Minutes
Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, November 10, 2014, 8:00 AM
333 W. Washington Street, Suite 130
Syracuse, NY 13202

Committee Members Present: Dan Barnaba, Jim Corbett, Dwight Hicks

Others Present: Katelyn Wright, Patty Mills, Mike Fallon

I. Call to order

Dan Barnaba called the meeting to order at 8:08 AM.

II. Roll Call

Mr. Barnaba noted that all committee members were present.

III. Proof of Notice

Mr. Barnaba noted that proper notice of the meeting had been posted.

IV. Minutes

Mr. Corbett moved to adopt the minutes of the July 31, 2014 meeting of the Finance Committee. Dwight Hicks seconded this motion. **ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY PASSED A MOTION TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 31, 2014 MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.**

V. New Business

- Review proposed change in bookkeeping practices in order to make a recommendation to the board

Patty Mills, Mike Fallon, and Katelyn Wright explained how land bank expenses are currently booked to an expense line and then reclassed to the balance sheet, only expensed upon sale of the property, and how much time recording that level of detail is taking. Ms. Wright explained that when designing these procedures she thought the wealth of information would be analyzed in order to refine budget projections, but that the cost of the time spent bookkeeping didn't seem to pay off in valuable data analysis as there was too much data to be easily analyzed and costs averaged by property class would be just as useful and take a fraction of the time to account for, saving bookkeeping costs. Patty presented a proposal to average several of the accounts by class, although occupied properties, for which these costs are expensed each month, would still be accounted for in more detail. There was much discussion among the committee members and staff about which accounts can be accurately averaged and which have too many outliers. Ms. Wright and Ms. Mills indicated that they would continue to analyze this issue and finalize the list of which accounts would be averaged and which would not. Overall the committee agreed it was an improvement to the existing procedures. Jim Corbett moved to recommend the board approve this change in accounting procedures. Dwight hicks seconded this motion. **ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY PASSED A MOTION TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD APPROVE THIS CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES.**

- Review 2014 Budget Revision for recommendation to the board
- Review 2015-2018 Budget for recommendation to the board

Ms. Wright outlined the proposed changes in the budget from the version adopted in October 2013. Mr. Hicks noted that he found the narrative summary of what each account contains to be quite helpful. Mr. Barnaba asked that she cover the significant changes and any potentially controversial items. She discussed the need for assistance relocating occupants in properties at the time of foreclosure where either the occupants do not have sufficient income for market rate housing and need help getting public assistance or where the housing is substandard at the time of foreclosure and noted that she would be working with Catholic Charities to draft a contract for their support in 2015. There was much discussion about what services could be obtained more cost effectively in 2015, including periodic inspections of vacant properties, snow removal, and lawn maintenance. The Committee recommended Ms. Wright change the name of account 80003 to "Pilot Buyer Incentive Program" in order to leave it open ended, acknowledging the need for incentives for purchasers of land bank properties to fix up the exterior and improve the overall neighborhood, but noting that the specifics of the program would be adopted by the board at a later date. Mr. Corbett moved that the committee recommend the full board adopt the proposed changes to the 2014 budget and the 2015-2018 budget as amended. Dwight Hicks seconded this motion. **ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT PASSED A MOTION TO RECOMMEND THAT THE FULL BOARD ADOPT THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE 2014 BUDGET AND THE 2015-2018 BUDGET AS AMENDED.**

VI. Discussion

- Snow Removal RFP

Ms. Wright indicated that responses were due this week and that a consolidated contract for snow removal would be on the board's November agenda.

- Property Management Contract Renewals

Ms. Wright indicated that she was containing to discuss renewal at lower rates with the land bank's property managers and that she was optimistic periodic inspection costs would be dramatically reduced. There was some discussion of how to reduce unit costs while still enjoying the centralization of services under one property management company for each property, reducing the land bank's administrative costs of responding to each code violation or maintenance complaint.

- Legal Services renewal

Ms. Wright explained that this item would be on the upcoming November agenda for the full board and would renew the organization's engagement of Menter at the same rates for the 2015 year. Committee members indicated that this was advisable.

- Accounting Services renewal

Ms. Wright indicated that the board would need to authorize engaging TMD for 2015 at the rates approved in 2014 when the Land Bank RFP'd for independent audit services and that this item would likely be on the December board agenda.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Corbett moved to adjourn. Mr. Hicks seconded this motion. **ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:53 AM.**