

**ATHENS COUNTY LAND REUTILIZATION CORPORATION**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS - MINUTES**  
[www.AthensCountyLandBank.com](http://www.AthensCountyLandBank.com)

LOCATION: Live meeting held at Athens County Records Center with guests joining virtually on Google Hangouts (<https://meet.google.com/bbz-ywph-ygf>)

DAY/TIME: Called to order on Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 @ 11:01 AM

PURPOSE: Regular meeting to consider the following business:

Board Administration

1. The meeting was called to order by Ric Wasserman, Chair. Roll Call by Aaron Dye, Secretary. Board members present were Ric Wasserman, Commissioner Lenny Eliason, Township Trustee Gregg Andrews, and Stephanie Morris for Commissioner Chris Chmiel (joined late).
2. Motion to approve agenda with the amendment that contracting J. Uhrig for the annual Hinkle filing be added under New Business by Mr. Wasserman, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Eliason. All Yeas.
3. Motion to approve minutes from December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 board meeting by Mr. Andrews, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Eliason. All Yeas.
4. Financial Report from Treasurer La Verne Humphrey

Summary	
Starting Balance	290,294.90
Actual Cash In	184,324.25
Actual Cash Out	127,462.75
Ending Balance	347,156.40

Mr. Wasserman notes that a reimbursement was received from the Ohio Department of Development for the Group J demolitions. He notes that since January 1<sup>st</sup>, the Land Bank has received \$158,372 from the sale of the Buchtel house and the final invoice from Hutton Excavating for one of the Group J demos was paid, so the account balance as of today is about \$446,000.

Business:

## Old Business

1. Update on acquisition process/pipeline – Mr. Wasserman
  - i) Properties acquired since December board meeting: 319 Oak Street, Nelsonville; 55 Madison Street, Glouster; 11 Maple Street, Glouster; 3 Main Street, Glouster; 29 Hill Street, Glouster; 21 W. High Street, Jacksonville; Vacant lot at corner of Congress Street and Valley Street, Trimble. Mr. Wasserman notes that 11 Maple Street may be a good candidate for renovation.
  - ii) We have moved into a new cycle of foreclosures with 7 title searches being ordered from Nolan and Meek in consultation with Asst. Prosecutor Zach West. Mr. Wasserman notes that there may be other properties coming to us if they do not sell at sheriff sale.
2. Self-Funded Demos: Hutton Excavating has completed the Group J1, J2, and J3 demolitions. These demolitions included 13 structures in Nelsonville, Glouster, Trimble, Jacksonville, Chauncey, and Stewart. Aaron and Ric are currently going through the projects list to determine the next rounds of demolitions. Expenses for these demolitions will be reimbursable under the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program rules. See below.
3. State Demo project: Update from Mr. Wasserman – The applications were due on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The Land Bank applied to demolish 42 buildings and six mobile homes across the county. We have finally been notified of our approval for the entire \$734,000 of our grant request! This means that all of the projects on our demo list will be funded though some of them are now moot due to sales or owner-demos. Aaron submitted the first reimbursement request for the amount of \$129,674.25, which was approved by ODOD and was received in our account on Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Asbestos inspections have been completed on the structures in the next round of demolitions. We are awaiting the results. Once we receive the surveys, we will publish the bid specifications for each group. Structures in Group K include: 8001 SR-78, Glouster; 2 Mound Street, Chauncey; 22 Smith Street, Chauncey; 3 Main Street, Glouster; 61 Summit Street, Glouster; 3 Summit Street, Glouster; 234 W. Washington, Nelsonville; 473 Poplar Street, Nelsonville; 3798 Woodlane Drive, Nelsonville; 823 Walnut Street, Nelsonville; 4071 Old SR-56, New Marshfield; 3 Elm Street, The Plains; 38 Brown Avenue, Athens. Mr. Wasserman notes that the original deadline to have BD&SR projects completed was in May, but we believe that will be extended due to the lengthy approval process that each county went through.

4. State Brownfield Grant Application: In collaboration with the Athens County Port Authority, we made application for several brownfield remediation projects around the county that had previously been Land Bank projects. As part of this program the Jacksonville-Trimble school, vacant and dilapidated for over 40 years, has been torn down. Two other projects

have had assessments completed and will be shifted to the OEPA BUSTR program for remediation. Greening has been carried out at the Jacksonville-Trimble school, marking the demolition as complete. Mr. Wasserman says that the Ohio Governor is supposed to deliver his budget by the end of the month, and we should know then if more money has been earmarked for future demolition programs.

