**LACKAWANNA COUNTY LAND BANK**
**SCHEDULED MEETING MINUTES**
**November 8, 2019**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Lackawanna County Land Bank was held on Friday, November 8, 2019 in the Commissioners' Conference Room, 123 Wyoming Avenue, Fifth Floor, Lackawanna County Government Center, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

At 10:00 AM Chairman Patrick O'Malley called the meeting to order and all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## ROLL CALL

Roll Call was taken by Ralph Pappas, Staff

Commissioner Patrick O'Malley – Present
Al Chelik - Present
Wayne Beck – Present
Henry Deecke - Present
Marion Gatto – Present
Terrence McDonnell – Excused
Steve Pitoniak – Present

Also present were Atty. Joseph Colbassani, Land Bank Legal Counsel, Ralph Pappas, Business Relations Manager.

## OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS BOARD (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

There were no comments made at this time.

## PRESENTATION OF MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

A Motion was made by Steve Pitoniak and seconded by Al Chelik to approve the minutes of the October 11, 2019 meeting as prepared and presented.

**All in Favor**

## PRESENTATION OF VOUCHERS FOR EXAMINATION AND APPROVAL

A Motion was made by Henry Deecke and seconded Marion Gatto by to approve voucher expenditures of October 12, 2019 through November 8, 2019, as presented.

**All in Favor**

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### New Interest /Land Bank- Carbondale, Dickson City, Scott Township

Mr. Pappas stated that Carbondale is on board now. Today, the Board will act on a resolution for final approval of Carbondale City and the Carbondale Area School District as a members on the Land Bank. He informed the Board that Carbondale has forty (40) properties on the Repository and now so we can see what we can do to help them get them back on the tax rolls. The properties are already listed on the Land Bank's County Website. Dickson City seems to be interested. Mr. Pappas has sent them information on the Land Bank, but has not heard anything back yet. The same for Scott Township. Dickson City is part of the Mid Valley School District so the School District is already on board. Scott Township is be part of Lakeland School District. When Lakeland School District passed their resolution it was only for Mayfield. Now, they will have to pass a resolution to include Scott Township as well.

### 1445 Meylert Avenue Update

Attorney Colbassani stated that he was contacted by Attorney Bill Rinaldi, brother of the principal, Don Rinaldi. From the conversation had with Attorney Rinaldi, Attorney Colbassani does not anticipate any major road blocks. They want to do a title search. This is understandable, since this property will be part of the LaceWorks Village project. Attorney Colbassani stated he informed Attorney Rinaldi that the Land Bank only gives a quit claim deed. If a quiet title needs to be done for loan purposes, the developer will have to incur that expense. Attorney Rinaldi stated that he understood. The property went through a judicial sale so there should not be any major issues. The Land Bank was successful in extinguishing an IRS lien on the property, so there should not be any other issues. The Land Bank is now waiting for Attorney Rinaldi to get back to Attorney Colbassani. Attorney Rinaldi has a copy of the Deed and the Amendment to the original Agreement. Attorney Rinaldi also stated to Attorney Colbassani that there would not be a problem with the Amendment holding the Land Bank harmless for the environmental issues.

### 601 Prospect Avenue, Scranton Update

Mr. Pappas stated that it is an ongoing project. It is all cleaned out now. Ms. Sandra Opshinsky, on behalf of the Veterans Resource Coalition, has applied for a $350,000.00 grant for rehabilitation of the property. The Coalition should know something by mid-December if it is approved. Commissioner O'Malley would like to have a press conference and have Dave Eisele announce what is going to be there. This is a property that was in disarray and it is going to be going back to help our veterans.

### Ontario Street Property/Fell Township Update

Mr. Pappas stated that the specifications are done for the demolition of this property. Fell Township is going to be responsible for the demolition. The Land Bank is contributing $20,000 towards the demolition but Fell Township is handling all of that and are abiding by the regulations of the LSA Grant. The timeframe is hard to pin down. Hopefully within a month or so.

### Scranton Demolitions

Mr. Pappas stated that he spoke with Dennis Gallagher, who is the DPW Director for the City of Scranton. The three land Bank owned properties will be demolished in- house, using DPW staff. All utilities have been disconnected. Mr. Gallagher has one or two other priorities right now and then will get right at these properties. There is one issue about getting access to the rear of Price Street. Mr. Pappas stated that is going to assist on getting a right of entry for DPW to get access to the rear property. Mr. Gallagher feels that the three houses will be easy to get down once access is available to the rear of Price Street. Video will be taken of the demolition for possible inclusion into the video being done in conjunction with NeighborWorks.

