

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 15, 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 September 15, 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 the Annual Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, September 15, 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

September 10, 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 September 10, 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/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
Nicole Contois
Michele Decoteau

Fidan Gousseynoff
 John Healy
 Wallace Kisiel
 Pam Wells
 Mary Ellen Lowney (arrived at 4:35 pm).

The Board reviewed the Minutes of August 18, 2015. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of August 18, 2015.

The Board reviewed the materials on adopting new utility allowances for the Section 8 Program. Michelle Booth explained that the new schedule was generated by Happy Software, a provider of software solutions for Section 8 programs. She indicated that the allowances vary depending on type of housing (for example, a townhouse or a single family house). Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9636 to adopt the revised HUD Utility Allowance Schedule for the Section 8 Programs to be effective October 1, 2015.

Michelle Booth presented to the Board a recommendation on approving the 2015-2016 FMR. In response to Chairman Warren's question Ms. Booth stated that the standards are established by HUD but public housing agencies are allowed to set up a higher (up to 110%) FMR. She explained why the SHA decided not to opt for higher FMR standards this year. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9637 to approve the following new Fair Market Rents and Payment standard to be effective as of October 1, 2015.

BEDROOM SIZES	FMR AND PAYMENT STANDARDS	FMR AND PAYMENT STANDARDS
	100% EFFECTIVE 10/1/15 - 9/30/16	100% EFFECTIVE 10/1/15 - 9/30/16
0 BEDROOM	626	626
1 BEDROOM	793	793
2 BEDROOM	989	989
3 BEDROOM	1227	1227
4 BEDROOM	1444	1444
5 BEDROOM	1660	1660
6 BEDROOM	1909	1890

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve entering into a contract with the Cambridge Housing Authority to begin the Rental Assistance Demonstration analysis. Judge Abrashkin explained that RAD is a HUD's program that allows a PHA to transfer (on paper) the ownership of some or all its properties to different entities in order to raise capital funding through tax credits system. He stated that the CHA, which applied all its properties to the RAD, is a statewide leader in this program. Judge Abrashkin pointed out that many major companies and business like Wynn

Construction has repeatedly contacted him offering their RAD services but cooperation with the CHA promises to be most collegial and cost effective. The Executive Director explained that no formal procurement was required for this contract because it is an agency to agency agreement which is exempt from regular HUD procurement requirements. Answering Commissioner Robles's question Judge Abrashkin confirmed that the total contract amount is not to exceed \$35,000 including consulting costs and travel. He indicated that there may be some negotiations about specifics of the proposal and the Board is requested to authorize the Executive Director to make some modifications to the contract unless it is a substantial change which will be submitted for the Board's approval. In response to Chairman Warren's inquiry Judge Abrashkin explained that the contract initially will be charged to the COCC and in the future it can be assigned to AMPs. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve to enter into a contract with the Cambridge Housing Authority in order to begin the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) analysis process.

Mary Ellen Lowney left the Conference Room at 4:40 pm and returned at 4:42 pm.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to award a contract for After-School and Summer Vacation Youth Enrichment Programming Services to YMCA. Resident Services Director Pam Wells indicated that YMCA has been providing these services to kids at Sullivan for several years and the SHA has been very satisfied with the quality of the after school and summer programs and especially that the YMCA staff works closely with the Springfield schools and TRS Program. Nicole Contois pointed out that even though YMCA rates submitted with the bids look more expensive than ADC, the Y offers 5 days a week of after-school programs and 6 hours programs 5 days a week on summer vs 3 days a week programs offered by ADC. Answering Commissioner Thomas's question Pam Wells explained that the program is usually attended by 20-25 elementary school students, ages 6-12 and the tutors work closely with the kids' teachers and other school staff to identify what extra help is needed for each program participant if he or she is struggling with a certain subject. Ms. Wells also told about parents' involvement in the program.

John Healy provided details about the procurement process stating that RFP had been sent to 7 service providers and only two responses were received.

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

VOTED: To award a contract to the YMCA of Greater Springfield for three years to provide After School Youth Enrichment Programming and Summer Vacation Youth Enrichment Programming at Sullivan Apartments for the total three (3) year amount \$175,280.00; to authorize Executive Director William H Abarashkin, the contracting officer, to execute the contract.

Pam Wells and Mary Ellen Lowney left the Conference Room at 4:50 pm.

Nicole Contois presented to the Board the revised FY16 Budget Request for state projects. She explained that due to a mistake in the Salaries section of the Budget Requests which were adopted by the Board in April, a new Budget was calculated and now needed the Board's approval.

