

MEETING MINUTES

1. ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Lower South Valley Land Bank was called to order at 9:05 am on October 9th, 2024 by Chair Donna Wall.

<u>Members Present:</u>	<u>Members Excused:</u>
Ashley Borough – Frank Sorokach	Newport Township
Hanover Township – Sam Guesto	Hanover Area School District
Municipality of Kingston - Sondra Riviello	
Nanticoke City – Donna Wall	
Wilkes-Barre City – Dave Wilson	
Citizen Member – Ronald Jones	

Others Present:

Slusser Law Firm – Attorney Chris Slusser
Hailstone Economic – Sara Hailstone
Hailstone Economic – Ted Ritsick

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jamie Smith – Wilkes-Barre City commented verbally regarding his interest in properties in the city and the Land Bank's disposition process for allowing members of the public to purchase.

3. APPROVAL OF 09.11.24 MEETING MINUTES

Motion: Mr. Guesto – 2nd: Mr. Sorokach

Motion passed unanimously.

4. FINANCE REPORT

A. Review and approve finance report:

B. Review and approve the following invoices:

1. \$6,709.85: Slusser Law Firm, legal services from May 2024 to August 2024
2. \$50.00: Luzerne County Tax Claim for September 2024 Upset Sale registration
3. \$16,231.92 for administrative services from April 2024 to August 2024

Motion: Mr. Guesto – 2nd: Mr. Sorokach

Motion passed unanimously.

5. STAFF REPORT

A. Solicitor's Report

- a. 2023 Judicial Sale Properties Update

- i. The final confirmation is being recorded.
- b. Hanover Township Property Transfer Update
 - i. Properties are all finalized except for one.
- c. 775 Hazle Street
 - i. Attorney Slusser discussed a settlement proposal to the owner of 775 Hazle Street.

Motion to Authorize a \$2,500 settlement for 775 Hazle

Motion: Mr. Sorokach – 2nd: Mr. Guesto

Motion passed unanimously.

B. Administrator's Report

- a. Demolition/Fencing Project for Newport Township, Ashley and Hanover Township Update
 - i. Pre demolition meeting was held on 9/19 with Hailstone Economic, Penn Engineering, Joe Hillian, Sam Guesto, and Brdaric Construction. Letters were sent out 9/20 to abutting and across street residents informing them of demolition work to take place. Some residents in Ashley requested calls when demolition was a day or so out. Mr. Hillian said the demolition in Newport has gone well thus far.
- b. Property Disposition Update
 - i. Ted Ritsick reached out to a neighbor at 128 West Main Street, Newport to discuss interest in noncompetitive disposition of a property. Neighbors of 69-71 in Newport reached out as well. Ted will also be reaching out to potential purchasers of Wilkes-Barre properties. RFP for 5 Arch Street, Newport targeted for November meeting.
 - ii. Mr. Gusto commented on the need to consider the best possible impact of the property when determining disposition.
 - iii. Attorney Slusser and Ms. Riviello discussed the need for reversionary clauses in the deeds to ensure the applicants are adhering to their disposition proposal applications.
- c. Audit Update
 - i. Hailstone reviewed the audit on 10/3, and it generally looks fine. A follow up meeting with the auditor to reconcile some differing numbers.
- d. ARPA Drawdown Status
 - i. Hailstone staff met on 10/4 to discuss use of ARPA funds. There is approximately \$300k left to be spent following demolition and purchase of Hanover property. Generally, we recommend that the LB aggressively pursue properties at the 2025 Judicial sale and perform any necessary demolition work on the sites with the remainder of the funds.
 - ii. Mr. Gusto emphasized the need to spend the entirety of the funds by the 2025 and 2026 deadlines.
- e. 501(c)3 Application Update
 - i. The 501c3 application has been mostly completed. Ted has been able to get in touch with Tri-COG Land Bank who also have their 501c3. Tri-COG

provided materials to assist with the application, and contact information for a law professor at Duquesne University who played a large role in developing the application for Tri-COG LB. Tri-COG also has an ethics policy which was adopted attached to their application. Currently, LSV LB only references one to be made.

- f. Upset Sale Update
 - i. Because of list reclamations, only 16 Garman in Hanover was left to bid on. The Land Bank purchased the property for \$5,572.97

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review and vote on a donation proposal for 447 New Grove Street, Wilkes-Barre.

Mr. Ritsick and Ms. Hailstone outlined the donation proposal and meeting with Wilkes-Barre regarding the donation.

Motion to decline donation proposal for 447 New Grove Street, Wilkes-Barre

Motion: Mr. Wilson – 2nd: Mr. Guesto

Motion passed unanimously.

B. Discussion and vote on course of action for ARPA interest disbursement to Luzerne County.

Mr. Guesto discussed the circumstances around the request for return for other municipalities for whom Luzerne County has made the same request.

Attorney Slusser discussed the federal regulations regarding the use of ARPA interest and return to the U.S. Treasury. Attorney Slusser will be contacting County Manager Crocomo to discuss the issue.

Motion to table item to next meeting.

Motion: Ms. Wall – 2nd: Mr. Guesto

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Discussion and vote on reimbursement of permit fees for Brdaric construction demolition.

Mr. Guesto discussed reimbursing Brdaric for the cost of permit fees and requested a dollar amount for the next meeting.

Ms. Wall recommended the towns implement policies to waive permit fees.

Motion to table item to next meeting until cost received.

Motion: Mr. Guesto – 2nd: Mr. Sorokach

Motion passed unanimously.

D. Discussion and vote on \$2,000 retainer fee to Slusser Law Firm for expenses, such as title searches.

Motion to approve retainer.

Motion: Mr. Sorokach – 2nd: Mr. Guesto

Motion passed unanimously.

E. Review and vote on the Land Bank 2025 Membership Fee.

Municipality Name	Membership Fee
Ashley Borough	\$1,500
Hanover Township	\$6,250
Municipality of Kingston	\$6,250
Nanticoke City	\$6,250
Newport Township	\$1,500
Wilkes-Barre City	\$8,250

Motion to approve as presented.

Motion: Mr. Guesto – 2nd: Mr. Sorokach

Motion passed unanimously.

F. Authorize Theodore Ritsick and Christopher Slusser on Form 8821 for 501(c)3 application.

Motion to authorize above individuals form.

Motion: Mr. Jones – 2nd: Ms. Riviello

Motion passed unanimously.

G. Executive Discussion to Discuss Pending Litigation/Real Estate Transaction -

■ No action was taken following the executive session.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mr. Guesto – 2nd: Ms. Wall

Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:09am.