

## MINUTES

### Portage County Land Reutilization Corporation

Reed Memorial Library  
Wednesday, January 14, 2019  
1:00 p.m.

The Board of Directors of the Portage County Land Reutilization Corporation met for a regular quarterly meeting on Wednesday, January 14, 2019 at the Reed Memorial Library. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Vicki Kline.

#### ROLL CALL

##### Board Members Present

Vicki Kline	Sue Fields	Ina Sayre	Brad Cromes
Bridget Susel	Jack Kohl	Kathleen Clyde	

##### Also Present

John Zizka	Chris Moravec	Julia Adkins	Lisa Reeves
Dan Morganti	John Kovacich	Phil Cox	Bob Finney
Jennifer Robison	Jenna Cariglio-Dorris	Kaitlyn McNerney	Stacy Brown
Brett Bencze	Chad Murdock		

#### APPROVAL OF OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

##### October 10, 2018 Official Meeting Minutes

The October 10, 2018 minutes were presented. J. Kohl made a motion to approve minutes as presented. Motion seconded by B. Susel. Motion carried with 6 Yeas.

#### FORECLOSURE STATUS UPDATE – Brett Bencze

For 2018 seven cases resulted in a payment plan. This resulted in \$9,013.00 in delinquent taxes paid thus far. Over the next 5 years, it will bring in a total of \$75,363.00 in delinquent taxes. Two parcels was also sold at Sheriff Sale and resulted in nearly \$40,000 in delinquent taxes being paid. Currently there are 13 parcels with open cases and all of these parcels are in some step of the default process. There are two parcels that are currently going under the traditional route. Brett said they are prepared to file on nine more parcels this week with 14 parcels cued up shortly after that.

B. Susel questioned if the nine parcels were the ones that were part of the NIP Grant. Brett said "yes".

## **REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Financials and Property Inventory – Dan Morganti**

The December Financial Statement was presented. For the year ending December 31, 2018 the total liabilities & capital was \$1,308,840. The total current asset is \$856,310. The total value of the property and equipment is \$452,530.00. The current liabilities are \$3,306. Total capital is \$1,305,534. B. Cromes questioned whether or not the \$201,003 in income was for the year or for the quarter. D. Morganti stated that the net income was for the year.

B. Cromes made a request to have the Land Bank packet paginated.

A motion was made by B. Susel to accept the financial statement as presented. Motion seconded by B. Cromes. Motion carried with 7 Yeas.

### **NIP Update/Agreements – Jennifer Robison**

The NIP Demolition Tracking Sheet is all up-to-date. Jennifer said they have closed on 12 parcels and nine more will be closed by the end of January.

Jennifer said they have reached the goal needed for the NIP Grant.

## **BOARD APPROVAL**

### **NDS Contract**

B. Cromes asked if it was a fair statement to say that the only difference between this contract and the prior one was the "Termination Period". Stacy said the Termination Period and the billing was changed from documented hourly billing to documented contract amount.

A motion was made by J. Kohl to approve entering into contract with NDS for an amount not to exceed \$75,000. Motion seconded by B. Cromes. Motion carried with 7 yeas.

### **Treasurer/Prosecutor Contract**

The contract between the Portage County Land Reutilization Corporation, County Treasurer and the Portage County Prosecutor's Office was presented.

B. Cromes said the concerns were raised by board members in the work sessions on production levels and future needs of the Land Bank. At the work sessions there was no real consensus made on which way they wanted to go with this. B. Cromes stated that the agreement in the packet is the same as the prior year. The thought process to that has a couple of elements: (1) what would our needs be and (2) the fact that Prosecutor has already retained an attorney for 2019. There is capacity to

provide work to the Prosecutor and then it would be up to staff and the Board to send the work flow in their direction.

B. Susel stated that in the work sessions she advocated for a "floor". B. Susel stated that for \$75,000 how many foreclosures would that equate too? Last year's was the same amount and we ended up with not getting that many foreclosures. B. Susel said she had no problem with the \$75,000 or it being paid all out in 2019 but would like some accountability for the number of foreclosures that it equates to and if it doesn't that it be carried forward. B. Susel stated that since the NIP Grant is done the level of foreclosures that have been done for the last three years will no longer be required. The Land Bank has 186 parcels that are still on the inventory because they have not been sold. B. Susel questioned if it was frugal to continue foreclosing for the sake of foreclosing which are then being added to the inventory and are not selling? B. Susel requested the process start early and with an understanding that if the number of foreclosures being done does not equate to a contract of this level going forward. B. Cromes agreed that the conversation has to happen earlier. B. Cromes stated that the board has to have planning sessions early in this year or maybe this quarter about what the Land Bank's direction should be. V. Kline agreed that the Land Bank shouldn't be foreclosing on property to just own more property and/or to eliminate blight. V. Kline felt that the Land Bank should be looking at the properties a little more closely to determine whether or not to move forward with it or not. B. Susel stated that since the NIP is done the Land Bank needs to take a look at the list of the foreclosure properties that are in the pipeline. On the list there were five that had a possibility of occupancy on the sight. B. Susel suggested not proceeding with those since the NIP will not reimburse and just so they do not have to deal with an eviction. B. Susel felt that the Land Bank should be evaluating the remaining 12 or 13 to determine how far along in the process they are to determine if they are worth pursuing. B. Susel recommended that before preceding any further to have administration email out to the Land Bank the status of each and then be confirmed before moving any further.

