

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON MAY 19, 2015

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 May 19, 2015.

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 Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, May 19, 2015 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
May 15, 2015

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 May 15, 2015 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
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
Michelle Booth
Sean Cahillane

Loleta Collins
Karen Dean
Eugenia Gasque
Chris Gelonese
Fidan Gousseynoff
John Healy
Libby Hernandez (arrived at 4:31 pm)
Wallace Kisiel (arrived at 4:35 pm)
Mike Laprade
Mary Ellen Lowney
Karen Mills
Jimmy Mitchell
Stephen Phillips
Stacey Sands
Shakeya Smith
Sommers Smith
Pam Wells

The meeting started with presenting Farris Mitchell Scholarship Award. Jimmy Mitchell, the SHA Youth Engagement Coordinator, provided a brief history of the scholarship, an award given yearly to two young SHA residents going to college. The scholarships are given in memory of Jimmy Mitchell's father, a long-time SHA resident who was promoting education. Jimmy Mitchell thanked the Board and the SHA staff for supporting this initiative for 20 years. He informed that 24 recipients benefited from this program. He introduced this year's award recipient, a Duggan resident and a graduate of Springfield High School Sommers Smith. Ms. Smith expressed her deep gratitude for the award. By Chairman Warren's request she introduced her family members and the President of Youth Council at Robinson Gardens who came to support her. Ms. Sommers informed that she is planning to study Communications in the University of New Haven.

Eugenia Gasque, Jimmy Mitchell, Stacey Sands, Shakeya Smith and Sommers Smith left the Conference Room at 4:36 pm.

The meeting continued with a presentation on CHES Program. Judge Abrashkin explained that the program which name stands for Community Housing that is Earned, Safe and Supportive provides housing assistance and other supportive services to people who are coming out of incarceration. Michelle Booth who has been coordinating this program from the SHA side, continued by indicating that the cooperation between SHA and the Sheriff's department started three years ago and has been successful. Chris Gelonese thanked the SHA for its partnership and the Board for its continued support to this important program that assists former offender population to transit back to the community through extensive services. He emphasized the role of stable housing in making this transition successful thus diminishing recidivism, increasing safety and decreasing burden to many social agencies. The statistical data provided by Mr. Gelonese shows 80% success rate with the Project Based Vouchers, 75% success rate with the scattered sites program and less than 1% recidivism rate. He explained that such a great success rate is explained by the extensive screening process and very extensive case management and support system.

Chris Gelonese introduced Karen Mill, a program participant for 6 years and now a CHESS volunteer. Ms. Mill praised the Program for providing her and others with a safe and affordable housing and great supportive services which are very important for everybody who comes out of jail. Karen Mill informed the Board how proud she is to be a program mentor now.

In response to Commissioner Thomas's question Karen Dean from the Sheriff's Department explained that supportive services to CHESS Program participants are offered on a minimum weekly basis and the Department's staff as well as volunteers like Karen Mills are always available to guide those who are going through challenging moments. Ms. Dean informed that their working groups meet every Friday to go through all the cases and if necessary to develop an action or intervention plan. Such an extensive level of support ensures a high level of the program's success - over the years only one program participant has been evicted.

Executive Director Abrashkin and Karen Dean expressed their gratitude to Michelle Booth for her involvement and contribution to the program. Ms. Booth expressed her hope that HUD and DHCD would be considering allocating vouchers for programs like CHESS.

Chairman Warren stated that in the beginning he was concerned about giving out vouchers to former inmates while the demand for those vouchers is so high and people have to wait for years, but now the statistic data for CHESS Program speaks for itself.

