



Rome/Floyd Land Bank Authority Minutes

Friday, August 5, 2022

8:30 AM

Carnegie Building Training Room

Committee Members Present:

Harry Brock
J.R. Davis
Rob Ware
David Mathis
David Clonts

Others:

Cindy Reed - City - Accountant, Grants/Internal Auditor
Toni Rhinehart - City - Finance Di
Meredith Ulmer - City - Assistant City Manager
Kevin Payne - County - Tax Commissioner
Bruce Ivey - County - Special Projects Manager

Staff:

Bekki Fox - City - Community Development Director
Amanda Carter - City - Community Development - Rome/Floyd Land Bank Authority Manager
Logan Drake - City - Community Development Administrative Program Assistant

Welcome and Call to order:

David Mathis called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. A quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes:

Mathis asked for any corrections to the May minutes. Harry Brock motioned to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Rob Ware. Motion carried.

Authority Updates- Property Transactions:

Bekki Fox brought up the closed deeds that have been recorded for the following properties: 300 Cave Spring Street (J14M041) and 13 N. McLin Street (J14L037). Payment for parcel J14M041 from received from Darlington School. Parcel J14L037 was transferred and donated to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest Georgia. Both transactions are complete.

LBA (Rome/Floyd Land Bank Authority) Staff received confirmation from Attorney Trey Newton that the following properties now have title clearance: 410 Hardy Avenue (I14W330), 1 Orchid Place (J14O113), 7 Forsyth Street (J14J165), and 712 E. Boundary Street (J14O314). Quiet title work on 420 Branham Avenue (I14W443) is still ongoing.

There is no update regarding 301/303 Walnut Avenue (J16Y344). An attorney from the Brinson Askew Berry law firm is meeting with the family to help them complete probate. LBA Staff reached out to the attorney but have not received a recent update.

Authority Updates- Property Maintenance:

Fox explained that LBA Staff has had difficulties obtaining lawn maintenance services. Staff received a quote back with "Grassroots of Rome" being the only one to reply. Amanda Carter's PowerPoint listed the amount and parcels in need of service. Some parcels simply need the grass cut while others will also require Bobcat/bush hog services. After discussing various options, the Board asked Fox to hold off until they have collected additional contacts to

reach out to. Board members may communicate with these contacts themselves or provide Carter with their information.

Financial Report:

The financial report was distributed for review and presented by Toni Rhinehart. The attached report details the cash balance as of July 31ST and 2018-2022 YTD property taxes collected. Rhinehart led a discussion regarding the money the City has approved for the LBA. Once the \$1 million is expended out of the ARPA funds and transferred to the LBA, the 2026 deadline will no longer apply.

Discussion Items- LBA Committee Updates:

Fox distributed copies of the August 2022 Monthly Report which summarizes the progress made by each of the four LBA committees.

The Finance Committee met to discuss the previously mentioned ARPA update. The next meeting date is TBA as the Committee will meet on an as-needed basis.

The Executive Committee met on **August 3, 2022**. They have reached out to Georgia Attorney Allie Jett of Jett Law Group. Jett is an expert in Judicial Tax Foreclosure and title clearance issues and has spoken for the Georgia Association of Land Bank Authorities (GALBA) before. As they are currently no action items for the September 2022 Board Meeting, the Committee invited Jett to give a 35-45 minute presentation explaining the Tax Foreclosure Process. This Board Meeting would take place in the Sam King Room instead of the usual Carnegie Building Training Room. Jett is not charging the LBA for this training session as she routinely provides this service for other land banks throughout the State.

The Housing Development Committee met on **June 28, 2022**. They recommended the expenditure of HOME Trust funds for rental units; however, more research needs to be done before the Board takes action. A long-term plan to sell rental properties after 10 years is possibly being developed. Development needs to be focused on the following properties: 604 Pennington Avenue (I14W563), 410/412 Hardy Avenue (I14W330/I14W331), 1 Orchid Place (J14O113), and 7 Forsyth Street (J14J165). These will be the first five builds. Two house plans have been purchased with options for both two bedroom/one bathroom and three bedroom/two bathroom. These plans can now be utilized and put out to proposal. The idea is to directly reach out to the following contractors: Pinson's, KC Homes, Cargle Brothers, Proactive Construction, and any other known, licensed contractors who may be interested in bidding. The construction process should begin once these lots have had proper lawncare. The next Housing Development Committee is scheduled for **September 20, 2022**.

The Program/Partnership Development Committee met on **June 1st** and **July 26th**. Carter is currently working on a recently approved, free website for the LBA. Updates will be given on a later date. The Committee has been working on a Neighborhood Vitality Beautification Grant. Carter sent out some information to the Board so that they could review everything beforehand. The intent is to improve the physical appearance and character of the neighborhoods the LBA works in by addressing residential disrepair and blight. Staff handed out copies of the application/guidelines that detailed the following: Statement of purpose, information, selection process, eligibility guidelines, eligible improvements/projects, process, property information, checklist, and post-award project timeline. Fox asked that the Board approve the grant program, should they be in favor of it. She then requested the Board allocate \$25,000.00 out of the budget to fund this grant. Discussion was had. Rather than having an open-ended grant application, the LBA would utilize a grassroots/door-to-door approach by going to homeowners directly to gauge their interest in participating. The grant money would not go directly to the homeowner. Instead, the process would be completed internally with the contractor or supplier being paid to ensure work is completed. The grant would be a one-time deal per person. While owner-occupied homes will take priority, options for rental units remain. All agreed with the purpose, guidelines, and approach but Fox acknowledged that the Board could revisit these components if need be.

