

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON OCTOBER 14, 2014

The members of the Springfield Housing Authority met in Open Session at the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress St., Springfield, Massachusetts at 4:30 PM on October 14, 2014.

A copy of the Notice of Meeting, pursuant to Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, with the Certificate as to Service of the Notice, was ordered spread upon the minutes of the meeting and filed for records.

NOTICE OF MEETING

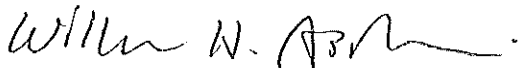
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that a Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, October 14, 2014 in the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
/s/William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director
October 9, 2014

CERTIFICATE AS TO SERVICE OF THE NOTICE OF MEETING

I, William H. Abrashkin, the duly appointed and qualified Secretary of the Springfield Housing Authority, do hereby certify that on October 9, 2014 I filed in the manner provided by Section 23B, Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, with the Clerk of the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, a Notice of Meeting of which the foregoing is a true and correct copy.

Attest:



William H. Abrashkin/Executive Director/
Secretary to the Board

Chairman Warren called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM, and those present upon roll call were as follows:

PRESENT

Raymond Warren
Willie Thomas
Thomas Labonte
Angela Robles
Jessica Quinonez

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

William Abrashkin

Fidan Gousseynoff

Michelle Kingston (CBS Channel 3)

Chairman Warren stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss some additional responsibilities for the members of the Board. He asked Judge Abrashkin first to brief on the situation concerning a murder committed at Sullivan Apartments. Mr. Abrashkin explained that not much public information can be provided because the murder is still a subject of active investigation but some information can be disclosed, namely, that despite some questions expressed at Masslive, the cameras at Sullivan are in working condition. Mr. Abrashkin also informed that the victims of the crime are not the SHA residents. The Executive Director informed the Board that Sullivan has a good safety record, with only 5% of all SHA incidents related to that development which is regularly patrolled by the agency's security staff and the Police. He also provided information on the SHA's prompt response to the crime -within an hour the agency organized trauma counselling through the Behavioral Network for the Sullivan residents including children. The SHA is also coordinating some counselling through the school.

Mr. Abrashkin then answered Chairman Warren's question on the SHA staff's availability 24/7 and the protocol on responding to incidents happening during week-ends or after hours.

Mr. Warren then proceeded to deliberation on assigning the Board members with new responsibilities. He praised the Board members for doing a great job, providing monitoring of the activity and performance of the agency and working in a collegial and responsive manner. He stressed the importance of working on a model of replacement of leadership on consistent basis to make sure that everybody is ready for any rotation or other potential changes at the next elections or, if necessary, before that. Chairman Warren expressed his confidence that with the experience and training the Commissioners will be ready to take additional responsibilities, and this new practice will help them to adapt to potential changes caused by circumstances and events like election of new governor, public housing reform etc.

Chairman Warren suggested starting introducing this new practice with giving assignments within some functional areas. Referring to the presentation of Wallace Kisiel at one of the Special Board meetings earlier this year, he suggested that Commissioner Labonte would work with Mr. Kisiel on researching the subject of recycling if it does not conflict with Mr. Labonte's job. Mr. Warren emphasized that the goal of this approach is not to overstep the roles of the Commissioners and do the job that the SHA staff members are supposed to do, but to get a deeper insight into most important issues on the agency's agenda.

Chairman Warren continued with recommending that Commissioner Robles would be working with Rosa Lebron and other members of the Crime Prevention Office to explore some public safety issues, for example, the parking. He indicated the importance of the partnership and collaboration with the Springfield Police Department with which the SHA has a contract and very active collaboration. Mr. Abrashkin informed that the Police Commissioner Barbieri is expected to do a presentation at the next Board meeting.

Recalling the presentation from the SHA Resident Services Director Pam Wells, Chairman Warren suggested that Commissioner Quinonez would do an analysis of the services in the light of potential changes in the agency's funding. Mr. Warren also stressed the importance of getting some feedback from the tenants' organizations to find out if they are satisfied with the responsiveness of the Board to their needs or they want the Board to consider some initiatives these organizations want to undertake.

Addressing to Commissioner Thomas, Mr. Warren stated that there will be a whole bunch of tasks coming out with the passage of the new Housing Act. He recommended that Commissioner Thomas would research new opportunities and challenges set up by forming joint maintenance capital planning groups. Executive Director Abrashkin stated that forming of the groups will start once the DHCD issues requests for proposals. Other areas of monitoring for Commissioner Thomas will be Section 8, units replacement program, and one of the tasks on Mr. Thomas's agenda will be to do a possible outreach to new Governor and DHCD.

Commissioner Thomas indicated the right timing of this new initiative and he welcomed the idea of assigning new responsibilities and ensuring better involvement of the Board members into the Agency's business. Answering his question about the process of outreaching to the staff and sharing the information with the Board, Chairman Warren suggested that there will be meetings outside Board meetings where the Board members, the Executive Director, and his Deputies would sit down with the managers and other staff members and inform them about Commissioners' intentions and plans. Judge Abrashkin emphasized the importance of not breaching the Open Meeting Law so he suggested that once the Board works out the approach to this new practice, it will be presented to General Counsel Chesky for the approval.

Mr. Abrashkin characterized the idea of Chairman Warren as great, indicating that even though the SHA staff tries its best to convey information about the agency's business to the Board, each of the issues on the agenda is very comprehensive and complex. As a sample he brought an issue of Marble Street and the City's plans to demolish the development - an idea which is in general supported by the agency but requires resolving many complicated problems including losing the subsidy or changing the subsidy level once the development becomes a building for the elderly/ disabled only. He then continued with

addressing the issues discussed by Chairman Warren earlier, like parking and recycling, stating that the SHA does it best in these areas but a new perspective and suggestions on how to improve will be very valuable.

Chairman Warren indicated the importance of outreaching to the staff members to make them aware about the Board's intentions. He stressed the significance of working together on the plan of improving the Board's involvement without overstepping the roles. Mr. Abrashkin expressed his assurance that the staff members will support the idea and will not consider these new practices as an involvement into their business.

Chairman Warren stated that he will follow up with Judge Abrashkin, Michelle Booth and others on working out the plan and will notify the Commissioners.

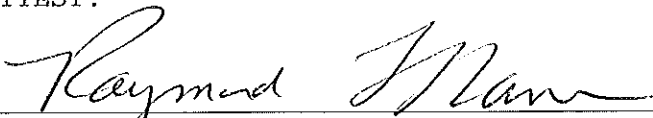
Mr. Abrashkin indicated that working on the SWOT presentation has turned out to be a very useful project which not only will provide an analysis for the Board but also will help the agency to work on a succession plan. The work on preparing the analysis so far has shown some areas that require looking into staffing patterns. He also touched on the issue of how new housing reform and consolidation of housing authorities can potentially change the agency and the industry.

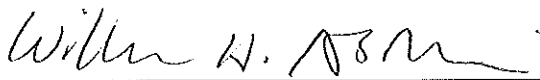
Mr. Abrashkin one more time welcomed Chairman Warren's initiative, indicating that reporting to the Board and having the Commissioners actively involved into the Agency's business contributes a lot into its effectiveness, efficiency and moving in a right direction.

There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority, upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session of a Special Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 5:24 PM.

ATTEST:


Raymond Warren, Chairman


William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director