### Blight Task Force Update

Mr. Ergott summarized the Blight Training Code Enforcement Workshop. "It went really well." There were over fifty attendees, fourteen different municipalities. People had a very good response to Chris Gulotta and the information he presented. It would be great to do something like that once or twice a year moving forward. Having

heard from some of the municipalities on how helpful it was just to have all that information ready at their fingertips. Mr. Chelik recommended that if the Workshop were to be held again that sample documents for the filing at

Magistrates should be given. The turnout showed that there is a definite interest. A couple of different angles can be looked at as to what can and needs to be presented and identify some of the key information that people want. Mr. Chelik opined that when you are dealing with small communities, the more practical information you give the easier it is going to be for them. Mr. Ergott stated that he spoke with Michele Bannon of Carbondale. Carbondale has a lot of strategies already in place, but there were still a lot of takeaways from the workshop. From the City of Scranton all the way down to the smallest municipality, there is something that everyone can use, which is so valuable. Mr. Ergott will keep in touch with Chris Gulotta and look at doing something probably in late spring. Mr. Chelik also mentioned taking before and after pictures, as they are extremely helpful for someone to understand. It's a visual aid.

The other item mentioned by Mr. Ergott, on behalf of the Blight Taskforce, is a Blight Tour that is happening in Carbondale next Tuesday, November 12 at 1:00pm. Michele Bannon asked that Mr. Ergott make sure that the invitation gets extended to the Land Bank Board. DCED from Harrisburg will be there along with the Mayor. The trolley will be on hand so that a couple of different sites can be seen. They'll talk about issues of blight in the community and what can be done. Carbondale would like the Land Bank to participate in the conversation.

Steve Pitoniak spoke regarding the Flood Coalition side of the presentation, it was great partnering between the two. FEMA was really excited with the amount of people that were there. He stated that about 18 months ago, there was an event up at the 911 Center and two people showed up. With all of the issues with flooding and the new flood maps, it was great. There were people in the room that needed to be there, the code enforcement people, supervisors, council to get them up and running. Mr. Pitoniak stated that the only mistake made was serving food between the two sessions. Because of that, we lost about seven people, next time we'll keep the food until the end.

**Bid Openings/if Necessary**
There were no property purchase bids received prior to this meeting.

**Advisory Committee Discussion**
There was no Advisory Committee meeting today because the two properties to be conveyed today are already owned by the Land Bank since February 2017. They were part of the original group. They are 70 properties left from the original group.

Mr. Ergott spoke of the video being made about the Land Bank. Commissioner O'Malley's interview will be scheduled. Board Member and Mayor of Mayfield, Al Chelik is being interviewed after the meeting today. After that interview, Mr. Ergott will be going to Senator Blake's Office to discuss some of the original legislation that he was involved in about land banks. There are a lot of different angles and a good response so far. The release date is tentatively set for December.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**PROPERTY ACQUISITION – Scranton**

**PROPERTY DISPOSITIONS**
**Resolution No. 19-032** – Approving the Conveyance of Certain Land Bank Owned Property Under the Land Bank Side Lot Program –

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| Property Located at 422 South Ninth Avenue, Scranton | Pin #: 15606040039 |
| Purchaser: Joseph Barbuti | Price: $100.00 |

A Motion was made by Wayne Beck and seconded by Steve Pitoniak to approve this Resolution.

**All in Favor**

**Resolution No. 19-033** – Approving the Conveyance of Certain Land Bank Owned Property Under the Property Purchase Program –
Property Located at 700 Block Saginaw Street, Scranton Pin #: 16718030004
Purchaser: Jonathon Maier Price: $500.00

A Motion was made by Henry Deecke and seconded by Al Chelik to approve this Resolution.

**All in Favor**

**Resolution No. 19-034** – Approving the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement With Lackawanna County, the City of Carbondale and the Carbondale Area School District –

A Motion was made by Henry Deecke and seconded by Marion Gatto to approve this Resolution.

**All in Favor**

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD:**

An audience member inquired as to how to find the location of some of the properties. It was discovered that the property she is interested in is in Jefferson Township. Commissioner O'Malley explained that each municipality needs to have its school district and municipality and the County sign on for Land Bank. After that occurs the Land Bank has access to go and get properties and if there are any types of liens on the property the Land Bank can eliminate them and then they can be sold. Unfortunately, Jefferson Township is not part of the Land Bank yet. In the Land Bank currently out of 40, there are only 5 municipalities, City of Scranton, Carbondale, Mayfield, Dunmore and Fell Township, with the biggest one being the City of Scranton. As she was unsure where exactly the property is located, Mr. Pappas took her information and will be in touch with her when he finds out more.

**ADJOURNMENT** –
A Motion to adjourn was made by Marion Gatto and seconded by Henry Deecke.

**All in Favor**

Next Scheduled Meeting: Friday, December 13, 2019

Marion Gatto, Secretary

Prepared by Barbara Arens