



Pittsburgh Land Bank [PLB] Minutes
September 16, 2022

Convene:

The Chair called the meeting to order.

Roll Call:

Emily Kauchak (PLB Assistant Manager) called the roll. Members Present: Rev. Ricky Burgess, Dr. Jamil Bey, Councilman Daniel Lavelle, Councilman Bobby Wilson, Director Karen Brean, Director Steve Mazza, Director Wanda Wilson

The PLB Board had a quorum.

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes:

A Motion to approve the June 2022 and July 2022 Board Meeting minutes [**Mazza/B. Wilson**] passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report:

A small delegation from the Pittsburgh Land Bank had the opportunity to attend the 2022 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference and learn about the latest strategies to address vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties. Councilmen Rev. Burgess and Bobby Wilson had an opportunity to meet with representatives of Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland Land Banks and participate in discussions on land transactions to bring back to PLB.

Dates for the remaining 2022 Board meetings have had to be changed due to holidays and scheduling conflicts. The revised dates for the next 3 months are October 7th, November 4th, and December 2nd.

Chairman Burgess announced the resignation of Senator Wayne Fontana from the PLB Board of Directors. He thanked Senator Fontana for his service.

Sen. Fontana has worked tirelessly to advocate for both this Land Bank and for the changes to the Municipal Claims and Tax Lien Law to expedite our powers. That critical legislation allows the Pittsburgh Land Bank to acquire property at the Judicial Tax Sale along with other changes so that we can use the



Sheriff's Sale versus the Treasurer's sale which means the properties would come to us clean of title. Upon creation of the land bank, an enabling ordinance was passed which allowed us to form the land bank, but a second legislative item was not passed to give expedited power for the second-class cities like us who have a dual way of obtaining land. Unfortunately, the Treasurer's sale does not give us a clean title. It gives us a quick deed but then that deed must be cleaned over several months and we don't have the expedited power to clean it any faster.

PLB Staff Updates:

- Emily Kauchak gave PLB Staff updates. Welcoming the new PLB Manager Sally Stadelman. Sally comes to the PLB with extensive experience working within Pittsburgh City government and community organizations across the City of Pittsburgh. We are excited to have Sally working with us to continue advancing the PLB's mission and values to repurpose unproductive real property.
- GRB Law Agreement
 - The City has filed petitions to Quiet Title on multiple batches of properties included in the agreement. There are now five batches of properties in various stages of the process. The first of these containing 14 properties is scheduled for final hearing(s) on September 27th and 28th and are expected to have a positive outcome. They will have a free and clear title and will be able to be marketed free of encumbrances.
- Tri-Party Cooperation Agreement Amendments
 - This agreement was held in the City Council for a post-agenda meeting. The Council members on the Board expressed a desire to have PLB staff schedule a briefing for City Council Members on the necessity of this agreement.

PLB/URA/City staff are waiting for discussions to be scheduled. Director Wanda Wilson asked staff to let the Board know when this will come before the City Council. In answer to a question by Director Bey, staff explained the relationship between MCTLL (Senate Bill 811), the Tri-Party Cooperation Agreement Amendments and the 3 Taxing Bodies Agreement.

- Property Updates
 - Staff updated the status of PLB-owned properties at 243 Meadow Street in the Larimer neighborhood and 6 Boggs Avenue in the Mt. Washington neighborhood.

Finance Report:

The Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference is held every eighteen months. It is the sole national conference dedicated to helping communities find solutions for vacant, abandoned, tax-delinquent, and other problem properties. Chairman Burgess explained that Kim Graziani, one of the founders of the



Pittsburgh Land Bank, is a member of The Center for Community Progress - one of the sponsoring organizations. Graziani recommended that no matter what, the PLB should attend the conference. She schedules meetings with other more advanced land banks that are a major opportunity for the PLB attendees.

◇ Motion to approve expenses for the 2022 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference **[Bey/Lavelle]**
Passed unanimously.

Councilman Wilson, Vice Chair Bey and Director Mazza questioned staff about costs incurred in quiet title actions and potential liability if something is missed in a title search. Staff member Emily Kauchak explained that the average cost to quiet title for a property is \$1,250 unless it is contested. If there is a response from a defendant or lienholder with a claim to the property to contest the quiet title action, additional costs can be incurred. Counsel Matt Sanders said costs in these cases vary with each property and would be difficult to estimate.

Director Wilson had questions concerning expenses presented to the Board and the lack of a finalized 2022 budget for the Land Bank. PLB Manager Sally Stadelman assured her that there will be a finalized budget presented at the next Board meeting and issues with financial reporting will be resolved.

PLB staff did a comparison between the services and costs of the URA under their current contract and Bookminders accounting services. PLB Board of Directors decided to continue using URA's staffing services but would like improvements to be implemented.

Legislative Updates:

Legislative updates were presented by David Geiger, Assistant Director of Strategic Affairs at the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

Senate Bill 811 – (Sen. Wayne Fontana) Amendment to MCTLL is a priority for the Board. David Geiger discussed where the bill now stands. It has passed the House Urban Affairs Committee. We are hopeful to see this move through final votes on the House floor before the session ends this year. Director Mazza asked if the staff could send the board members more information.

Mr. Geiger does not expect the other legislation to pass during this session.

New Business:

Director Brean asked if the attendees of the RVP Conference could share lessons learned and key takeaways during a brief presentation in an upcoming meeting. Chairman Burgess added that he was going to ask staff if there could be some scheduled board training, likely on a quarterly basis to give the board time to learn more about the Land Bank goals, processes, staff, and receive another perspective. Vice Chair Bey suggested that the discussion of the Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference should



include the public at the presentation. Chairman Burgess agreed, and recommended the presentation take place as part of the next board meeting.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Adjournment:

The Chair called for adjournment.

◇ Motion to adjourn. [**Bey/B. Wilson**] Passed unanimously.