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

VOTED: To adopt Resolution #9638 to approve the FY16 Budget Request for Project 400-1.

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

VOTED: To adopt Resolution #9639 to approve the FY16 Budget Request for Project 200-A.

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

VOTED: To adopt Resolution #9640 to approve the FY16 Budget Request for Project 667-A.

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

VOTED: To adopt Resolution #9641 to approve the FY16 Budget Request for Project 705-A.

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

VOTED: To adopt Resolution #9642 to approve the FY16 Budget Request for Project 689-C.

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

VOTED: To adopt Resolution #9643 to approve the FY16 Budget Request for Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program.

Moving to the Board Elections item Chairman Warren suggested the following slate of candidates for the Board: Willie Thomas - Chairman; Thomas Labonte - Vice-Chairman; Angela Robles - Treasurer; Jessica Quinonez - Assistant Secretary. Chairman Warren inquired if there will be any other nominations or objections to the suggested slate. The Board unanimously voted on approving the slate suggested by Chairman Warren.

Raymond Warren expressed his appreciation to the Board and staff members for their support and work and for their contribution into bringing many positive changes under difficult circumstances. Mr. Warren indicated that he is leaving the Board Chairman position being fully confident that the new Board will continue all the good efforts.

Newly elected Chairman Thomas also expressed his gratitude for electing him.

Executive Director Abrashkin started his report by thanking Raymond Warren for serving for many years as the Board Chairman and for all his contribution into bringing the agency to a very solid point in its history.

He presented to the Board the Annual Report and expressed his hope that the Commissioners will find its new format more helpful and user-friendly. Judge Abrashkin reminded about Consent Agenda, a new concept inaugurated at the previous Board meeting, and encouraged the Board members to add new items or contact him if they want to discuss, review or get an update on some issues that have been brought to their attention before.

Judge Abrashkin completed his Executive Director's report by providing information about a recent visit from HUD.

The Board reviewed the Accounts Payable report. In response to Ray Warren's inquiry about a big amount - \$25,000 paid to evaluate the TRS Program Judge Abrashkin explained that the amount was paid out of the Line Item. He indicated that the provider - Sam Stevens, had done the program design and some data collection for TRS but more evaluation was needed to back up the program's progress. He stated that the interim reports are very encouraging. Mr. Abrashkin also informed that the TRS is about to start developing a database together with the Springfield School System.

The Board reviewed and accepted the Financial report. Nicole Contois indicated that the staff is currently working on improving the format of the report to make it easier to read and understand. She answered Judge Abrashkin's questions on why the COCC reserves were at such a low level explaining that a big amount has been paid recently to the Retirement Fund.

The Board reviewed and accepted the Waiting List and Occupancy reports. Michelle Booth stressed out that for the 1st time in many years a goal of bringing the units turnaround time to 21 days has been achieved and an average turnaround period is currently 19 days comparing to 27-29 days in March. Ms. Booth described that the management worked closely with the foremen and Applications Department to make sure vacant units are made ready and leased up without any delays.


The Board reviewed and accepted the Public Safety report. Michelle Booth pointed out some important parts of the report stating that the summer has been very quiet and gang related activity has significantly diminished. She explained that several factors contributed to it, including hard work of the managers who have been aggressive on implementing lease enforcement and the efforts of the maintenance crew who kept the properties clean and less inviting for crime, as well as an active cooperation with the Springfield Police and State Police. Ms. Booth stated that as per the SHA's request the SPS and MSP have expanded C3 policing at Sullivan where several serious crime incidents had happened before including a murder, drugs and illegal firearm procession related arrests. The State Police has been providing additional patrols to Sullivan and set up a satellite office at the Barton Neighborhood center there. The C3 policing also increased at Jennie Lane Apartments where a drug raid and also an arrest of a boarder on charges of murder had happened.

The Board reviewed and accepted the Rental Assistance Report. Michelle Booth described the measures the SHA has been undertaking to increase and maintain utilization level at 98%, including pulling out 150 applicants off the waiting list (to ensure there is a pool of persons to whom vouchers can be allocated) and reviewing by RAO's Finance Department the utilization levels. Ms. Booth also indicated that the difference between the number of allocated vouchers and used vouchers is explained by lack of funds to utilize all the vouchers due to the sequestration effect.

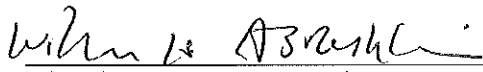
There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority, upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Warren, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 5:18 PM.

ATTEST,



Raymond Warren, Chairman



William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director