


BILLERICA

HOUSING AUTHORITY

Carol Ford, Chair
Marie O'Rourke, Vice Chair
Richard Baraldi, Treasurer
James O'Donnell
John Saulnier
Robert M. Correnti, Executive Director

16 River Street
BillERICA, MA 01821
Tel 978-667-2175
Fax 978-667-1156
email: bcorrenti@billericahousing.org

TO: Board of Commissioners

FROM: Robert M. Correnti 

DATE: May 2, 2016

RE: **MAY 2016 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

As required by BHA ByLaws, this report is being submitted as the Executive Director's Annual Report. As my employment began on August 10, 2015, this report will accordingly cover the period from August 2015 through May 2016.

ORIENTATION:

Obviously, as the new Executive Director, an orientation and transition was required. Even today, we are still learning procedures, policies, and reports required for various agencies! At times, it is a daunting task with some reports being tedious at best. Fortunately, our staff is eager and supportive. To date, we have met the challenges of these reports successfully. If a deadline was missed (e.g. 5 Top Compensated Positions Report), we have quickly recovered. We will continue to meet the challenges as we move ahead.

TEAM BUILDING:

We have sought to build a positive team attitude focused on serving our residents. The team has responded well. All take pride in their work. Team members have commented on the change. Some residents have also provided positive feedback. Team Members are aware that we are only as good as our service. Additionally, we have sought to provide a welcoming Office environment to all (residents, visitors, general public). Last September, I appeared on **Jack Morris Live** on BATV and discussed the BHA as well as the need for more housing (Commissioners were supplied a DVD of the program). Further, on 1/21/16 the **BillERICA Minuteman** had a positive article on the BHA and the need for more housing (copies of that article were previously supplied to BHA Commissioners). Both these initiatives are part of the continuing efforts

to increase community knowledge and awareness of the BHA and the need for more housing.

CONSISTENCY:

Through our interpretation and enforcement of policies, we have sought to provide consistency and fairness. Our Open Door approach and Monthly Tenant Meetings encourage dialog with the Executive Director. Additionally, visibility of the Executive Director at all properties has been increased.

FINANCIAL:

While maintaining the Authority's strong financial position, we have addressed initiatives to reduce operating expenses as well as increase revenues. Among these are:

- Finalized Solar Net Metering Agreement (with an estimated savings of \$578,000 over 20 years). The Legislature recently increased the cap for solar net metering credits and Urban Green is beginning construction;
- Secured new electric contract (18 months) saving approximately \$2500/year;
- Secured new gas agreement estimated to save approximately \$13,500 over two years;
- Executed bulk salt agreement with the Town saving over \$4,000/yr. based upon last year's expenditures;
- Obtained additional \$2,000 from Parker House tenant (VinFen) to cover specific items done by the BHA (mowing, raking leaves);
- LED lights installed in 16 River Common Room providing a brighter area and lowering energy consumption.

SAFETY:

Providing and maintaining a safe environment for all residents is a priority. To that end:

- Alarms at all properties have been inspected with defective devices replaced;
- Hazardous broken sidewalks at 16 River Street have been replaced (by students of Shawsheen Tech);
- Rotten porch columns and beams at 16 River have been replaced. Inspections continue and defective columns/beams will be replaced;
- Defective Boiler Room doors at 16 River Street have been replaced (previously noted on two past REAC Inspections). Doors were resized so they are no longer custom sized;
- Overhanging dead trees and tree limbs at 16 River were removed;

- Talbot Initiatives through Formula Funding:
 - Structural (\$7k): Addressing structural issues causing isolated settling of building
 - Addressing Heating system deficiencies (\$150k)
 - Replaced lobby/elevator flooring (\$2.5k)
- Fire Extinguishers have been installed in 13 River Street hallways, previously there were no extinguishers in these hallways. Additionally, some hallways at 16 River didn't have extinguishers - now all have extinguishers;
- "Code Red" notification system has been implemented and has been frequently used;
- Fire exit signage is being created (by Shawsheen Tech Drafting students) and should be installed by summer's end;
- Video surveillance cameras have been installed in the Kitchen and Laundry Rooms at 16 River;
- In collaboration with BPD, Police patrols, during late evening/early morning hours, have been instituted at 13 River and 16 River.

RECEIVABLES:

Very active oversight on receivables has resulted in positive results:

- Past Due Rents has been reduced by almost 80%;
- Agreements executed with those tenants with rent arrearage;
- Successfully captured over \$6,000 in back rents due to unreported income;
- Implemented automated check deposit system;
- Rent payments reviewed monthly to monitor and notify tenants with overdue rent.

POLICIES/PROGRAMS/MISCELLANEOUS:

- Brought forth Smoke Free Policies for 13 River and 33 Talbot;
- Per direction of DHCD, eliminated Lease Addendum allowing smoking on balconies at 16 River;
- Brought forth Violence Against Women Policy;
- Brought forth Bed Bug Policy;

- So as to reduce tenant hysteria and misinformation, conducted tenant informational meeting with Bain Pest;
- In collaboration with COA, implemented monthly Commodity Supplemental Food Program;
- Began picking up and delivering food to tenants for both this program and the Marshall Food monthly program;
- Advocated "Low Income" representation on CTI'S Board of Directors with a 16 River Street Tenant elected to CTI'S Board;
- Implemented new parking sticker program and policy. Began periodic ticketing of vehicles;
- Aggressively pursuing housing opportunities at the Old Ditson School site;
- Repaving Project (\$75k) at Talbot through Formula Funding
 - Relocating shed to increase number of available parking spaces
- Expanding utilization of Shawsheen Tech Students as well as Middlesex Sheriff Community Workforce Program
 - **Shawsheen Projects**
 - Repaired sidewalks at 16 River;
 - Compiling Fire Exit Routes for all buildings;
 - Constructing Horseshoe Court (summer 2016) at 16 River;
 - Building 12' X 12' cement pad for 13 River Street (BHA to install Grill);
 - Building cement pad for Talbot (BHA to install grill);
 - **Middlesex Sheriff Inmate Projects**
 - Painted ceiling and walls in 13 River Common Room, kitchen, laundry and lavatories;
 - Painted Ceiling in hallways of 13 River Street buildings;
 - Painted ceiling and walls of Talbot Common Rooms and Laundry Room;
 - Raked leaves at 16 River Street.

OTHER:

- Successfully completed seven courses (by 12/15) for Certification by NAHRO. Certificate to be awarded at May NAHRO Conference;
- Established monthly Tenant Meetings
 - Engaged and involved resources from Fire, Police, Recreation, COA, Board of Health;
- Collaborated with Recreation Department to offer courses to residents on site - pilot program offered in May 2016;
- Overcame initial obstacles establishing positive relationship with DHCD;
- Sought to increase visibility of BHA in Billerica Community as well as develop a sense of pride for BHA residents. Received positive press coverage (cf. Billerica Minuteman 1/21/16 article);
- Active in addressing 13 River Street and 33 Talbot issues so residents in those facilities no longer feel alienated or abandoned.

GOALS

- Requested Board of Commissioners develop goals for Executive Director for FY2017 (see separate memo);
- At May 2016 Board Meeting, I will provide a self-assessment for the Executive Director's Annual Performance Review. I will also provide Assessment Forms for individual assessments by each Commissioner. A proposed timeline will be supplied for assessments and contract review.