

**Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation
Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 4:00 PM
Heroes 9-11-01 Conference Room**

Directors Present: Ernie Brownell, Jill Henry, Les Marquart, Don Northrup, Frank Sinicropi

Directors Absent: Kyle Barnhart, David Wood

Staff: Joe McGrath, Caitlin Ryan

Other Attendees: Esther Dickinson, Attorney at Heaton & Venuti; Michael Scaglione, CFO of the FLRLBC

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Frank Sinicropi, chairperson. A quorum was present.
2. A motion was made by Ernie Brownell and seconded by Les Marquart to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on July 25, 2023. Motion approved 4-0. Don Northrup not yet present.

3. Resolutions:

• **23-27: Appointing Caitlin Ryan as Secretary of the Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation**

Jill Henry made a motion and Ernie Brownell seconded. Motion approved 4-0. Don Northrup not yet present. No further discussion.

• **23-28: Accepting HCR Land Bank Initiative Phase 1 Renewal**

Jill Henry made a motion and Les Marquart seconded. Motion approved 4-0. Don Northrup not yet present.

The Land Bank was awarded \$100,000 in 2022; the funds were accepted previously, and as the Land Bank had satisfactory performance in the first year of the grant were awarded an additional \$100,000 for a second year. The funds can be accepted after this resolution is passed.

The grant funds will be used for administrative & operational functions of the Land Bank. The Land Bank will continue working on a strategic plan which will move the Land Bank toward more sustainable revenue. Grants and resources will need to be identified. The strategic plan will map out that transition as well as identify the types of properties the Land Bank will be targeting.

- **23-29: Establishing 2024 Budget and Projections**

Ernie Brownell made a motion and Frank Sinicropi seconded. Motion approved 5-0.

The Authorities Budget Office requires annual budgets at least 90 days prior to the start of the fiscal year. The budget includes annual projections for the next several years. The budget includes the funding awarded from the HCR Grant as revenue and shows that will be lost in 2026, but with hopeful partnerships and projects FLRLBC can be back in positive in 2027.

- **23-30: Authorizing RFQ(s) for Professional Services Including: engineering and/or architecture services, environmental services, and grant preparation services**

Jill Henry made a motion and Frank Sinicropi seconded. Motion approved 5-0.

Mr. McGrath explained that due to the nature of certain land parcels the FLRLBC requires the procurement of additional professional services. This will enable the Land Bank to proceed with the inquiry on the 55 Washington Street property and the relationship with FLACRA for this property, and possibly others in the future. By obtaining these services, the Land Bank will also be able to allow partners to utilize these services as well.

4. CEO/Presidents Update & Discussion Items

- **Added – Habitat for Humanity President**

Menzo Case, president of Habitat, passed away unexpectedly. He was a big supporter of the Land Bank and the overall advancement of Housing in Seneca County and his passing represents a major loss to the community. Habitat is our most effective partner in advancing projects. Moving forward, we will need to engage with Habitat to ensure their program is sustainable.

- **FLRLBC Strategic Plan Draft Ready for Preview**

A presentation of the plan (provided in meeting packets) will be during the Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting immediately following the Land Bank meeting, done by MRB. It has been recognized that workforce, transitional housing, etc. is needed in Seneca County. Partnerships need to be established, but is challenging due to NYS grant funding, which leads to the next bullet point (see below). No action is taking place at tonight's BOS meeting as there is no resolution to adopt yet, but will likely occur at the next meeting.

- **Seneca Housing Inc. to apply for Rural Preservation Company designation**

Rural Preservation Companies are a designation and overall program that the state runs to provide administrative funds to non-profit organizations in rural areas to run housing programs. This designation would allow Seneca Housing Inc. to build local nonprofit development capacity, which was an identified need in the Housing Needs Assessment. There are two available spots open for this program; however, the state does not recognize Seneca County as underserved, so it may be tough to get this designation. Ongoing support and engagement with HCR and the State in support of Seneca Housing becoming an RPC is needed.

- EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant application update**

This involves the Land Bank and County Planning department; Planning Department and Board of Supervisors authorized a Request for Qualification (RFQ) to find a consultant to assist in applying for the EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant (that we did not receive last year). A consultant has been signed on, and an application is being developed for Brownfield Coalition program this time around. This grant funding would pay for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of site assessments to be done. Building materials assessments can be funded as well, such as asbestos and lead testing which can be beneficial for many properties in many area buildings in Seneca Falls, Waterloo, and Willard. Once funds have been effectively spent or committed, it opens the doors for future applications for clean-up funds. The coalition members are Seneca County as lead, with a partnership with the Town of Waterloo and Town of Seneca Falls, as well as the community organization, STEPS. The consultant believes the application being submitted is very competitive with all of the issues Seneca County faces. The announcement of the award is expected around April, as the submission is due in November. Mr. Frank Sinicropi inquired about obtaining the funding Senator Chuck Schumer announced previously, if getting this grant will allow the Land Bank and Seneca County a better opportunity to obtain those funds; Mr. McGrath stated that this is that money, via this grant we are asking for more money. By completing an EPA Brownfield Strategy assessment with the County we are set up with a more coherent application, and will be reaching out to Senator Schumer's office ahead of time to notify of our application in the process.
- 55 Washington St, Waterloo – potential Wells Fargo Donation/FLACRA Partnership update**

The Land Bank does not want to accept the donation unless FLACRA can take it. This ties into Resolution 23-30 authorizing RFQs for Professional Services, as this will determine the feasibility of FLACRA's plan for this property. Mr. Ernie Brownell asked if an engineer has been through the property; Mr. McGrath confirmed that Wells Fargo has stated that they sent an engineer, but the report was not very detailed. Seneca County Codes office is involved and aware of this property; the property is condemned. The condemnation is a statement of structural integrity, but is not a determination of feasibility of any possible rehabilitation. At this point, waiting on FLACRA to make a decision. The outstanding mortgage was mentioned, which is around \$90,000, but the Land Bank won't take the property until it is a confirmed rehabilitation from FLACRA. If the engineer and FLACRA both say no, then the Land Bank will not accept the donation, the Codes department will force Wells Fargo to tear the building down. Taxes are being paid by Wells Fargo.
- Reappoint FLRLBC Board of Directors by end of 2023**

The reappointment process for the Board of Directors occurs every 2 years for a 2-year term. Please let Mr. McGrath know if interested whether you are interested in staying or if you wish for this to be your last term, as that seat would need to be filled.

5. Attorney’s Update

Ms. Esther Dickinson from Heaton and Venuti spoke regarding the design process for the Article 19A Abandonment Proceedings; spoke to county attorneys and code enforcement, as our county involves code enforcement early on. We have established a skeleton of a good process and are now waiting for the new year to try out this process; a good job was done vetting thus far, now we need an example to determine where the process may need to be adjusted once we have an initial proceeding while testing this process. This process will allow the Land Bank to take properties that have been certified abandoned. Then she spoke on the two properties in Lodi, as there is a judgment that affects all properties in the town; title issues are delaying the process, everything else is ready to finalize, hoping to have an answer by the end of the month. Finally, she spoke on the Brownfield’s agreement with the DEC, we have 180 days to list properties from the day that it was executed, which is March 4th. We are waiting on an answer from the DEC as to how they want the information provided.

6. CFO/Treasurer Update

Mr. Michael Scaglione, the CFO for the Land Bank, spoke regarding the financial reports. The Land Bank general account balance is down around \$8,000 over the course of the summer, this is due largely to lawn and mowing costs and no income of funds. In looking at the September report, there has been low activity; expected LBI Phase 2 (in general account, sitting in LOC), sale of property, and CDBG funds as income, but nothing was received. There have been no demos, so costs are down as well; costs have been standard maintenance costs.

7. New Business

Tracy Verrier from MRB will be presenting for the BOS meeting at 5:30 on Tuesday, October 24, 2023.

FLRLBC is hoping to continue to assist the county in housing development in the midst of the crisis. The state will continue to support housing, and assist in removing technical barriers through the grants they have been offering.

8. Consideration of Executive Session: Not necessary at this meeting.

9. Adjourn: 4:42 PM; all in favor. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 4 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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