & Procedures Committee: Meg Kennedy, need two additional members
 - Space Committee: Kurt Ackerman, need two additional members
 - **Hiring/Search** – Ray asked for Tolga and any others to provide him a set of questions that should be asked during interviews. Tolga mentioned that an ad was going to be placed in the Observer Dispatch and while the cost of \$450.00 was under his signing authority he just wanted to let the board know about and tacitly approve this expense.
 - **Policies & Procedures** – Meg Kennedy & Chris Brown will circulate the remainder of the revised policies prior to the next month's meeting.
 - **Project Selection** – discussion was held on trying to come up with a submission form, donation letter template and exploring property management software. Suggestion was made to have a lawyer look at officially once there is a draft. Will also look into what funds may be available via LISC Code Enforcement grants to help cover the cost of software for the property inventory.

- **Herkimer County** – Tolga mentioned properties in Ilion and that they have a vote coming up at their September meeting on supporting the Land Bank. Kurt asked that Tolga let him know when the meeting is as he would like to go too. There are properties on Lester Ave., View Terrace & Maple Ave. that are in danger of collapse due to damage during the 2013 floods. There are seven remaining properties from the “pre-limbo” list including: 20-22 West Ave., Ilion; 156 Main Rd, Herkimer; 55 Glen Ave, 208 Loomis St, 32 & 76-78 Furnace St, East Mill St – all in Little Falls. The Project Selection Committee would like to invite Ray to their next meeting to discuss these properties. West Winfield is also supposed to vote to support the Land Bank in September.
- **Montgomery County** – Discussion was held on where to put the limestone from the Wagner House project. The demolition contractor quoted \$1900 to remove. The estimated resale value would be \$10k or more. We received an offer to store it at MVC’s West Hill School in Canajoharie through October 31, 2018 for no cost. Ray Johnson made a motion to pay up to \$1,900.00 for the movement of the limestone, seconded by Meg Kennedy and so passed. A motion was made by Ray Johnson to store the limestone @ the above mentioned school at no cost; the motion was seconded by Kurt Ackerman and passed unanimously.
- Village of Fort Plain – Tolga obtained quotes on appraisals for the car wash at 27 Hancock St., Fort Plain. The quote of \$700 from L. Berdan & Co., Inc. was the lowest bid. A motion was made by Ray Johnson to proceed with L. Berdan & Co., Inc. to provide an appraisal on the Car Wash property located at 27 Hancock St., Fort Plain. The motion was seconded by Kurt Ackerman and passed unanimously.
- Town of Mohawk property outside of Fonda, 891 State Route 334, Mohawk, NY 12068. Wells Fargo has offered the property with \$10k. Have a contractor in to evaluate the property and write up costs. Tolga looking for a motion to acquire the property, counter offer the donation based on costs. Tolga mentioned that the Project Selection Committee approved taking on this project. A motion was made by Ray Johnson to proceed with an offer pending the cost evaluation, seconded by Meg Kennedy, passed unanimously.
- **Otsego County** – Tolga met with the City of Oneonta on a report consisting of 8 properties for their September meeting. They were looking at contacting the owners for donation then take to project list.
- **Rome** – Tolga advised that there are 3 properties pending. He is awaiting a vote from the city; two are rehabs and one is a possible demolition. Once they hear from the city then it will move to the full GMVLB Board as the properties have already passed the Project Selection Committee.
- **Schoharie County** – Steve Wilson mentioned that codes/treasurers/representatives from the different towns & villages. Peter Johnson, Schoharie Village Community Development, project managers and SALT will assist in County demolitions. The Committees run out of SALT not the County. The County Supervisors have shown mixed support for the Land Bank but feels a few successes will quickly change that. The Towns & Villages are really interested. Potential: Cobleskill, Schoharie Town, Carlisle and Wright. There is a property in the Town of Wright that could be a donation for demolition as it has public safety issues. Tolga was looking for a motion to accept the property from the owner. Was working with Lloyd, Jerrine @ SALT, conditional on Tauge’s Supervisor getting him to sign off. Need address of the specific property also. Ray Johnson made a motion to accept the property pending the physical address and Tauge’s Supervisor signing off, seconded by Meg Kennedy, so carried.
 - Central Bridge & Village of Schoharie – A walking survey of Central Bridge will be performed by Cabryn & Heidi in September.

- **Utica** – pursuing three properties with Brian & Joe, expect to move them to full board in September; 613 Columbia St. which would be a demolition; 2 others that are Bank REO properties, the Property Selection committee had a few questions that Brian is researching.
 - Meg mentioned at the Hartwick Town meeting, they mentioned a building falling down and the Public Safety Officer asked who brings it to the attention of the Land Bank. It should be brought before the FGU. Heidi is circulating the form that is to be used to submit a property. Erik will get in touch with Meg.
- **Update on Video Conference Systems** – Brian Pokorny, IT Director of Otsego County was taking the lead on this but Erik Scrivener reported that Brian has said he will not be able to help after all. Steve Wilson asked to include the Schoharie County IT. All agreed the teleconference unit was difficult to hear and should be replaced.
- **Written Reports** – were provided from Bob, Susan, Cabryn & Heidi
- **Outstanding Bills:**
 - **Jessie Ravage** – training of AmeriCorps workers Cabryn & Heidi on research methods in Montgomery County, \$1,038.35.
 - **LISC bills** - for the remainder of service time for the AmeriCorps members, \$19,600.
 - Motion to pay the above bills was made by Ray Johnson, seconded by Kurt Ackerman and so carried.
 - **AmeriCorps 2017-2018, 1 position** - Tolga mentioned that there may be one (1) position available for 2017-2018 and would the board be willing to apply for another AmeriCorps worker. The whole cost is \$28,000 of which the land bank would pay \$14,000 of this amount. A motion was made by Kurt Ackerman to proceed with applying for one position at \$14,000, conditional on getting the grant, motion seconded by Ray Johnson and so carried.

New Business:

- Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session for personal items made by Meg Kennedy, seconded by Ray Johnson @ 6:50 pm.
- Motion to come out of Executive Session was made by Kurt Ackerman, seconded by Ray Johnson
- Motion to Adjourn @ 7:11 pm was made by Ray Johnson, seconded by Kurt Ackerman

Respectively submitted by Janine Thompson