



**LOWER SOUTH VALLEY LAND BANK
ANNUAL BOARD MEETING & BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2024
EARTH CONSERVANCY, 101 S MAIN STREET, ASHLEY BOROUGH
9:00 AM**

ANNUAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

I. ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER

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

Members excused: Paul Keating, Rick Oravic

Staff present: Sara Hailstone, Shannon Calluori, Chris Slusser

II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A motion was made by Sam Guesto and seconded by Carl Byra to keep the same officers in 2024 as 2023: Donna Wall, Chair; Paul Keating, Vice Chair; Joe Hillan, Secretary; Dave Wilson, Treasurer.

Approved 6-0

III. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Joe Hillan and seconded by Donna Wall to adjourn the meeting.

Approved 6-0

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

I. ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER

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

Members excused: Paul Keating, Rick Oravic

Staff present: Sara Hailstone, Shannon Calluori, Chris Slusser

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

III. MINUTES

A motion was made by Sam Guesto and seconded by Dave Wilson to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2023 board meeting.

Approved 6-0

IV. FINANCE REPORT

Donna Wall reported that the City of Nanticoke deposited \$30,000 into the Land Bank bank account to support Nanticoke specific work. Hanover Township previously deposited \$30,000 into the Land Bank bank account to support Hanover Township specific work.

V. STAFF REPORT

a. Tax Exemption Status

The Land Bank received a tax bill for 128 W Main Street in Newport Township. Attorney Slusser will research what the Land Bank needs to provide Luzerne County in order to qualify for tax exemption status and appeal the existing tax bill.

b. Judicial Sale

Attorney Slusser has four of the eight deeds from the August Judicial Sale. Elite Revenue Services will send the remaining four deeds ASAP. Attorney Slusser will file expedited quiet title action on all eight properties. It is anticipated that the quiet title action will take between 45 and 60 days to process.

c. RFQ for Engineering Services

The Board discussed a need to engage an engineering firm to provide engineering support for land bank work. Several municipalities already have demolition projects in mind and want to be ready to move forward early in 2024. The engineering firm would draft demolition specifications and provide other engineering support.

A motion was made by Sam Guesto and seconded by Carl Byra to release an RFQ for engineering services.

Approved 6-0

d. Luzerne County ARPA Funding

The Board asked staff to submit a Luzerne County ARPA modification request to extend the date to spend the funds.

e. Bankruptcy Law

Attorney Slusser's team drafted a memo regarding the bankruptcy law and how it applies to blighted property eminent domain and the conservatorship law. As a next step, Attorney Slusser's team will reach out to the bankruptcy trustee and discuss the two properties of concern for the Municipality of Kingston. Paul Keating will continue code enforcement efforts with these two properties.

f. Property Updates

a. Disposition

Shannon Calluori will draft disposition policies for review by the Board to include a draft RFP for selling properties and a draft developers agreement.

b. Municipal Updates

- Staff met with the City of Wilkes-Barre and the City of Nanticoke regarding priority properties to research.
- Hanover Township: Attorney Slusser will review the seven title searches received to date with Shannon Calluori and discuss next steps. Four of the properties under consideration are owned by the Township. Attorney Slusser will ask the Hanover Township solicitor to complete quiet title action on these properties; then the Township will transfer them to the Land Bank.
- Ashley Borough: the Land Bank is waiting on a response from the County repository for one property for which we submitted a bid.
- Wilkes-Barre: Attorney Slusser's office requested title searches for three properties.
- Municipality of Kingston: Staff sent letters to two property owners; no response to date.
- Newport Township: Joe Hillan stated that he will use Land Bank money to demolish 48 Newport Street when it is time to move forward with demolition. He previously thought he would use other demolition grant money, but the money has been spent on other projects.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Review Auditor RFP responses and select vendor

Shannon Calluori stated that the two firms that previously submitted RFPs for audit services submitted revised cost proposals. The Board agreed to select the firm with the lower cost proposal.

A motion was made by Joe Hillan and seconded by Carl Byra to approve the Prociak & Associates, LLC proposal for audit services.

Approved 6-0

VII. NEW BUSINESS

None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Sam Guesto seconded by Carl Byra to adjourn the meeting.

Approved 6-0