5. Update on previously approved projects: Mr. Wasserman

- A. 27 Main Street, Glouster (LB-2018-72): The house at 27 Main was demolished in the Group J2 demolitions. A sign has been placed at the property. We expect it to come up for disposition in early 2023.
- B. Rehabs: Land Bank Rehabs underway or nearly completed in the county: 24 Cherry Street (new owner), Glouster; 141 Monroe Street, Nelsonville; 130 Jefferson Street, Nelsonville; 354 Chestnut Street, Nelsonville; 637 High Street, Nelsonville; 495 Patton Street, Nelsonville; 770/784 Poplar Street, Nelsonville.

6. Rural Acquisition (Pay-in-advance) Program Projects:

- 1) 4070 Washington Road (3 parcels, LB-2021-16): We have acquired this property. See below for update on environmental remediation at this property. Aaron and Ric conducted a level one inspection of the house on the property, which seems to be in very good condition. We now have several potential end users for this property. Heirs of the previous owner contacted us and are currently in the process of removing some personal items from the house.
- 2) 110 High Street, Glouster (LB-2022-08): This property was transferred to the Land Bank on November 29, 2022. The previous owner is currently in the process of cleaning out some items from the building. LaVerne notes that the upstairs windows are open and they should likely be boarded up. Aaron notes that Jody plans on securing the building once the previous owner confirms that she has removed the items she wishes to keep.
- 3) 4667 Sand Ridge Road, Lodi Twp (LB-2020-07): The Land Bank purchased the tax certificates and sent them to Frank Lavelle, who filed the foreclosure case. The judge in the case issued a decree of foreclosure on Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> and ordered Direct Transfer to the Land Bank. Our attorney will be getting the required signatures on the deed and we should have it shortly.
- 4) 61 Summit Street, Glouster (LB-2021-06): Burned out church along Summit in Glouster. This property is already a Land Bank project. The church is slated to be demolished with BD&SR funds later this summer. It was voted at the July board meeting to accept Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio's proposal to acquire this property through the Rural Acquisition program. A foreclosure case was filed on this property on Land Bank lien certificates on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022. A foreclosure has

been decreed. Our attorney will be getting the required signatures on the deed and we should have it shortly. Mr. Wasserman notes that the Land Bank may be ready for disposition for this project and the 4667 Sand Ridge Road project (above) by March.

7. Brownfield Remediation Projects:

- a. 83 Columbus Road (LB-2021-18): abandoned gas station owned by the City of Athens. This project was granted a Level 1-2 assessment in the Round 1 brownfield funding and we applied for remediation (demo) of the property in Round 2. We expect the remediation to be funded since it is within our \$1 Million county set-aside. Best estimate on timeline is a mid-late summer 2023 demo.
- b. 4070 Washington Rd, Albany (LB-2021-16): Foreclosure was completed.

Phase 1 and 2 evaluations were done with Brownfield project money and it was decided to move this project to the EPA's BUSTR program as there is over \$10 million left in that fund and Tetra-Tech believes there is an easier path to funding there. It will not, however be quick. It will probably take 6 months to finish the work on the Phase 1 & 2 and get an approval from Ohio EPA for a remediation grant.

8. Update on pending dispositions:

- a. 17922 N. Akron Avenue, Buchtel (LB-2020-01): Closing for the renovated house on N. Akron Avenue occurred Friday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The house was sold to the happy buyer. We received a net total of \$158,372 from the sale after closing costs and real estate agent commission.
- b. Closings for 26 Converse, Chauncey, 19498 Congress Street, Trimble, and 60 Converse Street, Chauncey are slated to occur by the end of the month.

9. Buchtel Renovation

- a. 17922 Akron Avenue, Buchtel (LB-2020-01): All appliances have been installed and the renovation is complete! Sanborn Family Builders did a fantastic job with the renovation and were wonderful to work with. Finishing touches have been completed. The renovation cost approximately \$170,000. The Land Bank received \$15,000 from the Athens County Foundation and \$30,000 from the Treasurer's lien administration fund, so the Land Bank spent \$125,000.

