

ATHENS COUNTY LAND REUTILIZATION CORPORATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS – MINUTES
www.AthensCountyLandBank.com

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

DAY/TIME: Called to order Wednesday, December 13th, 2023 @ 11:00 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 Chris Chmiel, Township Trustee Gregg Andrews, Stephanie Morris for Commissioner Lenny Eliason, and Andrew Chiki for Mayor Steve Patterson (joined late).
2. Motion to approve agenda by Mr. Chmiel, 2nd by Ms. Morris. All Yeas.
3. Motion to approve minutes from October 18th, 2023 meeting by Mr. Chmiel, 2nd by Mr. Andrews. All Yeas.
4. Financial Report from Treasurer LaVerne Humphrey

Summary	
Starting Balance	343,944.50
Actual Cash In	400.00
Actual Cash Out	52,608.16
Ending Balance	291,736.34

Ms. Humphrey notes that cash-in included the remaining payment for the purchase of 42, 44, and 46 Front Street by Estel Russell and cash out included payments for Group L demolitions, building materials for 11 Maple Street, and Barber & Hoffman. Aaron notes that a reimbursement request has been submitted to ODOD for remaining Group K demolition expenses as well as Group L demolition expenses and should total to approximately \$155,000. Mr. Wasserman notes that some Land Banks are waiting 60-75 days for their reimbursements. Motion to approve financial report by Mr. Chmiel, 2nd by Ms. Morris. All Yeas.

Business:

Old Business

1. Update on acquisition process/pipeline from Mr. Wasserman

i) Properties acquired since September board meeting:

None. Assistant Prosecutor Zach West has several cases in various states of foreclosure, all bound for Sheriff sale when the foreclosure is decreed. A couple of projects are in the latter stages. In addition, the property at 10190 Chase Road in Alexander Twp, (2023-05) is expected to come to us within the next week.

Mr. Wasserman notes that three deeds were received yesterday (12/12/2023) including the Chase Road, Albany property, Nelsonville Avenue, Stewart, and 3012 Perry Ridge Road, York Township. The latter of the three are Rural Acquisition projects. He continues that Mr. West is looking to implement a new quarterly process for Land Bank foreclosures.

2. State Demo project:

The Group L1, L2, and L3 demolitions were awarded as follows: L1 to Running G Farms, L2 to Archer Excavating, and L3 to Aster Oilfield Services. Structures in Group L include: 26070 Congrove Street, Coolville; 26540 Main Street, Coolville; 472 SR-124, Hockingport; 62 Firehouse Drive, Glouster; 19549 Congress Street, Trimble (Garage at Village Hall). Pre-demolition progress is running smoothly with Running G Farms expected to break ground first on September 19th.

Substitution projects were submitted to ODOD and all were approved. The substitutions include 3 Fairlawn, Glouster; 42 Front, Glouster; 63 E. Main, Glouster; 55 Madison, Glouster; 1128 High, Nelsonville; 631 Cherry, Nelsonville; 4120 Old SR-56, New Marshfield. 4120 Old SR-56, New Marshfield is the only property in the substitutions not owned by the Land Bank and was brought to us by Gregg Andrews. There will be one more group demolition before we have completed this round of the BD&SR program. Remaining structures to be demolished include the above substitutions as well as 5377 Happy Hollow, Nelsonville; 426 Pleasantview, Nelsonville; 253 Myers, Nelsonville; 60 Terrace, Nelsonville; 12 Robbins, Nelsonville; 611 Patton, Nelsonville; 269 Madison, Nelsonville.

The Group L demolitions are complete! Structures in Group L included 472 SR-124, Hockingport, 26070 Congrove Street, Coolville, 26540 Main Street, Coolville, 19549 Congress Street, Trimble (Garage at Village Hall), and 62 Firehouse Drive, Glouster. Cleanup is still occurring at the Firehouse Drive property. Aaron is currently working on the next reimbursement request to submit to ODOD.