B. Susel felt that the Land Bank needed to be a little more strategic since there are 186 parcels that have not been sold and are on the inventory. B. Susel felt that there should be a balanced approach since they are heavily inventoried. B. Cromes stated that part of the reason there are so many properties on the inventory is because so much of the work that has been in the past 3-4 years has been grant driven. There were a number of deadlines that had to be met where the Land Bank had to get properties into the wheel house or they would lose the opportunity to take advantage of the grant.

It was noted that with all of the properties that the Land Bank has received through court order, etc. it is now up to 1.3 million dollars in back taxes that have been written off.

A motion was made by B. Cromes to approve entering into contract with the Portage County Prosecutor and Treasurers and before the Land Bank moves any further with the foreclosures that the Land Bank started as part of the NIP process and were not completed that they be evaluated by Administration and the occupied properties to be completely removed. Motion seconded by J. Kohl. Motion carried with 6 Yeas and 1 Nay (B. Susel)

### Budget 2019 Review/Approve

The 2019 Budget was presented. B. Cromes made a motion to approve the 2019 Budget as presented. Motion seconded by I. Sayre. Motion carried with 7 Yeas.

### Foreclosure Case Status of Potential Demolitions

A list of the potential demolitions was presented. B. Susel said she would like to see the estimated value of each of the properties before they decide whether or not to proceed with the foreclosure or not. B. Susel said "we shouldn't be adding parcels for the sake of adding parcels. We need to be very strategic about it." The Board was in agreement that any properties that were occupied they would not move forward on them. B. Cromes expressed his concerns about not moving forward. B. Susel said "that is why we need to have a work session. The work session will allow the Board to go through each one and determine which ones to move forward on."

Philip Cox from Atwater Township asked about 1405 Whittlesey, Atwater Township. Phillip stated that the property has been abandoned for years and it has become a health hazard. Phillip said he has asked the Trustees about the status of removing the house and they have said that it was with the Land Bank. Chris Meduri stated that the Township is considering structural removal and tearing it down on its own rather than going through the Land Bank. B. Cromes said he would look into it and see where it is at in the process with the Land Bank.

### Cummins Lane Property

Chad Murdock stated that "Cummins Lane is not a dedicated right-of-way. It's a private, strip of land and the houses that were foreclosed on by the Land Bank are on the private strip of land." Chad stated that he has tried to negotiate with the property owner in order to gain access to the property so that the house can be demolished and then later sell off the property have not been successful in negotiating that right-of-way. Chad stated that at this stage we either need to forget about it or file a lawsuit to get a judge to order the Land Bank access. Chad recommended filing a lawsuit to gain temporary access to the property however, the real question is would you want permanent access in order to try and sell the lots or whether you just want temporary access in order to demolish the structure. The owner next door wants to purchase the lots however the Township won't allow because they feel he will then use it to expand his salvage yard. J. Kohl did not feel the lots would market well. Chris Meduri questioned if a deed restriction could be done if sold to the person? The question is who would enforce the deed restriction? B. Cromes stated that they would have to enforce. J. Kohl recommended pursuing the case to get the easement subject to accommodations to what the Trustees want. B. Susel stated that if they don't want the lots it's pointless to pursue anything.

### 6669 Henderson, Ravenna – Realtor Statement of Value - Approve

6669 Henderson is a three bedroom and two bath manufactured home. The realtor valued the property at \$27,000

A motion was made by J. Kohl to proceed with the sale of the property. Motion seconded by B. Susel. Motion carried with 7 Yeas.

3878 Richardson, Ravenna – Forfeiture Property – Jennifer Robison

The Land Bank acquired the property and the property is occupied. Jennifer stated that they have been trying to get from the occupant an application completed to see if she would qualify to be a homeowner and three months has gone by and they haven't heard anything. The occupant finally on January 11<sup>th</sup> gave them a partially completed application and then she said she would have the rest of the information in a few days. It was recommended that the occupant be given a 10:00 a.m., Friday deadline and if not received then the Land Bank to continue with the eviction.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

B. Susel said that we were the only Land Bank that actually uses a contract for administration. We finally have funding ability to make this a full time hired position. In the work session the board members want to work towards that goal by the end of the year. B. Susel felt that it would be best to have somebody who's sole focus is the Land Bank and then have NDS working as the solvent agency. B. Susel said that before moving forward with that she would like to contact Western Reserve Land Conservancy to talk them about getting some information on how it's paid, structure, etc. We need to get the request for information out to them sooner than later.

John Zizka questioned if the Land Bank joined a coalition for Land Banks and thought they would be a good source. B. Susel said the Land Bank did join however unfortunately they are in an organization level like we were for our first two or three years and they would probably not have those resources available.

B. Susel said "it wouldn't cost that much to get the information but we should see what other Land Banks are doing, how it's paid, how it's structured, etc. so that we can be making good decisions as we move forward to advertise and fill this position by the end of the year."

John Zizka asked how much thought was given as Trumbull County and Cuyahoga County is doing to shifting some of the focus on rehabbing these structures rather than demolition. B. Susel stated that it was the whole point of based on the Prosecutor's contract. B. Susel felt that foreclosures should not be the Land Bank's primary mechanism anymore since the NIP Grant is gone and Moving Ohio Forward is gone. B. Susel felt that the Land Bank should be moving towards acquisition where you have resale and towards the development of projects that will put properties back on the tax roll, which is the Land Banks primary mission and should be the Land Bank's focus.

Quarterly Meeting Date April 8, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. – Vicki Kline

The next quarterly meeting will be held on April 8, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. at the Reed Memorial Library, Haymaker Room.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by B. Cromes to adjourn the meeting at 1:47 p.m. Motion seconded by I. Sayre. Motion carried with 7 Yeas.



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Brad Cromes, Chairman



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Stacy Brown, Secretary/Administrator