

**Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation**  
**Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 4:00 PM**  
**Heroes 9-11-01 Conference Room**

**Directors Present:** Joe Borst (late), Ernie Brownell, Jill Henry, Les Marquart,  
Don Northrup

**Staff:** Joe McGrath; Caitlin Ryan

**Other Attendees:** Esther Dickinson, Heaton & Venuti

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:01 pm by Jill Henry, Vice Chairperson. A quorum was present.
2. A motion was made by Les Marquart and seconded by Ernie Brownell to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on November 28, 2023. Motion approved 4-0; Joe Borst not yet present.
3. **Resolutions:**
  - **24-01: Electing Frank Sinicropi as the Chairperson of the Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation**  
Don Northrup made a motion and Joe Borst seconded. Motion approved 5-0.
  - **24-02: Electing Jill Henry as the Vice Chairperson of the Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation Board of Directors**  
Ernie Brownell made a motion and Joe Borst seconded. Motion approved 5-0.
  - **24-03: Electing Caitlin Ryan as the Secretary of the Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation**  
Joe Borst made a motion and Les Marquart seconded. Motion approved 5-0.
  - **24-04: Electing Michael Scaglione as the CFO/Treasurer of the Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation**  
Ernie Brownell made a motion and Joe Borst seconded. Motion approved 5-0.
  - **24-05: Electing Joe McGrath as the CEO/President of the Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation**  
Joe Borst made a motion and Les Marquart seconded. Motion approved 5-0.
  - **24-06: Establishing the 2024 Governance Committee of the Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation Board of Directors**  
This resolution establishes the members of the Governance Committee to be Jill Henry as chairperson, Les Marquart as vice chairperson, and Frank Sinicropi. Ernie Brownell made a motion and Joe Borst seconded. Motion approved 5-0.
  - **24-07: Establishing the 2024 Audit Committee of the Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation Board of Directors**  
This resolution establishes the members of the Audit Committee to be Jill Henry as chairperson, Frank Sinicropi as vice chairperson, and Les Marquart. Joe Borst made a motion and Ernie Brownell seconded. Motion approved 5-0.

- **24-08: Designating Persons Authorized to Sign Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation Checks**

This resolution authorizes the following persons as check signers for the accounts for the 2024 year: Frank Sinicropi, Chairperson; Jill Henry, Vice Chairperson; Joe McGrath, CEO/President; and Michael Scaglione, CFO/Treasurer. Les Marquart made a motion and Ernie Brownell seconded. Motion approved 5-0.

- **24-09: Establishing the 2024 Schedule of Regular Meetings of the Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation Board of Directors**

This resolution establishes the regular meeting schedule to take place on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 4 pm, except for December, which will not be held. Ernie Brownell asked about changing to a different day of the week but keeping the same time due to the Seneca County Board of Supervisors committee meetings. Discussion ensued regarding the length of time needed for the meetings as well as why the Land Bank meetings were originally scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of the month. Joe Borst made a motion and Don Northrup seconded. Motion approved 5-0.

- **24-10: Authorizing the Appointment of Accountants, Attorneys, and Auditors for 2024**

This resolution authorizes Bowers & Company CPAs of Syracuse as accountants; Heaton & Venuti, LLP of Geneva as our general counsel; Hancock Estabrook, LLP of Syracuse as our consulting attorneys; and The Bonadio Group of Syracuse as our auditors. Joe McGrath advised that there are minimal changes on this matter from what we have had in the past. The biggest change is that the accountants may be taking on a greater role and cost for the Land Bank (grant, budget, project budget, etc.); the current cost is \$750 per month and will increase to \$1000 per month. This will add more of a bookkeeping role and will allow us to be more sure that grant usage is being done appropriately. Ernie Brownell asked what services we are getting for the additional cost; was advised that the accountants will take care of paying any invoices as submitted and approved (dual when applicable) by Land Bank staff. Further concern was addressed as to whether it would affect time taken by Land Bank staff; was advised that this will help while Caitlin is out on leave and will allow her to handle other tasks once she returns. Another positive to this feature is that it will allow us to pull information and reports more easily depending on what is being asked for. Joe Borst made a motion and Don Northrup seconded. Motion approved 5-0.

#### **4. CEO/Presidents Update & Discussion Items**

- **Conflict of Interest Signatures Needed**

Please sign the conflict-of-interest handouts provided today and turn back in.

- **Board Member ABO Training for Public Authorities**

All members may have to complete this training; may just be Joe Borst. The training is done online, anyone that needs to complete it can come to the Planning Department to complete it if they choose.

- **Update on Annual Audit with the Bonadio Group**

An audit is required annually; our accountants at Bowers are in the process of closing the books for 2023; will then transfer to Bonadio to begin the audit. The official audit start date is listed as February 19, 2024.

- **Update on Accounting and Bookkeeping Services with Bowers & Co. CPAs**

This matter was discussed during resolution 24-10; Bowers & Co. CPAs will also handle our bookkeeping functions.