Asbestos inspections have been completed for the final group of demolitions. Three structures came back "hot," and remediation is underway.

Mr. Wasserman notes that folks looking to have the Land Bank demolish structures on their behalf must be up to date on property tax payments. He continues that it is likely we will not surpass the \$500,000 county set-aside for the 2024-2025 BD&SR biennium. If our application is over \$500,000, the property owners would need to supply the match funds.

We are compiling a preliminary list of potential properties to submit as part of our application for the next round of this program. Folks are encouraged to reach out to Mr. Wasserman or Aaron if they know of potential projects.

3. State Brownfield Grant Application:

In collaboration with the Athens County Port Authority, we made application for two brownfield remediation projects in conjunction with the Athens County Port Authority.

Cornerstone Harvest Church in Hollister is an old school that has been used as a church for several years. The congregation has built a new building and would like the old school torn down. Application has been made for a Level I and II assessment.

We were informed by ODOD that the Abandoned Gas Stations grant program is out of money and they are no longer accepting applications. We had already filed an application for the cleanup of 4070 Washington Road, Albany. We were asked to instead put this remediation through the State Brownfield program. The folks at the Port Authority were very quick to meet with us and submitted the Washington Road property as part of their Brownfield application but this will result in a significant delay of this already long-running project.

Mr. Wasserman notes that the old Sohio service station in Glouster at the SR-78/13 intersection may be submitted as a brownfield project.

5. Update on previously approved projects: Mr. Wasserman

- A. Rehabs: Land Bank Rehabs underway or nearly completed in the county: 24 Cherry Street (new owner), Glouster; 141 Monroe Street, Nelsonville; 354 Chestnut Street, Nelsonville. Wasserman notes that he will check in with Tony Dunfee on the status of 141 Monroe Street, Nelsonville. Mike Smith has completed the renovation of 30 Cross Street, Glouster. A few small repairs remain, but one of his employees has rented the house. Aaron presented photos from the walkthrough of the house with Mr. Smith. Mr. Wasserman notes it took a long time to acquire this property, but it was quick to be disposed. Aaron notes that this was likely the fastest end-user renovation. Mr. Wasserman spoke with North Fairlawn Property Group who acquired 24 Cherry Street, and they plan on beginning their renovation shortly.

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

Mr. Wasserman notes that all Rural Acquisition projects now have to go through sheriff's sale unless the taxes owed is greater than the value of the property. Our RA contract was updated to reflect the changes to the process.

- 1) 4070 Washington Road (3 parcels, LB-2021-16): We have acquired this property. See above for update on environmental remediation at this property. See update regarding 4070 Washington Road above in the Brownfield section.
- 2) 33012 Perry Ridge Road, Nelsonville (LB-2023-02): Pay-in-advance with Chris Breeze. A motion for default judgement was filed on 9/25/23. No action by the judge yet.
- 3) SR-691, York Township (LB-2023-03): Pay-in-advance with Jeff and Laura Brown. On today's agenda.
- 4) Nelsonville Avenue, Stewart (LB-2021-11): Pay-in-advance with Charles Cochran. A motion for Summary Judgement has been filed and may have been adjudicated on 9/25/23 but it has not been recorded in the official docket as of last Friday.

7. Brownfield Remediation Projects:

1. See sections 5 & 6 for details.

8. Update on pending dispositions:

1. Closing for 42, 44, and 46 Front Street, Glouster occurred on December 4th, 2023.
2. The end-user for 8001 SR-78, Glouster has found a surveyor and is in the process of having the survey completed.
3. A new survey is needed for 32 Locust Street, Glouster. The Land Bank informed Allen and Joyce Flowers that we would be willing to split the cost of a new survey. We're currently in the process of ordering a new survey. Tim Newman informed Aaron that he would check out the property and get back to us whether he could take it on and what the estimate would be. He has not yet returned Aaron's attempts at contact.

