



LOWER SOUTH VALLEY LAND BANK
BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2024
9:00 AM
VIA ZOOM

MINUTES

I. ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER

Members present: Carl Byra, Sam Guesto, Donna Wall, Joe Hillan, Dave Wilson, Ronald Jones, Paul Keating

Members excused: Rick Oravic

Staff present: Sara Hailstone, Shannon Calluori

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

III. MINUTES

A motion was made by Carl Byra and seconded by Dave Wilson to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2024 board meeting.

Approved 7-0

IV. FINANCE REPORT

Donna Wall reported on the January bank statement. She also reported that the Land Bank received a \$200,000 deposit in PHARE funding in January 2024.

V. STAFF REPORT

A. Tax exempt status

Shannon Calluori reported that Attorney Slusser indicated that he will file a tax appeal later this year that will become effective in 2025. He will also reach out to the municipal, county, and school district solicitors to ask them to exempt the Land Bank from paying taxes.

B. Quiet title action

Shannon Calluori reported that Attorney Slusser is in the process of preparing consolidated quiet title action for seven properties acquired during the August 2023 Judicial Tax Sale. The Land Bank will not receive the deed for the eighth property, 775 Hazle Street, until the pending court case is resolved.

C. Hanover Township

Shannon Calluori reported the Attorney Slusser contacted the Hanover Township solicitor regarding initiating quiet title action on the eight properties Hanover Township is interested in transferring to the Land Bank. The Hanover Township solicitor suggested that the Land Bank complete the quiet title action. Sam Guesto suggested that this work is paid for from the funding Hanover Township provided to the Land Bank to support Hanover Township related work.

A motion was made by Donna Wall and seconded by Paul Keating to request Attorney Slusser to prepare consolidated quiet title action on the eight properties.
Approved 7-0

D. Municipality of Kingston

Shannon Calluori reported that Attorney Slusser advised that the next step with the two blighted properties in bankruptcy is to continue to issue code enforcement notices.

Paul Keating and Donna Wall will send Shannon Calluori copies of their most recent code enforcement letters for the properties identified for Land Bank intervention. Shannon will provide comments on the letters. A discussion was held about when to engage an engineer in the code enforcement process. It was discussed that the engineer engaged by the Land Bank may be asked to attend a court hearing to support the Land Bank/municipality's case regarding blighted properties.

E. City of Nanticoke

Shannon Calluori reported that she tried to contact the Prospect Street and Washington Street property owners via telephone. She will continue to try to reach them via telephone. She will also send a follow up certified letter to the Prospect Street, Washington Street, and Noble Street property owners and request that they contact her to discuss their properties.

F. Ashley Borough

Sam Guesto reported that Ashley Borough received a letter from Luzerne County regarding the Land Bank's repository bid. The Land Bank should receive title to the property in the near future.

G. Audit engagement letter

Shannon Calluori reported that Attorney Slusser is reviewing the audit engagement letter. After Attorney Slusser completes his review, Donna Wall will sign the letter.

H. ARPA extension request

Shannon Calluori reported that staff submitted an ARPA extension request to Luzerne County for their consideration.

I. PA Land Bank Network

Shannon Calluori reported that she reached out to the PA Land Bank Network regarding their use of relators in support of Land Bank property disposition. The City of Lancaster and the County of Westmoreland Land Banks both have engaged realtors to support their work.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review disposition policies

The Board will review the disposition policies at the March 13, 2024 meeting.

B. Review engineering proposals

Shannon Calluori provided an overview of the two proposals for engineering services. A motion was made by Sam Guesto and seconded by Donna Wall to approve the Penn Eastern Engineers, LLC proposal.

Approved 7-0

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM.