

**LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
November 10, 2016**

The regular meeting of the Lackawanna County Land Bank was held on November 10, 2016 in the Conference Room of the Commissioners' offices at 200 Adams Avenue in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

At 10:00 AM Chairman O'Malley called the meeting to order and asked for all to join in the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call was taken by Mr. George Kelly (member)
Commissioner O'Malley (Chairman) - Present
Henry Deecke – Excused Absence
Linda Aebli – Present
Marion Gatto – Present
Terrence McDonnell – Excused Absence
Steve Pitoniak – Present

Also present were Atty. Joseph Colbassani, Land Bank Legal Counsel, Ron Koldjeski, Director Tax Claim Office, and Ralph Pappas, Business Relations Manager, Department of Economic Development

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

No public comment at this time.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mrs. Aebli and seconded by Mrs. Gatto to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2016 regular meeting as prepared.

All in Favor

PRESENTATION of VOUCHERS for EXAMINATION and APPROVAL

Mr. Kelly presented, for examination and approval, a listing of voucher expenditures for the months of October through November. There was one voucher. A check in amount of \$1,000.00 made payable to Atty. Colbassani for legal services.

Motion was made by Mr. Pitoniak and seconded by Mrs. Aebli to approve the voucher.

All in Favor

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Land Bank Work Session

Mr. Kelly gave an update on the work session that was held on Friday, November 4, 2016. At the work session members of the advisory group were introduced. A joint meeting of all the neighborhood groups was discussed. The purpose of the meeting will be to communicate the mission of the land bank. The process of transferring the properties from the repository list to the land bank was also discussed.

Scranton Advisory Committee Update

Mr. Kelly stated that at the last meeting, the board made a motion to approve Mayor Courtright's appointments to Land Bank Advisory Committee from the City of Scranton. At today's meeting the appointments will be ratified. The Scranton School Board's two appointments to Advisory Committee will also be approved at today's meeting. Mr. Kelly stated the advisory committee is now established. The public and any neighborhood groups are invited to attend the meetings of the advisory committee.

b) Neighborhood Meeting Update

Chairman O'Malley stated that a joint neighborhood meeting was a great idea to get the mission of the Land Bank out to public. Mr. Kelly further elaborated by stating that he plans on inviting the neighborhood groups and the public to attend the meeting either at Lackawanna College or the Theater at North to talk about the Land Bank and what it means to the Community-and listen to the various groups and find out their priorities in their neighborhoods. This will be done in conjunction with other organizations such as NeighborWorks to talk about the land bank and also address blight. Mr. Kelly also stated that after the general meeting and with the assistance of NeighborWorks, smaller meetings will be held with various neighborhood groups. He stated that, hopefully, we can get the general meeting together within the next two to three weeks.

c) First Round of Property Acquisitions

Mr. Kelly stated that at the last meeting the board took the steps to acquire the first 100 properties. The staff, along with some of the neighborhood groups, started to analyze the properties on the repository list and decide what properties would make the most sense to bring into land bank. Some are those properties that someone or an organization had expressed an interest in acquiring. There are some properties with structures that could be rehabilitated. Also included are buildable lots and properties available for the side lot program. Mr. Kelly stated at today's meeting we are looking to ratify the motion that was made at the last meeting to acquire the first 100 properties. Mrs. Aebli had some questions

regarding the 100 properties to be acquired. She specifically addressed a properties on the demolition list. She is going to check on whether the CDBG funds would have to be paid back.

Attorney Colbasanni stated that since the work session, he has been in touch with several representatives from other land banks as well as Attorney Joe Joyce, solicitor for the tax claim bureau. He was able to get a copy of a sample deed from the Westmoreland County Land Bank. He will have to revise it to meet our requirements.