Mr. Wasserman commented on all the work the Land Bank has done on Front Street in Glouster. Aaron notes that someone who recently acquired a dilapidated structure along the street has reached out about the Land Bank demolishing the structure through the BD&SR program. Mr. Wasserman mentions that 32 Front Street would be an excellent lot for a new build if folks know of anyone who would be interested. He continues that Integrated Services for Behavioral Health purchased 31 Front Street for a new park installation, but no progress has been made.

9. ARPA request in the amount of \$200,000 for demolitions and nuisance properties in collaboration with the Health Department

A request was sent to the Commissioners and was then sent to their Auditors to verify that it is an approved expense. We have received neither an approval nor a denial of this request. At the April board meeting Mr. Eliason informed us that a letter would be sent once an official determination is made.

Mr. Chmiel notes that he does not believe there is any funding left. Mr. Wasserman responds that it would be beneficial to receive an official letter so this item could be removed from future agendas.

10. Update on 47 Main Street, Chauncey – Mr. Wasserman:

At the July board meeting, the board voted to proceed with filing the lawsuit against Athens Preservation, Ltd. The suit was filed in mid-August. Significant staff time was spent during November to prepare documents for discovery including any emails, minutes, agendas, resolutions, etc. that mention either 47 Main or Athens Preservation, LLC. Opposing counsel is now reviewing the discovery documents.

Chauncey Code Inspector Drew Daniels was present at the meeting. He noted that he spoke with John Stevenson from RVC Architects, but the submission was incomplete as it did not include plans regarding how to flood-proof the building.

11. Community Development Block Grant opportunity in collaboration with HAPCAP for downtown revitalization:

Nathan Simons informed us that applications are due by January 22nd, 2024. He has informed us that he needs a scope of work so that an architect can provide an estimate for the project.

Mr. Simons was present at the meeting. Mr. Chmiel notes that Mike from Barber & Hoffman will be at the High Street properties next week, and that a meeting then with Don Dispenza may be beneficial for a front-end estimate on the scope of work for the project. Mr. Wasserman notes that there would be sprinkler regulations for specific businesses. He continues that other than the facades or the roofs, any work being done such as HVAC or electrical would have to be tailored to whatever the end use of the building would be. Aaron notes that he likes the idea of the roof and façade repair, as the façade work is imperative.

12. 11 Maple Street, Gloucester Renovation:

Work on the house began in August. This is basically a full-gut renovation with every wall down to the studs. Sanborn Family Builders is currently working through the renovation, the project is nearing completion. Drywall is up, hardwood floor has been finished. LVT flooring will go down later this week. Painting, cabinet installation and other finishings will be done in the next two weeks. There is some local interest in purchasing the house already.

Mr. Wasserman notes that siding work will be done next week. It will likely be mid-February before completion.

On December 12th, Mr. Chmiel was notified that we were awarded the grant submission he made to the Athens County Foundation. The grant amount is \$14,000 and will cover the costs of the new roof and gutters.

Ms. Morris asks how many bedrooms the house has. Mr. Wasserman notes it is a 2BR house with a functional basement that will feature a laundry room, mud room, family room, and unfinished utility room.

13. Structural Assessment of Downtown Glouster Buildings:

At the July board meeting, contract was approved with Barber & Hoffman for the structural assessments of 73, 83/85, and 87 High Street, Glouster. Aaron and Jody met with Mike Mazzocco from Barber & Hoffman on September 14th for the initial inspections. Jody has performed certain work to create openings in certain areas of the floors, walls, ceilings so further structural assessment may be made. Immediate temporary repairs need to be completed on 83/85 and 87 High Street. Chris Hutton is working on an estimate for these temporary repairs. Two invoices for the engineers have now been paid.

Jody has completed making the openings in the buildings as requested by Barber & Hoffman. They will be visiting Glouster again shortly to complete the next round of inspections.

Hutton Excavating has visited the buildings so they can put together an estimate on temporary parapet repairs per Barber & Hoffman's recommendations.