As noted above, closing for the Buchtel house occurred on Friday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The Land Bank received a total of \$158,372 from the sale. After the cost of the renovation and including the funds received from the Athens County Foundation and the Treasurer's lien administration fund, the Land Bank made \$33,372 from its first renovation project. Mr. Wasserman mentioned that the buyer loves the house and the sale went swimmingly. The only remaining item left before closing out this project is filling out a grant completion form for the Athens County Foundation.

10. ARPA request in the amount of \$200,000 for demolitions and nuisance properties in collaboration with the Health Department
  - a. A request was sent to the Commissioners, and was then sent to their Auditors to verify that it is an approved expense. Mr. Eliason notes that the request is still being reviewed.
  
11. Discussion on an event with Heritage Ohio in Spring 2023
  - a. Ms. Morris notes that Mr. Chmiel has asked for a \$500 contribution from the Land Bank for the workshop. Aaron notes that Mr. Chmiel indicated in an email that the workshop will take place on Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Wasserman asks what exactly the workshop is for. Aaron responds that the workshop focuses on downtown revitalization, historic tax credits, the benefits of historic preservation, and the like with presentations from Heritage Ohio and others. Ms. Morris motions that the Land Bank contribute \$500 to the Heritage Ohio workshop. Mr. Eliason asks if the Land Bank would be receiving sponsorship credit for this contribution. Mr. Wasserman says he asked the same thing and that Mr. Chmiel said we would. Mr. Eliason asks to whom the money would be paid, and Mr. Wasserman responds that it would be Heritage Ohio. Mr. Eliason asks if it is their workshop. Aaron notes that he believes Mr. Chmiel's thought behind it was that we would be paying them to put on the workshop. Mr. Wasserman notes that it is similar to a workshop that another organization hosted at Stuart's Opera House in Nelsonville. Mr. Eliason said that he is not sure if it is a "good use of Land Bank money." Mr. Wasserman asks when the February board meeting is, and Aaron notes it is on February 15<sup>th</sup>, a week before the event. The motion dies for lack of a 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### New Business

1. Future Dispositions – Several potential dispositions are in progress, and we hope to bring them to the board soon. They include:
  - a. 27 Main Street, Glouster (LB-2018-72): The structure was demolished during the recent Group J2 demolitions. A new sign has been placed on the property. We expect it to come up for disposition in early 2023.
  - b. 8001 SR-78, Glouster (LB-2019-10): Parcel with a dilapidated trailer. A few end-users have applied for this property. Needs survey. An application was submitted to have this structure demolished with state BD&SR funds.
  - c. 20 Campbell Street, Nelsonville (LB-2018-43): This property was recently acquired last fall and we believed it might be a candidate for renovation. Waste diversion is currently being carried out at the house. It was inspected by local contractor Danny Yahini and it is his opinion that the structure can be renovated. He estimates it would cost \$25,000-35,000 in materials to successfully renovate. No project proposals were submitted on the prior October 19, 2022 deadline. Athens County Planner Laura Olbers confirmed with us that this

property is in the floodplain and would need to be elevated 6 inches above the base flood elevation if renovated.

