

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON NOVEMBER 17, 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 November 17, 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

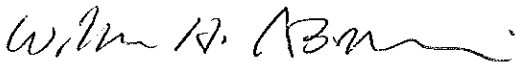
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that a regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, November 17, 2015 in the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
/s/William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director
November 12, 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 November 12, 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 Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM, and those present upon roll call were as follows:

PRESENT

Willie Thomas
Thomas Labonte
Jessica Quinonez
Angela Robles
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

William Abrashkin
Michelle Booth
Fidan Gousseynoff

John Healy
Wallace Kisiel

The Board reviewed the Minutes of October 20, 2015. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of October 20, 2015.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to award a Contract for Windows and Roof replacement at 689-1 Scattered Sites properties. John Healy reminded that this item was tabled at the last meeting due to pending DHCD approval. The cost of Contract includes some Hazmat works, replacing windows and roofs at 689-1 Scattered Sites located in different parts of the City. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to award a contract to the lowest responsible & responsive bidder, Diversified Construction Services, LLC 100 University Drive, Amherst, MA 01002 in the amount of Two Hundred Fifteen Thousand - Five Hundred and Seventy Dollars (\$215,570.00) for Windows and Roof Replacement for the 689-1 Scattered sites properties, utilizing the funds from Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) No.281105; Appoint Executive Director, William H. Abrashkin as the Contracting Officer authorizing him to execute the contract.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to approve Change Order #1 to Contract with NL Construction for ADA renovations at 178 Pendleton Ave. John Healy demonstrated pictures and provided details about the Change due to additional work to remove three layers of floor tile and plywood with mastic, removal of asbestos and sheetrock compound. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve contract Change Order No. 1 in the amount of \$22,541.00 to Contract # 35-C-2015-13-5 with NL Construction. This will increase the contract amount from \$ 258,586.00 to \$281,127.00. The Substantial Completion date will remain at December 20, 2015.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to approve Change Order #2 to Contract with NL Construction for ADA renovations at 178 Pendleton Ave. John Healy explained that this Change Order was for some electrical work missed by the architect and not included into the bid. Judge Abrashkin questioned why the Springfield Housing Authority is responsible for extra charges caused by architect's omission. Mr. Healy responded that since the project is owned and maintained the by the SHA, the agency is responsible for all the expenses but he has requested the architect to waive some fees. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve contract Change Order No. 2 in the amount of \$13,177.00 to Contract # 35-C-2015-13-5 with NL Construction. This will increase the contract amount from \$ 281,127.00 to \$294,304.00. The Substantial Completion date will remain at December 20, 2015.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to approve Change Order #3 to Contract with NL Construction for ADA renovations at 178 Pendleton Ave. John Healy explained that the Change Order was for plumbing work caused by some discrepancies in the old site drawings that showed some pipes in a wrong location. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve contract Change Order No. 3 in the amount of \$5,017.00 to Contract # 35-C-2015-13-5 with NL Construction. This will increase the contract amount from \$ 294,304.00 to \$299,321.00. The Substantial Completion date will remain at December 20, 2015.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to approve Change Order #4 to Contract with NL Construction for ADA renovations at 178 Pendleton Ave. John Healy explained that this was a framing change to repair a joist, a part of which was removed when an A/C for the old office was installed several years ago. He indicated that the gap in the wall was not visible because of a wall thus this joist repair was not included into the bid. Mr. Healy also stated that the amount of the Change Order was not indicated in the Memo correctly so the Board is requested to approve Change Order #4 in amount of \$2,614 instead of \$5,017. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve contract Change Order No. 4 in the amount of \$2,614.00 to Contract # 35-C-2015-13-5 with NL Construction. This will increase the contract amount from \$ 299,321.00 to \$301,935.00. The Substantial Completion date will remain at December 20, 2015.

In response to Commissioner Warren's comment about high wages for the labor, electrical and plumbing services Mr. Healy explained that the wages include benefits as well.

The Board reviewed the FY15 Audit Report and the letters from the Auditors, Guyer Hurley. Judge Abrashkin and Commissioner Warren indicated that the letters contained some important observations and recommendations. Answering Commissioner Labonte's question if the software characterized by the Auditors as outdated will be replaced in near future Judge Abrashkin and Michelle Booth explained that the SHA has tested a different type of software which costs around \$300,000 and it is not clear at this point if it can be included into the next year's budget. Ms. Booth also explained what the SHA reached out to the Cambridge Housing Authority and they agreed to review the SHA IT system and provide some consultations on how to improve it as well as what qualifications are required for a new IT Specialist that needs to be hired. Once more reviews are conducted it will be determined if a new system will be installed or the old one upgraded. Ms. Booth indicated that the PH software system is 30 years old and the one for Section 8 is eight years old.

Judge Abrashkin suggested to the Board members to notify him if they have any specific questions about the Audit Report and the Letters so that a follow-up discussion can be scheduled for the next Board meeting.