Mr. Chmiel will be holding a walkthrough of 75 High on Friday, December 15th with an interested end-user.

Mr. Chmiel notes that he has donated the use of many of his personal tools for Jody to use and asks that the Land Bank purchase a generator as well as other tools Jody will need. Mr. Wasserman says yes, the Land Bank is able to do that. Motion by Mr. Chmiel to purchase a generator, 2nd by Mr. Chiki. All Yeas.

14. Temporary roof repairs have been accomplished at two Glouster commercial properties, 60 Main Street (Ditty box) and 110 High Street. Cost was \$960.00 for both buildings. This was necessary to prevent rainwater from entering the buildings. Aaron notes that Jody has mostly worked on waste diversion on the first floor of the building. Mr. Wasserman notes that a complete assessment needs to be done shortly so we know if it needs to be submitted as part of our upcoming demolition application.

15. Appalachian Community Grant Application-Mr. Chmiel:

One of the primary focuses of this program is on downtown revitalization. Update from Mr. Chmiel.

Mr. Chmiel notes that other organizations did not seem interested in partnering with the Land Bank on the revitalization of the downtown Glouster buildings. He did note that

Tomcat Trail, which runs from Trimble to Jacksonville, was part of an application and there may be some work we can do there.

16. Acquisition of 10190 Chase Road, Albany:

The Prosecutor's office has asked us to accept this parcel. It was surrendered by the owner to them in a criminal matter. The Prosecutor's title search showed only the taxes and assessments from the county as liens against the property. This property will be a big clean-up job. We expect to receive the deed before the end of the year.

Mr. Wasserman notes that we should begin work on a preliminary waste diversion plan. Mr. Chmiel notes this property is in his neighborhood and has been a problem for the county for decades. Mr. Wasserman notes that Jody will need to do an inventory of what is located on the property. He is sure there are many tires. The two mobile homes can likely be submitted as part of our BD&SR application. Aaron notes that Rural Action's Watersheds team has asked about performing a river cleanup at the house. Mr. Chmiel has been talking with the Prosecutor's office about having extra hands for cleanup.

New Business – 25 minutes

1. Future Dispositions – Several potential dispositions are in progress, and we hope to bring them to the board soon. They include:
 - a. 20 Campbell Street, Nelsonville (LB-2018-43): This property was recently acquired, and we believe it to 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. Steve Pierson has informed us it would need to be raised 12 inches above the BFE. A new end-user is interested in touring the property and has reached out to Nelsonville City Code to learn more about the code requirements for renovation.
 - b. 8160 State Street, Stewart (LB-2020-10): A dilapidated house formerly occupied this structure. A qualified end-user is in the process of purchasing the property contiguous with this one, which has a usable septic system. His plan is to build on the 8160 State Street parcel and hook into the septic system on the adjacent property which he is purchasing. We expect this property to come up for disposition within the next couple of months.
 - c. 62 Grover Street, Nelsonville (LB-2018-45): A neighboring property owner has expressed interest in acquiring this parcel as green space.

- d. 923/931 E High, Nelsonville (LB-2021-21/22): There is one new end-user interested in acquiring both parcels. They are currently reaching out to Nelsonville City Code to ensure their plan is acceptable.

Aaron notes that he spoke with Ken Oehlers from Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio and they may be interested in acquiring several lots in Nelsonville for future Habitat builds. While discussing Habitat, Mr. Wasserman notes that he recently spoke with them about 36 Main Street, Glouster which was purchased by Mrs. Thompson through a zero-interest loan provided by Habitat. Mrs. Thompson has made the final payment on the loan.

2. Petty Cash for Aaron

Mr. Wasserman notes that \$25 cash is usually kept on hand for conveyances and the like, and the previous petty cash is nearly used up. Motion by Mr. Wasserman to make \$25 of petty cash available to Aaron, 2nd by Mr. Andrews. All Yeas.