- **Update on HCR LBI Grant Phase I and Phase II**

We have grant funding from HCR through their Land Bank Initiative that is split into two phases; phase 1 pays for administration and operations (we are on the second year of phase 1), phase 2 pays for development and capital costs for projects. We renewed and requested a first disbursement of funds of \$100,000; this will offset some of the accounting and attorney costs, will pay for the audit, and will also go towards the salary contribution under the MOA with the county and the cost of lawn mowing. We just completed an Operational Plan for the Land Bank at the end of 2023 and adopted it; this will allow us to focus on finding partners, utilizing phase 2 funds appropriately, and encourage us to find end-users. In order to spend phase 2 funding, we need partners and development professionals under contract to assist with permits, grant administration, and environmental factors; thus, we put forth an RFQ for development services. Once we have the RFQ contracts in place we will begin working with Habitat (although with their recent internal changes, we will be taking on a couple of additional tasks) and Seneca Housing (with the hopes that they get the Rural Preservation designation from the state). In order to proceed with working with partners, we need the development professionals from the RFQ first to assist.

- **Update on RFQ for Development Services**

The RFQ is necessary in order to appropriately spend phase 2 funding for the HCR LBI Grant so that we have assistance with permitting, grant administration, and environmental factors. The RFQ is requesting architects, engineers, and environmental services. It is live and active until February 2<sup>nd</sup> for the search phase. Once we receive the RFQ submissions and review and select to have the RFQ contracts in place, we can spend the HCR LBI Grant Phase 2 money and proceed with working with partners.

- **Update on 55 Washington St, Waterloo**

In July 2023, Wells Fargo reached out with regards to donating a property to the Land Bank; they are now donating the property and a \$60,000 cash donation to go towards property stabilization or demolition costs. We reached out to Sessler's Wrecking to obtain a quote for demolition to provide to Wells Fargo requesting the full amount. The Land Bank continues to work with FLACRA to see about the potential for supportive housing. In working with FLACRA, Habitat, and other partnerships, we have confirmed that we need the development capacity, that the prior mentioned RFQ would provide, to be able to move forward with this project and others. A feasibility study will allow us to determine if it is a property that could be stabilized and rehabilitated or if we need to demolish the entire home. We need to have an architect and engineer go through the property to perform this study to determine if it can be stabilized and re-used. This feasibility study, costing about \$5,000-10,000, will be paid for out of grant funds. We are spending our grant funding to get the process started, then our partnerships and their funding would determine the next steps of the process. These partnerships can get rehabilitation grants more easily than new construction. Our grant is specific towards all aspects of a stabilization and rehabilitation, tear down, and/or design and soft cost, but not the actual build of a new construction. We do not intend to pay for all of the costs with our grant funds for a rehabilitation, we intend to partner and utilize other grants. It is easier to keep a building up with grant funds than it is to tear it down and put in

something new; by tearing it down before determining the possibilities of the property, we would be boxing us into what our options are. Jill and Joe M. confirmed we cannot sell this as an empty lot for the property for a profit.

**3. (continued) Resolutions:**

• **24-11: Authorizing the Acceptance of 55 Washington Street, Village of Waterloo as a Donation from Wells Fargo**

This resolution proposes that the Land Bank accept the property of 55 Washington Street in the Village of Waterloo as well as a \$60,000 donation to be used for stabilization or demolition funding on the property. Any discussion occurred with the CEO/President's update regarding this property. Joe Borst made a motion and Les Marquart seconded. Motion approved 5-0.

**5. Attorney's Update:** Esther Dickinson with Heaton and Venuti stated that there was not much new going on to provide updates on. We are still waiting on the judgment for the Lodi properties; the oral arguments completed four (4) weeks ago and we are hoping for a judgment in about two (2) weeks. She advised that we attempted to reach out to the creditors, to no avail. Joe McGrath confirmed that we are using phase 2 money for these properties.

**6. CFO/Treasurer Update:** Joe McGrath presented in Michael Scaglione's absence; there are no major changes in spending and the accounts, just standard expenses.

**7. New Business:** Joe M. stated that there are requests for expressions of interest for the Willard property being submitted to the County. We are debating on replying; is there a way to advance housing development, and then economic development by participating in the development of this property. By submitting a letter of interest, we could potentially establish partnerships with housing partners that will set us up for future projects. Jill stated it would be good to be seen as a tool in this project to assist with this project for other developers, which would establish these further partnerships. As the larger developers do not stick around after these types of projects and they do not do the smaller ones, but our Land Bank properties on the other side of the Hamlet could potentially be looped in with this project. Another positive to participating would be that it could bring grants here and keep them here. The Willard project would create something locally that can stay here and show that the Land Bank exists, and we stay here as we are invested in our local community. Joe B. commented on the Willard project, that it is better that the County receive many submissions of interest rather than fewer; this is a large-scale project that could last 10 years.

**8. Adjourn:** 4:42 pm. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 4 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Caitlin Ryan  
Staff Resource Assistant  
Seneca County Department of Planning and Community Development