Chris Gelonese, Karen Dean, Karen Mill and Stephen Phillips left the Conference Room at 4:55 pm.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve revisions to Section 8 Housing Voucher Program Administrative Plan. Michelle Booth explained that the proposed changes were dictated by last SEMAP certification audit that revealed some errors. The first change proposes indication in the Administrative Plan that the Springfield Housing Authority keeps a separate waiting list for Project Based Voucher Programs like CHESS and Chronically Homeless and that samples are pulled out from this separate lists for SEMAP Certification as well as from the general waiting list. This list is separate from the state waiting list and is being managed by Mass NAHRO. The second change to the Plan proposes including language about the quality control inspections which will be now conducted not by the agency's inspectors but by outside qualified contractors. Finally, the 3rd change as described by Ms. Booth was about utilizing a new rent reasonableness software offered by the agency's new vendor called Go Section 8. Ms. Booth explained that this software provides regularly updated rent reasonableness database which is based not on the information provided by landlords but on the data on rent rates in the area. This software was described by Ms Booth as a very helpful tool both for the SHA and its Section 8 residents and applicants looking for a new housing.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to Adopt Resolution #9632 to approve revisions to its Section 8 Housing Voucher Program Administrative Plan in Chapter 4, Section I.A., Chapter 8 II.E., and Chapter 8, Section III.D

The Board reviewed the materials and recommendation to approve FYE 3/31/15 Section 8 Management Assessment Program Certification. Michelle Booth explained to the Board that only 7 indicators need to be reviewed by the staff and every year the agency has to submit this Certification to HUD to evaluate how the Section Eight program is being managed. She stated that the data is being collected randomly based on a special HUD formula and the number of files to be reviewed depends on general number of files in the portfolio. Ms. Booth explained that factors to be analyzed include correct calculation of deductions, presence of income verification, checking income through the EIV system etc. She indicated that even though the score for Indicator 1 - Selection From Waiting List - has improved comparing to last year, the agency has had trouble with some other indicators like rent reasonableness and HQS Enforcement. She explained what factors caused low score for those indicators and what measures have been undertaken to improve. Ms. Booth expressed her gratitude to Mike Laprade and Libby Hernandez for their efforts on preparing the Certification. In response to Chairman Warren's question she said that there are 3 full-time Section 8 inspectors.

Mary Ellen Lowney left the Conference Room at 5:07 pm.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Thomas it was unanimously

VOTED: To adopt Resolution #9633 to approve FYE 3/31/15 Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) Certification and authorize Board Chairman and Executive Director execute the Certification.

Michael Laprade, Loleta Collins and Libby Hernandez left the Conference Room at 5:12 pm.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to adopt new income limits for federally-aided public housing. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: To adopt Resolution #9634 to adopt and implement HUD's FY 2015 income limits for federally-aided public housing.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve Change Order #1 from Mecho Contracting Inc. for changes requested by the owner in conjunction with the Supplemental Environmental Plan to remove lead based paint from several Springfield Housing Authority units. Wallace Kisiel explained to the Board that once all existing metal cladding and lead contaminated wood trim was removed it was decided to use a material called Azek to cover support beams. Mr. Kisiel indicated that unlike aluminum, this vinyl material does not chip, flake or peel and does not need to be painted. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve Change Order #1 to Contract # G-2014-25-13, in the amount of \$5,279.34, making the new contract amount \$81,479.34, and changing the substantial completion date to 05/29/2015.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award contract for the purchase of replacement boilers at Riverview Apartments to F.W. Webb and Premier Supply Group. John Healy explained that new boilers need to be installed at 8 low-rise and two high-rise buildings. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question he indicated that funds for both the labor and the boilers come from the Capital Plan. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: To award two (2) contracts, one in the amount of \$114,833.04 to F.W. Webb Company of 145 Performance Blvd., Springfield, MA 01104, and the second to Premier Supply Group of 372 Pasco Road, Springfield, MA 01119. The two (2) contracts are for the purchase of replacement boilers for 10 buildings at Riverview Apartments. The boilers will be paid from the 2015 Capital Fund Program

The Board reviewed materials and a request to approve 2015 electrical supply award recommendation. Responding to Commissioner Quinonez's question John Healy explained that the manager of the warehouse collects information from the districts about what electrical supplies are needed before ordering them.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve 2015 Electrical Supplies Award recommendations totaling \$102,531.40 as follows:

Suppliers	PO Amount	#Awarded Items
Hampden Zimmerman 274 Taylor Street Springfield, MA 01005	\$59,120.10	50 items
Twin City Supply Co. 233 Harris Ave. Providence, RI 02903	\$19,051.40	24 items
Wattsaver Lighting Products 22 Thomas Street East Hartford, CT 06108	\$24,359.90	37 items