3. OLBA Dues:

It was mentioned at the last Ohio Land Bank Association network meeting on Friday, December 8th, that invoices would be sent out shortly for 2024 dues to the OLBA. We are requesting \$1,100 for membership dues (\$600) as well as an additional \$500 for our sponsorship of the Ohio Land Bank Conference. Motion by Mr. Wasserman for \$1,100 to be applied toward membership dues and OLBA sponsorship, 2nd by Mr. Chmiel. All Yeas.

4. New Marshfield School:

Mr. Chmiel would like to hold a discussion regarding the old New Marshfield school at 8000 New Marshfield Road.

Mr. Chmiel notes there is a lot of funding available for un-sewered areas, and New Marshfield seems to be an area with a high need of sewer. Different methods were mentioned, such as forced mains or sand bio-reactors. The sand bio-reactor would require about an acre of land. Mr. Chmiel will be visiting a sand bio-reactor in Knox County tomorrow. He continues that this school is for sale and has several acres available. He believes the school could be renovated as has been done in other areas like Shade and Albany. It is a 25,000sq.ft. building. The current asking price is \$130,000 through the Athens Real Estate Company. He says he sees this as a good example of what a Land Bank can do as a community improvement corporation. He also mentioned an organization called Homeport who works with the Franklin County Land Bank who could aid in affordable housing renovations, which is an option for the school.

Mr. Wasserman asks if the main goal here is the sewer project, why would the Land Bank be working on this and not the Commissioners? Mr. Chmiel responds that he asked Mr. Eliason about this and he responded that it seems to be in the Land Bank's

purview to do this kind of work. He notes there is a public meeting in New Marshfield on January 9th, 2024 regarding the sewer project. Mr. Wasserman notes that the financial burden of buying a building that is not in great shape is high, he asks "How do we bear that burden and who will come along in the deal to help us?" Mr. Andrews replies that this is in the beginning stages and there will be many partners. He believes it is important for the Land Bank to be involved in this project. He thinks providing affordable housing in the area would be huge. Guest Nathan Simons notes that HAPCAP could be a possible partner with the affordable housing aspect of the project.

Mr. Wasserman asks why we would need to make an offer on the property at this moment. Mr. Chmiel notes the Auditor has the property appraised in the \$140,000 range and suggests we could make an offer of \$80,000 or \$50,000. Mr. Wasserman responds that he does not believe we are to that point in the process. Mr. Wasserman asks how we get to the point where we determine which partners will be involved and whether the proposed uses are possible without making a financial commitment yet. He suggests forming a working group to get a sense of what the building is worth to us and the work it would need. He asks if we could work on this without making an offer now. Mr. Chmiel responds that it is his understanding if we make an offer, we can back out without penalty. Mr. Wasserman responds that while that may be the case, if it happens that we like the building, we would be bound by that offer. He continues that currently we spend about a \$125,000/year on personnel and the rest of the funding is spent on maintenance of our properties and the like. We would have to be careful about any offer we make. Mr. Chmiel asks if we could work on this for the next month and come to a resolution on an offer. Mr. Wasserman responds that would be great.

Mr. Chiki asks if the more important aspect of the project is the land associated with the building, or if it's the building itself? Mr. Chmiel responds that the part of the project easiest to determine would be the land for the sewer project. Mr. Chiki asks if the Land Bank is the most appropriate organization for this project, and that a land trust may be a better avenue. Mr. Chmiel notes that the sewer project would assist with the renovation of this building as well. Ms. Morris notes that it was her understanding that the sand bioreactor would still need to be pumped. Mr. Chmiel says yes, but the folks he's spoken with from Knox County have not yet had to pump theirs.

Mr. Wasserman notes that a public meeting should be scheduled to discuss this project after the first of the year. Mr. Chmiel notes that the public meeting for the sewer project will be at 6:00 PM on January 9th, 2024 at the Senior Center. Mr. Chmiel asks if it would be beneficial to have somebody from Homeport come speak to the board at the January board meeting. Mr. Wasserman replies that it could be helpful.

