Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 30, 2018

In attendance

Executive Director: Bruce Washington

Commissioners: Pablo Medina, Andrea Mitchell, Diane Reyes, Michael Saladino, Thomas Simmons, Kerry Murphy

Called to order: 6:38 p.m.

Approval of agenda:

- Update date of Approval of Previous Minutes from 14 May to 16 July
- Move to approve agenda: Kerry Murphy; seconded by Michael Saladino. Approved by unanaimous vote.

Approval of minutes:

- Date to be adjusted from 14 May to 16 July
- Minutes are missing the discussion re: commission response to communication between Ald. Taliaferro and Illinois Inspector General Joseph Ferguson. Board decided not to take any official action on behalf of the body. Individual commissioners able to respond if desired.
- Revised minutes to be approved at the next regular meeting.

1. Public hearing and vote on budget

- Board would like to emphasize to attendees that the budget line items are estimates, and we will work to lower actual costs where possible.
- The proposed Fiscal Year 2018 Budget was created on record at the 16 July meeting. It was made available for public review for 30 days as required, beginning Monday, 30 July, at the Board office at 3022 N. Harlem Avenue, plus at the Ward offices in the 28th, 30th, 38th, 45th, and 41st wards. Notice of public review period and vote was posted in print on Saturday, 28 July, in Nadig Newspapers.
- To remind all: the fiscal year for the Northwest Side Home Equity Assurance Program runs July 1-June 30

  Public comment on budget:
  - Ald. Sposato – where did the $150K estimate for claim settlements originate? BW: based on estimate from past board's budgets.
  - The Loan Program budget was based on information from South Side loan program.
  - Question about "floor" on fund – what amount can we not go below to protect fund?

        - $3 mil IL SECTION 11d.1 ($4mil to establish)
    - Tax levy: how is this determined? The income line item is based on what was taken in last year. For reference, the rate voted on by commissioners, and hasn't been raised in several (5) years. A majority of commissioners must vote to increase.
    - Com. Reyes: Where are our cash assets? BW: accounts are with the Illinois Fund. How do we pay out? We have a bank acct at Bank of America for operating expenses, and keep about $95-$100K on hand for bills, etc.
    - The interest revenue line item is the approximately amount that's come in the last 4-5 years.

Motion to approve the Budget: Diane Reyes; seconded by Tomas Simmons. Unanimous approval of 6 present commissioners.

2. Discussion of Pending Claims

Com. Saladino: Where did the requirement for listing at certificate come from? State statute says home must be listed at certificate price for 90 days.

Claim 3853:

- The home was listed at the certificate value of $344,000 for 107 days. No photos were included in the listing; when relisted at the lower price, the seller posted photos, a better description, etc.
- The price was reduced to $277K, but the file contains– no evidence of request to board or board approval. In the past, they've taken the appraisal price, however, we have no documentation. Can we approach claimant for evidence of board approval? Can we waive documentation requirement in this instance – will it set a precedent?
- Section 8 of the statute says it must be a "reasonable" value. How is this determined? We need to put more specific guidelines around this for future claims.
- Can we locate documentation of board approval of the offer? Mike went through ALL PAST MINUTES and there is no mention. Bruce states that in the past all communication appears to have been done by the former executive director calling the current commissioners; no votes were taken and minimal records were kept. The statute does not specify of verbal consent is acceptable.
- Motion by Com. Saladino to table the vote, and ask sellers for documentation on board approval to reduce price, and the offer; seconded by Thomas Simmons. Approved by unanimous vote.
    - Citation: Sec 8 65 IL CS sec 95/8 subsection h.

Claim 2852:

- Sellers did not list the home for sale at certificate amount (no attempt to sell at the price we're guaranteeing).
- Motion from Com. Saladino to deny based on failure to follow steps/timeline as outlined in the statute 65 ILCS 95/8b; seconded by Thomas Simmons. Unanimous vote to deny the claim.

3. Public comment

- Ald Sposato: do we need to allow both claimants to appeal? Kerry: we don't know that 3853 didn't comply; we DO know that 2852 did NOT comply.

- Ald Sposato encourages the commissioners to "slow down, get to know each other, get the lay of the land" before instating loan program. Admits he should have "tried harder" to keep tabs on the previous board! Was a "farce" for 20 years.
- William S. How is the median rate adjusted? We use the MRA – many feel this area is too large, given that claims are limited to a hyper-local level. Can we narrow this going forward?
- Resident seconding Ald. Sposato's comments to take our time. Appreciates work we're doing.
- Ald Sposato – reiterating difficulties w/ payouts in the past.

Close public comment period 7:48.

4. Committee Reports:

Website (Com. Kerry Murphy): the new website is live at www.nwheap.com Kerry bought domain name, and is currently hosting. The body will need to take steps to transfer. The site is about 80% complete: the statute is live, but we need to get past meeting minutes posted. We'd also like to create an FAQ section with steps to claim. The site was built in Wordpress, so with training, an employee can manage and we don't need a webmaster.

- Com. Mitchell to revise general description
- Review and update FAQs.
- Draft and add steps to claim in plain English.
- Upload PDFs of old minutes.

How might we communicate new website to area? Ideas include the Aldermen's newsletters, possibly create a database for future communications.

Executive Director Search (Com. Diane Reyes, Pablo Medina and Thomas Simmons):

- The subcommittee drafted a new job description and opened a search on indeed.com for 30 days. All commissioners were given access to the indeed.com account. The search resulted in:
    - 40 applicants, screened/sorted by Indeed web portal
    - Interviewed 8 qualified applicants; narrowed to 2 final candidates.
- Was Bruce invited to apply? Diane asked Thomas, who is on the committee, twice to reach out to Bruce, and was told that Bruce was informed. However, it appears details on how to apply were not provided. Due to this miscommunication, the Board will:
    - Provide Mr. Washington the updated job description;
    - Give Mr. Washington until COB Friday next week, 7 September, to submit his application materials;
    - Ask Mr. Washington all standard questions that were asked of the previous candidates, during his scheduled interview time;
- Motion made by Com. Reyes to move into closed session at a future date to interview all potential candidates for the Executive Director position, as well as potentially a part-time administrative employee, and the potential consequent termination of current executive director. This motion is made in accordance with Section 2c1 of the IL Open Meetings Act. Motion seconded by Pablo Medina; unanimous vote in favor.
        - Ald. Sposato has offered office, 3821 N. Harlem.
        - Interview date will be Thursday, 20 Sept., 6:30 pm.

- Will post notice ASAP.

5. New business

- Com. Saladino researched the phone bill as promised. He called AT&T, and they can move us to new digital plan, however we need new phones. Commission has Ok'd Bruce to utilize the Staples account to responsibly research and purchase phones.
- Internet – we should be able to get this reduced. Bruce to look for the PIN in the files.
- Security system: Com. Saladino's vendor will beat whatever price we're currently paying for monitoring.
- Com. Mitchell suggests establishing a regular meeting day/time, to be established at the next meeting and implemented in 2019.

Next regular meeting set for Wednesday, 10 October, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Com. Saladino moves to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.; seconded by Com. Simmons.