

**LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 13, 2017**

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 –Absent
Linda Aebli – Present
Marion Gatto – Present
Terrence McDonnell – Present
Steve Pitoniak – Present

Also present were Atty. Joseph Colbassani, Land Bank Legal Counsel, and Ralph Pappas, Business Relations Manager, Department of Economic Development

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Marie Schumacher-Scranton Resident

Ms. Schumacher expressed some concerns about the current Land Bank website.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Deecke and seconded by Mrs. Aebli to approve the minutes of the November 10, 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 November through January 5, 2017. There were two vouchers. A check in the amount of \$1,000.00 made payable to Atty. Colbassani for legal services. A check in the amount \$110.10 made payable to the Scranton Times for the 2017 meeting schedule ad.

Motion was made by Mrs. Gatto and seconded by Mr. Deecke to approve the vouchers.

All in Favor

DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) First Round of Property Acquisitions

Mr. Kelly explained that the land bank is still in the process of acquiring the 100 properties. The staff is working with the Tax Claim office to get the deeds delivered. Since this was the first time that we are actually going to acquire properties, the Lackawanna County Commissioners approved by resolution the transfer of the properties. Also, the solicitor for the tax claim bureau is requesting a fifty dollar preparation fee for each deed. Mr. Kelly feels the land bank should not have to pay the fifty dollars and negotiations are ongoing with the tax claim office about this issue. Atty. Colbasanni stated he has been touch with Atty. Joe Joyce, the tax claim office solicitor. He informed the board that he has provided him a sample copy of a deed that transfers property from a county tax office to a land bank. He received the copy from the Westmoreland County Land Bank. He also informed Atty. Joyce he wants to review the deeds before they are recorded. Mr. Kelly stated after we acquire the properties, we will meet with the advisory committee and review the applications to see if the applicant's plan meet the needs of the community. At that point we can have the advisory committee make recommendations to the land bank board. Mr. Pappas informed the board that we have approximately 5 applications for the side lot program and 3 for property acquisition. Mr. O'Malley stated when we start conveying the properties, he would like to have the County's communication office get before and after photos.

b) Economic Development Website/ Land Bank Link

Mr. Kelly stated that Ms. Schumacher's earlier comments are correct. Our current website does need work. Once we get the LSA grant money, he informed the board we will move forward with the website. The staff did reach out to a company for a proposal. However, that proposal came in at over \$10,000. We have decided to go out for an RFP and get multiple proposals. He stated that it also has been brought to our attention a few discrepancies within the property descriptions. The information was taken from the assessor's database. However, some of information has not been updated. The plan is to place a disclaimer on the website. Mrs. Gatto brought up the idea of going to our local colleges to see if they can help with our website. Mr. Kelly stated we can look into that as well.

c) Neighborhood Outreach Meeting Update

Everyone was in agreement that the meeting went well considering the weather forecast that evening. Mr. O'Malley spoke about a property on Farr Street

owned by the school district and possibly having the land bank acquire it and sell it to an interested party. Mr. Kelly stated that some of the attendees were asking when the land bank would be expanding into other municipalities. Mr. Kelly explained to them the land bank will be expanding into other area. However, since more than half of the properties on the repository list are in the City of Scranton, we were focusing on the city first. The discussion continued about the outreach meeting and how it benefited the community by explaining exactly the land bank's purpose. Mr. Kelly stated the next step is to approach the communities with the most repository properties and see they would like to become part of the land bank.

d) Scranton Advisory Committee Update

Mr. Kelly stated we will be getting a meeting together with the advisory committee and discuss the 100 properties that are being acquired.

e) 2017 Meeting Schedule

Mr. Pappas stated the meeting schedule and time will remain the same as in 2016. The second Friday of every month at 10:00AM, except in the month of November. In November 2017, the board will meet on Thursday due to Veteran's day holiday falling on Friday.

Mr. Pitoniak made a motion keeping the meeting schedule for 2017 the same as in 2016. It was seconded by Mrs. Aebli. All in favor.

ACTION ITEMS

Resolution #17-01 Resolution entering into a Cooperation Agreement/Local Share Account Grant

Mr. Kelly explained the details of the Cooperation Agreement between the land bank and the County.

A motion was made by Mr. Deecke and seconded by Mrs. Gatto to approve Resolution # 17-01.

All in Favor

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Marie Schumacher-Scranton Resident

Ms. Schumacher suggested we contact Lori Reed, City Clerk, regarding a contact at the University of Scranton for help with the website. She informed the board that Councilman William Gaughan suggested the city put a link on their website to the land bank. Mr. Kelly mentioned that we will work to have the land bank link in a more prominent place on the county website. It was also discussed that the advisory committee meetings be scheduled at 9:00AM on the second Friday of every month prior to the regular board meeting. There was some further discussion about the advisory committee meeting and the possibility of having one representative of the advisory committee discuss the committee's recommendations with the Land Bank Board. Ms. Schumacher also asked about how the redevelopment authority figures into the land bank equation. Mr. Kelly explained how, in the future, properties owned by both the Scranton Redevelopment Authority and the County Redevelopment Authority will be considered for transfer to the land bank. He also explained how the Redevelopment Authority, working with a developer, can float a bond for infrastructure improvements so undeveloped land can become suitable for development.

Jesse Ergott-NeighborWorks

Mr. Ergott again praised the land Bank board and their work to date. He then informed the board about a \$500,000 grant that his organization is seeking through NeighborWorks America. The grant will help to redevelopment an area of West Scranton near the high school. He stressed that his organization would not be able to go after this money without the land bank moving ahead with property acquisition.

ADJOURNMENT

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


Marion Gatto, Secretary

Prepared by Ralph Pappas