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to extend Contract with Serv-U Locksmiths. In response to Chairman Warren's inquiry about cost of the locksmith services annually Wallace Kisiel explained that the amount varies depending on the number of vacant units. He indicated that the agency is on the 2/3 of the way to replace the old numbering system with high-security Medeco keyway. He explained that several years ago the agency decided to purchase Medeco keyway for safety reasons so that keys cannot be

duplicated without an authorization and situations when one key fits several locks are eliminated. He confirmed that the Contract includes costs of Medeco locks. Answering to Commissioner Thomas's question if this new Medeco system can be used in the future with a new vendor Mr. Kisiel stated when the agency will be issuing RFB, it will be a requirement number one. Judge Abrashkin expressed his concern over a recent issue with Serv-U when their staff member was not available in an emergency situation. John Healy promised to address this issue with the company.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the first One Year Option to Contract No. G-2011-11-13 with Serv-U Locksmiths for the provision of Locksmith services. The One Year Option shall be for the period June 1, 2015 through May 31, 2016, under the current price proposal terms of the contract which shall be at an hourly rate of \$70.00 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday; at an hourly rate of \$140.00 between the hours of 4:30 PM and 8:00 AM, Monday through Friday; at an hourly of \$70.00 between the hours of 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM Saturday; at an hourly rate of \$170 Sunday and holidays; and with a 10% markup for associated like parts and standard services.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve After-School and Summer Vacation Youth Enrichment Programming Services. John Healy provided information about the bid. Pam Wells provided detailed information about the program which runs 3 days a week during school time and 5 days a week during summer and offers assistance with homework, recreational and physical activities, visits to library and local dance studio, field trips and different literacy enhancement activities. Ms. Wells indicated that the ADC staff is working actively with local schools, supplementing the school program with after-school work. The staff regularly checks the participants' report cards to identify the subjects they struggle with and works with the kids to improve their grades. In response to a question about how many kids participate in the Program Ms. Wells said that about 65 children use the services. The Program at Pine James is the smallest one with only 10-12 persons capacity, the Program at Duggan also can accommodate only 15 people and only Riverview program can offer enough space to all those willing to attend. The Program at Moxon does not have its own space so the participants are being transported on a van to the Senior center at Morris School. Ms. Wells informed that the services are for 4-6th grade students. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question why the cost is the same for all developments the Resident Services Director stated that the cost for Pine James is a bit less and for all other programs the ratio of staff is 10-1 so usually there are two instructors who work with kids. Ms. Wells indicated that the program has proved to be very successful with providing an excellent opportunity to kids to improve academically and develop their social skills. Judge Abrashkin indicated that this kind of program is not a requirement of HUD but it is important that the Springfield Housing Authority continues providing this kind of services and support to the resident families. Following Chairman Warren's inquiry if the agency could use services of other local agencies like Boys & Girls Club to save money Pam Wells explained the previous experience showed that the programs offered by those

agencies do not focus on the SHA's goals on improving academic skills of the participants and provide more like daycare services.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the following After-School Youth Enrichment Programming Services and Summer Vacation Youth Enrichment Programming Services Contract award recommendation totaling \$174,428.00 for year 1, \$174,428.00 for year 2, and \$174,428.00 for year 3.

Supplier	PO Amount	Awarded Developments
ADC Prevention and Associates 22 Bacon Road Springfield MA. 01119	\$43,922.00 (1) \$43,922.00 (2) \$43,922.00 (3)	Riverview Apts.
ADC Prevention and Associates 22 Bacon Road Springfield MA. 01119	\$43,922.00 (1) \$43,922.00 (2) \$43,922.00 (3)	Moxon Apts.
ADC Prevention and Associates 22 Bacon Road Springfield MA. 01119	\$43,922.00 (1) \$43,922.00 (2) \$43,922.00 (3)	Duggan Apts.
ADC Prevention and Associates 22 Bacon Road Springfield MA. 01119	\$42,662.00 (1) \$42,662.00 (2) \$42,662.00 (3)	Pine James Apts.

John Healy left the Conference Room at 5:40 pm.