- d. 38 Main Street, Glouster (LB-2018-73): Large blue boarded up Victorian house in Glouster. A new end-user has come forth with an interest in renovating the house. He is currently composing a prospectus. Our Property Manager, Jody Barnes conducted a tour for a new interested end-user on December 15, 2022.
  - e. 14 and 16 Maple Street, Glouster (LB-2019-25 and LB-2019-26): Empty parcels. Structures previously demolished by Land Bank. The only interested end-user has not responded to contact attempts.
  - f. 823 Walnut Street, Nelsonville (LB-2020-13): Currently on our list to be demolished in the next round of BD&SR funding demolitions. An end-user came forth with an interest in potentially renovating the structure. Jody met with local contractor Danny Yahini who determined that the house would not be a feasible renovation candidate.
  - g. 98 W. Franklin Street, Nelsonville (LB-2018-03): A new end-user has applied for this property. A dilapidated house used to occupy this property, but was demolished in the Group J demos in Fall 2022.
  - h. 30 Cross Street, Glouster (LB-2019-42): A recently acquired property with a house that we believe to be a good candidate for renovation. Several potential end-users have applied for this property and have been taken on walk-throughs of the house.
2. Ohio Land Bank Association 2023 Dues.
- i) The yearly membership fee is \$500.00 and we would like to sponsor the OLBA Land Bank Conference in the amount of \$500.00. Mr. Wasserman notes that the OLBA has been key in the Athens County Land Bank's development in terms of technical support and providing support for litigation. Mr. Wasserman motions that the Land Bank pay its dues to OLBA in the amount of \$500.00 and sponsor the OLBA Land Bank Conference in the amount of \$500.00, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Eliason. Mr. Wasserman also points out that the OLBA is in the process of hiring its first Executive Director. All Yeas.
3. Maintenance repairs for the Ditty Box (60 Main Street, Glouster)
- i) We received a quote from Mike Smith of Smitty's Interior & Exterior in the amount of \$5,000.00 for maintenance repairs at 60 Main Street to prevent further dilapidation. Mr. Wasserman notes that it is a usable building if an applicant comes along that would like to put money into it. He notes that there are holes in the slate roof that need to be patched with tarp, and that there is a porch on one side of the building that is very dilapidated and needs to come off. The porch is very close to a bus stop for Trimble Local Schools, and that we are concerned that someone may be standing beneath it when something falls off. Mr. Wasserman notes that Mike Smith and his company put the new roof on 83/85 High Street, Glouster. The bid that Mr. Smith submitted includes patching the roof, removing the porch, and resealing the staircase that leads to the porch so it

can be used in the future. Mr. Wasserman makes a motion to hire Smitty's Interior & Exterior to make these emergency repairs for \$5,000.00, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Andrews. All Yeas.

4. **Contract with J.L. Uhrig & Associates for annual Hinkle filing**

i) Mr. Wasserman notes that this is a regular contract that is executed every year. J.L. Uhrig & Associates specializes in public entity accounting. He says that what they do for the Land Bank is take our financials and put it into the generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) format that the State Auditor requires, and the filing is made on the State Auditor's website (called the Hinkle system). This is a requirement for all public entities. He notes they are paid between \$1,500-\$2,000 for this work. Mr. Wasserman moves that the Land Bank contract with J.L. Uhrig & Associates again for the annual Hinkle filing, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Eliason. All Yeas.

5. Disposition Action:

No disposition action this month.

6. New Projects:

<b>Taxes Owed</b>	<b>Last Pymt</b>	<b>Parcel ID</b>	<b>Owner Name</b>	<b>Property Address</b>

No new projects this month.

Roundtable:

A. Scheduling of next meeting: February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

B. Guest Lydia Cunningham, resident of Gloucester, asks about 24 Spring Street, Gloucester. She notes that she noticed 24 Spring Street did not go to sheriff sale and asks if it was bought by the Land Bank. Mr. Wasserman notes that the Land Bank does not typically purchase properties. If a property does not sell at sheriff sale, the Prosecutor may offer it to the Land Bank. Ms. Cunningham notes that the property did not go up for sale. Mr. Wasserman said that he does not believe the Land Bank or the Treasurer's office has had any contact with 24 Spring Street.

Aaron notes that 24 Spring Street was owned by Michael Kennedy, but the only property previously owned by Michael Kennedy that the Land Bank has acquired is 3 Main Street, Gloucester. Mr. Wasserman informs Ms. Cunningham that Aaron will check out the property. Regarding 3 Main Street, Mr.

Wasserman notes that Mr. Kennedy's widow was approached for permission to demolish the dilapidated building before we acquired it. Subsequent to that, a foreclosure was completed and it went to sheriff sale and did not sell. When it did not sell, the Prosecutor offered it to us, as well as the school district and other entities. The Land Bank claimed 3 Main Street, and is in the process of having it demolished. He states that 24 Spring Street was not on the Land Bank's radar. Ms. Cunningham notes that 24 Spring Street and 3 Main Street were on the same deed. Mr. Wasserman responds that just because they were on the same deed, that does not mean that the Land Bank is aware of the property. Ms. Cunningham says that she lives next door to 24 Spring Street and that it has been a problem for years. Mr. Wasserman says that Aaron will check out the property and if it meets the criteria to become a Land Bank project, the board will vote to make it a project. If it's accepted as a project, the Land Bank can begin a foreclosure on it. Ms. Cunningham notes that the grass has not been mowed and that there have been squatters in the house. She continues that she has brought her concerns to the village council meetings but no movement forward has been made.