Judge Abrashkin started his Executive Director's report by providing an update on real estate matters on the local, state and federal levels. On the

matter of 90 Carew Street he informed that a preliminary agreement with DevelopSpringfield was signed and the City accepted DS's bid on the adjacent parking lot. The bid was approved by the Mayor and now is subject of approval by the City Council. The SHA decided at this point not to start any Lease negotiations or buildout plans until the Council votes on the matter.

Judge Abrashkin continued with the real estate report by providing an update on the state level, on the State tornado units. He reminded the Board that the state units at Melrose, destroyed by tornado, were taken by the City. The four units on Eastern Avenue that also were destroyed have never been disposed or replaced due to lack of funding. Wallace Kisiel conducted some evaluation to review a possibility of building four units at Carpe Diem but it has been determined that there is not enough money to do that. The SHA has recently contacted to DHCD suggesting disposing these four units in accordance with a Notice that DHCD issued some time ago that allows LPHs to dispose most troubled units. If the permission is granted, a RFP will be issued. Bidders who are planning to build an affordable housing on the site of the units will be given a priority and if determined qualified, will be able to purchase those units for \$1. If there is no qualified affordable housing bidder available, the units will be sold to the highest qualified bidder. Springfield College will be most likely interested in purchasing this property.

Judge Abrashkin completed his real estate report by updating the Board on the Marble Street project. He reminded the Board that the Springfield Housing Authority has undertaken all necessary measures to get the project moving, including getting an approval (from the residents, the Board, the Resident Advisory Board), conducting environmental reviews and appraisal, however it has been determined recently that because of the condition of the building, it does not qualify for disposition without HUD's discretion. The Executive Director informed the Board that he has reached to Congressman Neal to get his support in getting HUD's approval.

Judge Abrashkin continued his Executive Director's report by informing the Board about the status of Union Negotiations. He informed that thanks to involvement of a mediator, Atty. Mark Albano, it is expected that some progress can be achieved soon.

The Executive Director provided to the Board information about the Broadband Connection Program. The SHA was chosen by HUD to support this initiative. After the agency expressed its commitment to the Program, HUD informed that it will not be providing any funding and the SHA together with the City must apply for grants to cover all the expenses on purchasing, installing, maintaining the equipment as well as for cable and Internet services. Unlike New York or Austin, TX where LHAs get multimillion grants for the Broadband Program implementation, there is no prospect of getting any financial support for this Program in Springfield. The SHA staff cannot commit much time and resources to work on this project so it was decided to put on hold its participation in this program due to financial problems and lack of support from the City.

The Executive Director added that the SHA IT Department currently has only two staff members who serve more than 150 employees and have a very heavy workload. Answering Chairman Thomas's question about hiring an IT Technician

Michelle Booth explained that the agency, together with consultants from Cambridge Housing Authority is working on drafting the position description as the one used before (dated back to 1990s) was more for a hardware rather than a software technician. Once the SHA and SHA determine what description corresponds the new SHA IT needs, the position will be advertised.

The Executive Director addressed the Board with a question on whether more education on budget related issues is needed. Commissioner Warren stated that it is hard to get a clear picture of the financial state when the Board members only receive the reports and statements a few days before Board meetings. He suggested providing to the Board some kind of a message or a review that explains how the budgets are drafted, what are the challenges, goals to be achieved, priorities, troubled areas, how expenses are projected etc. Mr. Warren also stated it would be more helpful to hold a Special meeting on Budget orientation rather than adding this complicated subject as a regular meeting agenda item. This idea was supported by Chairman Thomas. It was decided to hold such a meeting in February.

Michelle Booth explained that starting in December the District Managers submit to the Deputy Executive Director and Mike Petro their proposals indicating their needs, like expenses on equipment, supplies, extraordinary maintenance items, additional staff. Based on the managers' proposals and previous expenses Mike Petro projects the budgets.

Judge Abrashkin continued his report by referring to the document from HUD proposing banning smoking in all public housing authorities.

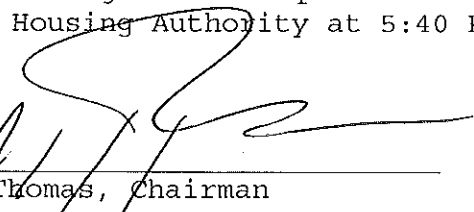
The Executive Director's report was completed by reminding the Board members about Casual Friday breakfast scheduled for November 20th. Judge Abrashkin indicated that this event will help to increase awareness about how much impact the agency has in local economy providing business opportunities through contracts and Section 8 as well as about all the work it does in the Community, including Resident Services and Public Safety programs.

Michelle Booth invited the Board members to attend the Springfield Rotary Club and Basketball Hall of Fame 2015 Service Above Self Luncheon.

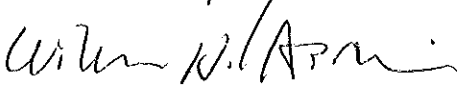
There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 5:40 PM.

ATTEST:



Willie Thomas, Chairman



William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director