The Board entered into discussion on authorizing backup funding for Talk/Read/ Succeed! Program. Executive Director Abrashkin explained to the Board that since the work to identify sources for funding the TRS school summer program is still in progress and it is important to start planning this program now the Springfield Housing Authority is requesting the Board for authorization for backup funding as necessary in the amount of \$25,000. Judge Abrashkin indicated that this money could come from one or both of two sources: SHA, Inc., which has about \$80,000 in reserves, and/or the COCC, which has available (unrestricted) cash balance of about \$363,000. He reminded the Board that last year the Board authorized the SHA to spend up to \$40,000 for this purpose and only \$18,000 was spent because other funding sources were identified. By Wallace Kisiel's recommendation it was decided to vote on authorizing spending \$40,000 from only the COCC account and if in the future a need for more funds arises, a separate vote will be taken at the SHA, Inc. Board meeting. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: To adopt Resolution # 9635 to authorize backup funding for Talk/Read/ Succeed! program as necessary in the amount of \$25,000 to come from COCC.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to approve renewal of the SHA's financial support for the North End Shotspotter Expansion Project. Answering Commissioner Labonte's question about other contributors to this project Michelle Booth stated that apart from the SHA 15 other agencies and companies also contribute to it, including Baystate and Mercy Medical Centers, Pride gas stations, McDonald's in the North End, Peabody and Beacon Properties. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Labonte, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve renewal of the SHA's financial support for the North End Shotspotter Expansion Project in an annual amount of \$12,000 for each year of a three-year period, and authorize the Executive Director to execute the proposed Memorandum of Understanding among the SHA, Springfield Police Department, and New North Citizens' Council.

Judge Abrashkin started his Executive Director's report by informing the Board that a non-profit organization called Develop Springfield has signed a Letter of Intent with regards to purchasing the building at 90 Carew Street. Mr. Abrashkin stated that Sean Cahillane has just received preliminary drawings from an architect and the negotiations with the City of Springfield about the adjacent lot are still in progress.

The Executive Director continued his report by providing information about Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. He explained that since HUD does not provide enough funds to local housing authorities to meet all their needs some agencies are enforced to explore other opportunities like a RAD Program. Judge Abrashkin indicated that this is a very complicated program the basic principle of which is conveying public housing properties into non-profit entities which will become a form of tax shelter and will be able to raise money through loans, tax programs, syndications etc. William Abrashkin explained that in order to get some guidance with filing a RAD application with HUD, which will be a first step in the process followed by physical and financial assessment of all properties, the Springfield Housing Authority contacted Cambridge Housing Authority, the only PHA in the state which has RAD program and no longer has any federal public housing. Judge Abrashkin also explained that either all federal housing properties or just a separate federal development can apply for RAD. The Executive Director said that the Cambridge Housing Authority's RAD Program has brought big profit and lots of benefits but the program at the CHA is being managed by a team of specialists so at this point the Springfield Housing Authority is planning to contact their Executive Director to see if the SHA can contract with the CHA to file the application. Judge Abrashkin explained that RAD Program is the only program that will allow housing authorities to raise capital funds to keep their properties in a decent shape. He indicated that the process is extremely complicated and long lasting but the agency is ready to start exploring opportunities. Following Judge Abrashkin's comment that with almost the same number of units in its portfolio as the SHA, the CHA has much bigger staff, Chairman Warren inquired if it became possible after the agency started implementing its RAD program. Mr. Abrashkin stated that he does not know for sure but since the CHA is a Move to Work agency, it has much more flexibility and freedom in funds distribution. He brought an example of the situation with current reserves of 3 million dollars at the SHA's Section 8 account which cannot be used for some PH initiatives

like hiring a consultant for recycling program for which there is a great need.

Chairman Warren supported this initiative describing it as an immense task and an immense opportunity and encouraged to take first steps towards applying for Rental Assistance Demonstration program.

Judge Abrashkin finished his report by inviting the Board members to join the SHA employees for the staff picture scheduled for June 22nd.


Chairman Warren asked for the Board's consideration to enter into Executive Session. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was by a roll call vote (Warren - Aye, Thomas - Aye, Robles - Aye, Labonte - Aye, Quinonez - Aye) unanimously

VOTED: To enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation and to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and to not reconvene in Open Session.

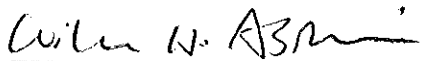
There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority, upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 6:05 PM.

ATTEST:



Raymond Warren, Chairman



William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director