5. 2024 Budget:

Mr. Wasserman and Aaron have completed an unapproved 2024 budget for the board's consideration.

Mr. Wasserman notes that the budget was disseminated to the board. He continues that the timeline for last year's grants were skewed and are making their way into the 2024 budget. The sale of properties in 2022 was heavily dominated by the Buchtel house sale. He does not believe the Washington Road, Albany property will be sold in 2024 so that was not included in the projections. He notes that Aaron's Rural Action contract has an increased administrative fee. He suggests that upon moving forward, we renegotiate the contract or look at other avenues. Mr. Chmiel asks since Jody is now an employee of the Land Bank, what is the reason Aaron can't be made one as well? Mr. Wasserman responds that the Land Bank would not be able to match the benefits provided by Rural Action. Mr. Chmiel asks if we could talk to HAPCAP about it and Mr. Wasserman responds that it is on his list to do that. Mr. Chmiel asks if we could price out the benefits on our own. Mr. Wasserman responds yes, but he does not believe the benefits would be comparable to what he has now. Mr. Chmiel asks what other rural Land Banks do and Mr. Wasserman responds that it varies from some not having staff, some being run by their respective Port Authorities, and more. Ms. Morris asks if Jody has no benefits and Mr. Wasserman responds that she already has benefits through her domestic partnership.

Mr. Wasserman notes that Aaron's new office fees are included. The demolition line-item is high because we will be finishing up the 2021-2022 BD&SR program as well as engaging in the 2024-2025 program. Renovation expenses are noted at the bottom of the budget. Mr. Chmiel asks if we could sell 11 Maple ourselves instead of listing it through a real estate company. Mr. Wasserman responds that it's certainly an option. Motion to approve 2024 budget by Mr. Chmiel, 2nd by Mr. Andrews. All Yeas.

6. 2021/2022 Annual Report:

Aaron has completed the final draft of the 2021/2022 annual report. Board members were sent the draft for approval.

Aaron went through the annual report with those present for review. Mr. Chmiel asks if we would want to include the Environmental Deputy we work with in the annual report. Aaron responds that we could likely work something into the report.

7. Disposition Action:

SR-691, York Township (LB-2023-03): Pay-in-advance project with Jeff & Laura Brown. There have been no other applicants. The agreed upon sales price for this property is \$3,060 with \$2,200 having been paid in advance.

Aaron reviewed the history of the parcel and mentioned that there has been no other interest outside of Jeff and Laura Brown since acquired. Mr. Wasserman notes that since the parcel is landlocked, it would have been difficult for other interested

end-users to come forth. Motion by Mr. Chiki to dispose SR-691, York Township to Jeff and Laura Brown, 2nd by Ms. Morris. All Yeas.

8. New Projects:

Taxes Owed	Last Pymt	Parcel ID	Owner Name	Property Address

No new projects.

A. Scheduling of next meeting: January 17th, 2024.

Roundtable discussion:

Mr. Chmiel notes that on Friday, December 15th, a potential end-user for 75 High Street will be touring the building with Chris and a few others. He is interested in creative projects with difficult to restore buildings. Mr. Chmiel invites any others interested to attend.

Guest Nathan Simons is working on closing out the FEMA project in Trimble. He does not have any information regarding the titles being clean and was wondering if the Land Bank had any records about the titles. Mr. Wasserman responds that the Prosecutor may or may not have the title searches. He continues that the actual foreclosure case numbers may be a better avenue, because the numbers could be entered into CourtView and there would be record of any liens. He notes that he will get Mr. Simons those case numbers.

B. Motion to adjourn by Mr. Chiki, 2nd by Ms. Morris. All Yeas. Adjournment at 12:35 PM.

Minutes submitted for approval by Aaron Dye, Secretary

Secretary

Date

Approved, as amended (if any) on _____