

**LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
April 13, 2018**

The regular meeting of the Lackawanna County Land Bank was held on April 13, 2018 in the Commissioners' Conference Room, 200 Adams Avenue, Sixth Floor, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

At 10:00 am Chairman O'Malley called the meeting to order and all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

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

Also present were Atty. Joseph Colbassani, Land Bank Legal Counsel, Ralph Pappas, Business Relations Manager and Laura McGowan, Housing Financial Analyst.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

There were no comments made at this time.

**MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Terrence McDonnell and seconded by Ms. Linda Aebli to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2018 regular meeting as prepared and presented.

**All in Favor**

**PRESENTATION of VOUCHERS for EXAMINATION and APPROVAL**

A motion was made by Ms. Marion Gatto and seconded by Ms. Linda Aebli to approve voucher expenditures of March 10, 2018 through April 13, 2018, as presented.

**All in Favor**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**a.) Land Bank Website Update:** Mr. Pappas explained that the Land Bank website is about 90% finished. By next meeting, Design Done Right should be have everything prepared and ready to be shown.

**b.) Blight to Bright LSA Grant Update:** Mr. Kelly explained the Land Bank will be sponsoring a series of town hall meetings throughout Lackawanna County to inform the municipalities the Bright to Blight program as well as the benefits of Land Bank. NeighborWorks will be partnering with the county on this initiative. A contract with Chris Gulotta still needs to be signed to get things started. Todd Pousley from NeighborWorks mentioned they were looking at May 23<sup>rd</sup> as the possible date for a first meeting. The first meeting will be at Goodwill North.

**c.) 1445 Meylert Avenue Update:** Mr. Kelly explained that they just received a signed purchase agreement from the buyer and they have 90 days to complete a Phase 2 environmental assessment. The buyers are taking the property as is.

## **PROPERTY DISCUSSIONS**

### **Property Donation Applications:**

#### **1129 Swetland Street & 2235-2237 N. Main Avenue**

Ms. Aebli explained that these two properties are owned by RRR Investments, a company based in Florida. They purchased the properties in the hopes of rehabilitating them. However, when it became too expensive to do so, they decided they would instead like to donate them to the land bank. They will provide a \$500 cash donation for each property if the land bank would take them. The Advisory Committee suggested a 30 day waiting period, Jesse Ergott from NeighborWorks was going to look at it to see if it could be rehabilitated, and possibly a Land Bank sign would be placed outside to see if it generated any selling potential. Commissioner O'Malley mentioned the decrepit state of the roof on the home at 1129 Swetland Street, saying it would not be a house the Land Bank would want to take in, it most likely would have to be torn down. The recommendation of placing the Land Bank sign out front and waiting 30 days was accepted by the Board.

#### **1911 Price Street**

Ms. Aebli explained that an offer was received from Gerald and Arlene Beck from Lake Ariel. They would like to donate the property. Taxes are paid up to date. The Advisory Committee recommended to take the property in. Mr. Pappas discussed how this property is a vacant lot and there is another vacant lot next to it on the repository list, so if both were to be taken in it could become a more profitable amount of land. Steve Pitoniak made a motion to move to take both properties in, Terrence McDonnell seconded. All in favor.

**Additional Properties to be acquired from the Repository of Unsold Properties:**

**119 South Dewey Avenue**

Ms. Aebli explained that one application was received from a Mr. Steven Coyne, who resides in the neighborhood, who would like to purchase the parcel and maintain it as greenspace. It would be \$500 since it is not a side lot. The Advisory Committee advised to take it in. Terrence McDonnell made a motion to accept, Marion Gatto seconded. All in favor.

**1215-1217 Pittston Avenue**

Ms. Aebli explained that Ms. Enya Garcia is interested in purchasing both properties, they are on one lot. She was informed that the taxes are approximately \$7,000 a year. She would like to rehab the properties and turn them into rentals. Her bid was \$4,500 for both. Mr. Pappas said he has already spoken to Ms. Garcia, explaining what she would have to do in order to get the houses up to code for the city, which would be quite an undertaking. Ms. Garcia said she understood and would like to proceed. Steve Pitoniak made a motion to accept the bid, Terrence McDonnell seconded it. All in favor.

**Property Purchase Applications:**

**N. Merrifield Avenue, 1500 Block Crown Avenue, 1500 Block Crown Avenue & White Birch Drive**

Ms. Aebli explained that for these four properties, Hillsboro Inlet LLC, a company out of Wyoming, would like to purchase all four properties. Mr. Pappas and Mr. Kelly looked into Hillsboro Inlet LLC, which is a hedge-fund investment company. They have bought other property in Pennsylvania and it seems they are going to employ a buy and long term hold strategy, with the hopes of selling the land in the future, for profit. These parcels have been on the list since the beginning and have not had other interested parties until now. Hillsboro Inlet has submitted cashier's checks already for the amounts of their bids. Mr. Pappas is going to look into the tax payment history on these particular vacant lots. Terrence McDonnell made a motion to accept the bids, Marion Gatto seconded it. All in favor.

Mr. McDonnell referred back to the previous house discussed on Swetland Street and wondered if it would be possible to ask RRR Investments to pay for the demolition of the home in question. That way, the Land Bank could offer to take it in so RRR wouldn't have to pay taxes on it anymore

## **ACTION ITEM**

**Resolution NO. 18-011** Approving the Donation of Property to the Lackawanna County Land Bank located at 1911 Price Street, Scranton PA, Parcel Pin #: 14513040031

Motion by Marion Gatto

Seconded by Linda Aebli

**All in favor**

**Resolution No. 18-012** Approving the Acquisition of additional property from the Tax Claim Office Repository List of Unsold Property located at 119 South Dewey Avenue, Scranton PA, Parcel Pin #: 14412020073 and 1215-1217 Pittston Avenue, Scranton PA, Parcel Pin #: 16707030056

Motion by Marion Gatto

Seconded by Linda Aebli

**All in favor**

**Resolution No. 18-013** Approving the Conveyance of Certain Land Bank Owned Property under the Land Bank Property Purchase Program located at N. Merrifield Avenue, Scranton, Parcel Pin #: 14412040052, 1500 Block Crown Avenue, Scranton Parcel Pin #: 16712020004, 1500 Block Crown Avenue, Scranton Parcel Pin #: 16712020003 & White Birch Drive, Scranton, Parcel Pin #: 1340101000423 to Hillsboro Inlet, LLC, Casper Wyoming 82609

Motion by Marion Gatto

Seconded by Linda Aebli

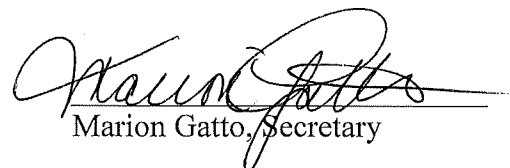
**All in Favor**

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

No members of the public addressed the board.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

As all business had been conducted, a motion to adjourn was made by Marion Gatto with a second by Linda Aebli. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

  
Marion Gatto, Secretary

Prepared by Laura McGowan