Action Updates:

Once discussion ceased on the Neighborhood Vitality Beautification Grant Program, the Board took the following actions:

- J.R. Davis made a motion to approve the Neighborhood Vitality Beautification Grant program and application process, which was seconded by Brock. Motion carried.
- Ware made a motion to approve the funding request by allowing \$25,000.00, which was seconded by David Clonts. Motion carried.

Staff Updates:

Fox stated that Carter has done well educating the community about the LBA with much positive feedback. Carter recently gave a successful presentation at the Rome Floyd Chamber's Young Professionals of Rome Lunch and Learn. She also spoke at Rome's quarterly meeting for the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH).

Fox and Carter will be attending the Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference in Chicago, IL. They will complete this travel/training after the upcoming September Board meeting. Carter explained that they will continue researching which property management software is best as there will be vendors present.

Fox reminded everyone that the LBA Strategic Plan is a living document. The mission statement has been set. Staff is still waiting on getting responses back from the Center for Community Progress (CPP).

Property Purchase Requests:

Carter presented seven applications for property acquisition through the Land Bank Authority. The applications were discussed, and the outcome is listed as follows:

- **34 Ross Street (J130244)**

The Board reviewed two applications submitted for the purchase of a wooded, vacant parcel located at 34 Ross Street. Theolia Millsap Jr made an offer of \$500.00 for parcel J130244. As a resident in the neighborhood, he desires to buy more land in the area and develop. Millsap Jr's prescribed plan is to build a 700 - 900 sq ft home on the lot. He also desires to submit applications for two other LBA-owned parcels located on Ross Street. Joshua Tree Associates LLC, an out-of-state investment company, also made an offer of \$1,000.00 for parcel J130244. Their prescribed plan details real property investment with an eventual resell of said property to a third party with no set time frame. Discussion was made. Considering the LBA already owns the adjacent lot, 106 Ross Street (J130245), it was suggested that the two properties be packaged together. Staff could then ask Millsap Jr if were interested. After discussion, however, all agreed to just sell Millsap Jr parcel J130244. Depending on how the process goes, the idea of him also acquiring parcel J130245 can be revisited. In the meantime, the LBA can investigate potentially clearing the title on parcel J130245. The Board acted as follows:

- Ware motioned to approve the \$500.00 offer presented from Theolia Millsap Jr for parcel J130244, subject to conveyance from Floyd County, which was seconded by Brock. Motion carried.

- **0 Smith Avenue (I16X038)**

The Board reviewed an application submitted for the purchase of a parcel located at 0 Smith Avenue. Joshua Tree Associates LLC made an offer of \$1,250.00 for parcel I16X038. Their prescribed plan details real property investment with an eventual resell of said property to a third party with no set time frame. After discussion, Staff was authorized to reach out to the adjoining property owners of 132A Walker Mountain Road (I16X023) and gauge their interest in purchasing the parcel. Considering parcel I16X023 is 8.2 acres, the owners might be interested in acquiring parcel I16X038 so that they may add to their land. If they say they are not interested, the offer from Joshua Tree Associates, LLC will be accepted. The Board acted as follows:

- Brock motioned to ask the adjoining property owners if they would be willing to make an offer of \$1,250.00 for parcel I16X038, and if not, to accept Joshua Tree Associates' offer of \$1,250.00, subject to conveyance from Floyd County, which was seconded by Ware. Motion carried.

- **2 Blacks Bluff Road (I14Z149), 411 Superba Avenue (K13X195), 0 Spring Creek Street (J14K242)**

The Board reviewed three separate applications submitted for the purchase of three vacant parcels located at 2 Blacks Bluff Road (I14Z149), 411 Superba Avenue (K13X195), and 0 Spring Creek Street (J14K242). Joshua Tree Associates, LLC made the following offers: \$1,650.00 for parcel I14Z149, \$1,000.00 for parcel K13X195 and \$1,200.00 for parcel J14K242. Their prescribed plan is the same for all three properties. They want real property investment with an eventual resell of said property to a third party. There is no set time frame for this process. Discussion was had. The Board agreed that, for now, they would rather request these lots from Floyd County to potentially build upon them than sell to Joshua Tree Associates, LLC. If conveyed from Floyd County, the title clearance process would not begin until Allie Jett has already spoken. The Board acted as follows:

 - Davis motioned to begin the title clearance process, subject to conveyance from Floyd County, on parcels I14Z149, K13X195 and J14K242, which was seconded by Ware. Motion carried.

- **0 Miller Mountain Road (H19129)**

The Board reviewed an application submitted for the purchase of a vacant parcel located at 0 Miller Mountain Road. Douglas and Sue Howell made a negotiable offer of \$150.00 - \$200.00 for parcel H19129. They already own the surrounding property, 0 South Highway 27 (H19130) and clean up the lot in question. Their prescribed plan is to prevent people from disposing garbage on the lot by putting up a gate and continuing to keep the area clean. Discussion was had. Due to the property already having clear title, the Board believed it was reasonable to counter back with a higher figure. The Board acted as follows:

 - Brock motioned to counter the Howell's negotiable offer of \$150.00 - \$200.00 with a figure of \$2,500.00, subject to conveyance from Floyd County. Motion carried.

Other Business:

The next regular meeting is scheduled for **Friday, September 2, 2022, at 8:30 AM**. Since this meeting will take place in the Sam King Room instead of the Carnegie Training Room like usual, another reminder will be sent out closer to time.

Adjourn:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Logan Drake
Recording Secretary