



**LOWER SOUTH VALLEY LAND BANK**

**BOARD MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2023**

**9:00 AM**

**EARTH CONSERVANCY, 101 S MAIN STREET, ASHLEY BOROUGH**

**MINUTES**

**I. ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER**

Members present: Sam Guesto, Donna Wall, Joe Hillan, Dave Wilson, Paul Keating, Ronald Jones, Rick Oravic (via telephone)

Members excused: Carl Byra

Staff present: Sara Hailstone, Shannon Calluori, Chris Slusser (via telephone)

Others present: Gail Conrad

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**III. MINUTES**

A motion was made by Sam Guesto and seconded by Paul Keating to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2023 board meeting.

Approved 7-0

A motion was made by Rick Oravic and seconded by Dave Wilson to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2023 board meeting.

Approved 7-0

**IV. FINANCE REPORT**

Donna Wall reported on recent Land Bank expenses. Sam Guesto reminded the Board that the Land Bank is required to spend the Luzerne County ARPA money by June 30, 2024.

Sam and Sara Hailstone indicated that there may be an opportunity to extend that timeframe if the Land Bank provides a solid spending plan to the county.

**V. STAFF REPORT**

**1. Judicial Sale**

Attorney Slusser reported on the next steps with the properties the Land Bank acquired at the August Luzerne County judicial sale:

- Luzerne County courts may take up to six month to confirm the judicial sale.
- Luzerne County will provide the Land Bank with deeds to the properties within 30 days of the confirmation hearing.
- Attorney Slusser will initiate quiet title action.

In a response to a question from Sam Guesto, Attorney Slusser indicated that the Land Bank can issue an RFP for demolition engineers and contractors in January to prepare for when the Land Bank takes ownership of the judicial sale properties. Attorney Slusser advised that the RFP should request that the bidders hold the bid for 60 days. Sara Hailstone clarified that ARPA funds require work to be bid through an RFP unless the work falls under the small purchase price. Shannon Calluori will prepare an RFP for review by the Board.

Sam Guesto reported that he had a letter delivered to the tenants of 775 Hazle Street. The letter, drafted by Attorney Slusser, let the tenants know that the property was owned by the Land Bank and provided Sam's contact information.

Shannon Calluori will reach out to the PA Landbanks Network to understand the timeline for court confirmation for other counties to determine the timeline for judicial sale court confirmation in other counties.

## 2. Property Acquisition

Shannon Calluori shared a draft property acquisition process for properties acquired outside of the judicial sale process. The Board agreed with the outlined process with one change. For Amicable Acquisition, the Land Bank staff will email the Board when outreach to property owners is conducted; the Board does not need a formal vote on initial outreach to property owners. See the attached process, as revised following the discussion during the meeting.

Shannon Calluori will reach out to Elite Revenue Services to better understand why some properties with high amounts of back taxes have not gone to tax sale.

Ashley Borough would like to bid on 56 N Main Street, Parcel ID: 01-I9SE4-017-021-000, a parcel in the Luzerne County repository. A motion was made by Joe Hillan and seconded by Donna Wall to pass Resolution 2023-03 to bid \$500 (plus the \$100 administrative fee) to acquire the property.

Approved 7-0

Sara Hailstone will request rehabilitation guidelines from Luzerne County.

As reported previously to the Board through an email, the property that Newport Township intended to bid on during the September Luzerne County Upset Sale was sold prior to the sale; Newport Township did not bid on the property.

Shannon Calluori reported that Luzerne County cancelled the Upset Sale/Judicial Sale that was tentatively scheduled for November 2, 2023.

Sam Guesto asked Shannon Calluori to share the website address for the Luzerne county-owned properties. Shannon will also share the updated Luzerne County repository list.

3. Funding Opportunity

The Board agreed that the Land Bank will apply for 2024 PHFA PHARE funding in the amount of \$200,000 to support Land Bank priorities.

4. Code of Conduct

A motion was made by Sam Guesto and seconded by Paul Keating to approve the LSV Land Bank Code of Conduct required by the Luzerne County ARPA funds.

Approved 7-0

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Auditor

Shannon Calluori relayed to the Board that the PA Land Banks Law requires the Land Bank to submit an audit to the state within 120 days after the end of the fiscal year. The Board requested that Shannon Calluori draft and release an RFP for an auditor.

2. 2024 Budget

Shannon Calluori will share a draft 2024 budget at the November Board meeting for review.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Paul Keating and seconded by Joe Hillan to adjourn the meeting.

Approved 7-0