Mr. Koldjeski stated that his office will use the normal process of reaching out to the taxing districts to get their approvals. Mr. Koldjeski also pointed out that some of the properties on the list of 100 properties already contained the names of interested parties. Mr. Kelly explained that just because someone or an organization has shown an interest in a property doesn't necessarily mean they will get it. Properties will go through a process for disposition. Properties will be advertised on the website. We will then give other interested parties the opportunity to bid on a property. Exceptions to this process may be properties in the Pittsburgh plan. We want to make sure that there is full transparency and the public knows who is getting the properties and the plan for the properties. We will be looking to both the land bank board and the advisory board for guidance on this process. Mr. Koldjeski then explained his process when accepting a bid on a repository property. Now, when the tax claim bureau receives a bid on a property, there is three day waiting period. This three day waiting period gives someone else a chance to bid on a property. That process will remain the same. Mr. Kelly stated for the land bank it will be at least 15 days after we receive a bid and the property is posted. That way it gives other interested parties the opportunity to bid on the property. If we receive more than one bid or proposal on a property, the bids or proposals will be reviewed with the advisory committee to determine the best use of the property. Mr. Koldjeski then wanted to clarify the tax claims office's role if the board passes the resolution to acquire the 100 properties. He stated that he will take the list, send it to the Scranton School District and the City of Scranton Council for their approval. Once the approval is received, the properties will be transferred by deed to the Land Bank and his office is no longer involved.

d) Land Bank Website

Mr. Kelly informed the board that the staff met with a website design firm that completed a website for the Lackawanna Luzerne Metropolitan Planning Organization of PennDot. We asked them to take a look at it so we can understand the scope of what is involved. The proposal was received from the company, however the cost was double what we thought it would be. Mr. Kelly stated we will go out for a request for proposals. Until that happens, Land Bank information will continue to be placed on the Land Bank link on the Economic Development website.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to create a Request for Proposals for the Land Bank website. Motion was seconded by Mr. Pitoniak.

All in Favor

ACTION ITEMS

- a) **Resolution #16-009 ratifying Mayor William Courtright's appointments to Scranton's Advisory Committee.**

A motion was made by Mrs. Aebli and seconded by Mrs. Gatto to approve Resolution # 16-009.

All in Favor

- b) **Resolution # 16-010 approving the Scranton School Districts appointments to Scranton's Advisory Committee**

A motion was made by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Pitoniak to approve Resolution # 16-010.

All in Favor

- c) **Resolution #16-011 ratifying the Acquisition of One Hundred Properties from the City of Scranton's Tax Claim Repository of Unsold Property**

A motion was made by Mr. Pitoniak and seconded by Mrs. Gatto to approve Resolution # 16-011.

All in Favor

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Ron Koldjeski-Clarks Summit Director, Lackawanna Tax Claim Bureau

Mr. Koldjeski stated that a few years ago the tax claim bureau took about 576 properties from the City of Scranton to get them back on the tax rolls. He explained that his office went through the process of having the properties prepared for upset tax sale and then judicial sale. They went through the upset sale. However, when getting into the judicial sale process his office found problems with either ownership or deeds. This stopped his title searchers from being able to prepare these properties for the sale. There are 106 properties on this list. His office is requesting to have these properties looked at by the County Assessor's office in order to find ownership or have work completed to find out who the owner was prior to conveyance. He proceeded to give the list to the board. Mr. Kelly asked

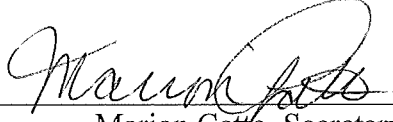
if it would be possible for the land bank to take title to the property and then file an action to quiet title on all the properties. Mr. Koldjeski stated that would be a question for Atty. Colbasanni, Atty. Joe Joyce and the Attorney for the Assessor's office. Mr. Koldjeski stated he took the properties to the Assessor's office over a year ago and nothing has been done with them. Atty. Colbasanni was requested to research this issue for the next meeting

Marie Schumacher-Scranton Resident

Mrs. Schumacher asked if the 100 properties scheduled to be acquired by the land bank are on the website. Mr. Kelly responded not yet, but will be in the next few days. She also suggested that the land bank publish the names of the interested parties twice a month so people do not have to look at the website every day.

ADJOURNMENT

As all business had been conducted, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. McDonnell with a second by Mrs. Gatto. The motion carried.



Marion Gatto, Secretary