Ms. Cunningham's second item pertains to the Ditty Box (60 Main Street, Glouster). She notes that as a Glouster resident who drives past the building every day, she believes it should be torn down and does not see the point in spending money on repairs. She continues that children are getting inside the building. Mr. Wasserman responds that the building has been secured and nobody is getting inside. He further said that the problem with tearing everything down is that you would end up with nothing left in the village. Mr. Wasserman replies that the Land Bank has demolished many buildings in Glouster and that in the case of the Ditty Box, it is a real brick building – that is to say, not a brick veneer, but three courses of brick – and is incredibly solid. Even with a roof leak, the second floor is dry, and it is a useable building. He notes that there is no grocery store in Glouster, and as the Land Bank continues with redevelopment along Main Street and High Street, some buildings have to be kept in the inventory in hopes that someone will buy and redevelop them. He comments that we didn't expect that a coffee company would come to Glouster and repurpose an abandoned building, but they did. He goes on to say that the old flower shop (62 Firehouse Drive) will be torn down, as it is not usable, but because the Ditty Box is such a solid building, it's worth the risk to keep around and put some money into repairs until somebody comes along with hopes to restore it. Ms. Cunningham asks how many years the building will have to sit abandoned. Mr. Wasserman responds that he doesn't know, but the Land Bank is in the process of cleaning up the side lot next to the building so it is less of an eyesore. Ms. Morris asks if there is parking at the Ditty Box. Mr. Wasserman replies that there is parking in the alley behind the building. Ms. Cunningham says that as a resident of Glouster, she views things differently and wants it cleaned up. Mr. Wasserman responds that it is getting cleaned it up, it's just not getting torn down.



- C. Guest Steve Pierson, Athens Township Trustee, presented a quick report from Athens Township. He notes that the Trustees applied for a property (9 Clinton Road, The Plains) behind Joe Burrow Stadium, but a local attorney intervened and the property was purchased privately by Danny Riley. At the time, the zoning code read that if you have two lots side-by-side that were deficient in area, they must be combined, but the zoning code was changed. Rather than building two houses there, Mr. Riley was able to build three. The third house has just been completed, but the two others are occupied and he believes one has sold. Where there once were three vacant lots and a dilapidated house, there are now three brand new houses. He notes that there is a similar situation with a property purchased by Bryan Lutz (36 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, The Plains). There is now a house that has almost completed construction and Mr. Pierson has issued a zoning certificate for the other house Mr. Lutz would like to build. The second structure has to be owner-occupied, per the agreement with the Land Bank. Mr. Pierson sums up that the five lots he mentioned now have five new houses. Mr. Wasserman notes that the Land Bank is excited about these updates. While the Land Bank never acquired 9 Clinton, Treasurer Wasserman did work on the foreclosure case for several years to pressure the estate to either sell it or give it up to the Land Bank. The Land Bank did acquire 36 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> and chose Mr. Lutz as the end-user.

Mr. Pierson also mentioned that he appreciates that 3 Elm Street, The Plains is in the Land Bank's Group K demolitions. He comments that a 3-million-dollar restoration of Elm Street, the main entrance into the high school, was just completed, including pavement, bike lane, street lighting, and sidewalk. He notes that 3 Elm Street is the eyesore on Elm Street. He continues that when improvements are made, it snowballs. He notes a house constructed on South Plains Road that is now owner-occupied, a permit he recently issued for a manufactured home to go in behind The Plains Fire Department, and a couple of other projects. He says that even though there's zoning in the Athens Township portion of The Plains, there's a lot of development. Other big developments include a new Hopewell Health facility, 911 EMA are moving their call center across from the intermediate school, and HAPCAP is building a head start pre-school across from The Plains Fire Department.

- D. Mr. Wasserman asks if there's an update from the Tomcat Bridgebuilders. Jeff Ross mentions that he hasn't been to a Land Bank meeting for a while, but that the board meeting minutes are so comprehensive that he feels like he's at the meetings. Mr. Wasserman credited manager Aaron Dye with deftly crafting the minutes month after month.
- E. Guest Joshua McLaughlin asks about the status of 21 W. High Street, Jacksonville. Mr. Wasserman notes that the Land Bank is currently evaluating the structure, but after a long foreclosure it has finally been acquired.

