

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON DECEMBER 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 December 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

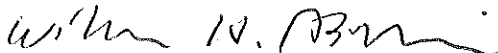
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that a regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, December 15, 2015 in the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
/s/William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director
December 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 December 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 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
Howard Coro

Michelle Decoteau
Fidan Gousseynoff
John Healy
Wallace Kisiel
Mike Petro, Casterline & Associates
JoAnn White

The Board reviewed the Minutes of November 17, 2015. Commissioner Warren requested to make an amendment on Page 5 by deleting a part of the sentence. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the amended Minutes of November 17, 2015.

Judge Abrashkin requested to move the Executive Director's report which was dedicated to Finances to the beginning of the meeting to accommodate Mike Petro's request. Mr. Petro expressed his appreciation to Commissioner Warren for all his comments and suggestions and stated he would be delighted to provide more details about how the budget is developed. He invited the Board members to share their thoughts on what exactly they are looking for so that he could be able to prepare a comprehensive report.

Commissioner Warren explained it would be helpful for the Board to get a better picture on the budget issues, including getting an assessment on how the budget is put together, what are key items to be addressed, what represents a big change comparing to last years, what are the priorities or what items are being neglected due to lack of resources. Mr. Warren brought an example of the software upgrade which requires lots of money and indicated that it would be good to get information on how this item will be reflected in the Budget and where the money will come from.

Mr. Petro stated that he will be able to provide the Board with an enhanced Summary before the March Board meeting then the next Fiscal Year budget will be presented for approval. He promised to send all the materials in advance so that the Board would have enough time to review them and inquire any clarification before voting. Mike Petro also indicated that the Board members are welcome to request one-to-one meetings or a presentation. He informed that earlier that day he held a seminar for the Property Managers which they found useful for better understanding on how the budget is formed and managed. Mr. Petro stated that a similar workshop can be conducted for the Board members. Chairman Thomas expressed his gratitude and stated that all Members will definitely benefit from such an initiative.

In response to Judge Abrashkin's question Mr. Petro confirmed that he would be available at the March Board meeting when the budget will be presented.

Mike Petro left the Conference Room at 4:50 pm.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to accept Amendment No. 2 to DHCD Capital Improvement Work Plan for Projects 667 & 689. Howard Coro explained that all the work on the DHCD Health and Safety Award was completed back in July, all the contractors were paid but DHCD has never

sent a Contract for this Project. Now the DHCD officials requested the Contract to be signed and submitted to them.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution No.9644, accepting Amendment No. 2 to DHCD Contract for Financial Assistance, Capital Improvement Work Plan No. 2811075001; FY2015 Formula Funding And Health And Safety Initiative Awards.

The Board reviewed the 2016 Annual Plan. Michelle Booth presented to the Board an information on how the plan was drafted and discussed at the Resident Advisory Board meeting, how it reflects the goals and objectives of the agency; what part it includes (Capital Fund information, management related issues etc.); what are challenged elements and how the SHA is planning to overcome those challenges. Ms. Booth expressed her regret that despite publishing information in the newspaper about the Plan's availability, no requests to review the Plan have been made and no comments or suggestions from the residents have been received except for those expressed at the Resident Advisory Board meeting held on October 7th. In response to Chairman Thomas and Commissioner Warren's question on what kind of issues were raised at the RAB meeting and whether those issues were reflected in the Annual Plan Michelle Booth said that most attendees especially from Central Apartments were concerned about safety and the plan does state that the Springfield Housing Authority will be applying for safety and security grants and will be considering including security cameras into the budget in the future. Answering Commissioner Warren's question Wallace Kisiel confirmed that money from Capital Fund Program can be used for the cameras like it was done for Sullivan, Tri Towers and Marble Street. Mr. Kisiel stated that because most of the money in last 4 year has been used to meet the requirements of the Voluntary Compliance Agreement, the agency has not been able to include security cameras into its Annual Plans. Mr. Kisiel and Ms. Booth explained that even though now the SHA's Capital Plan will be rebounding to its normal phase, there are still many important items on the agenda that need to be taken care of to ensure structural integrity of the buildings, like, for example, leaking roofs, cold-water risers, breaker panels etc. Executive Director Abrashkin explained that it is not recommended just to state in the Plan that the SHA will be installing the cameras in some developments because if it fails to do so due to lack of finances, it will be criticized by HUD. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution No 9645 approving the Springfield Housing Authority's FY2016 Annual Plan and certifying compliance of the Plan and related regulations with form HUD-50077.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve disposition of four units at Eastern Avenue destroyed by tornado in 2011. Judge Abrashkin explained that the Springfield Housing Authority had been for several years reviewing opportunities for replacing those four units but it was determined that the proceeds from the insurance company and sale to the Springfield College are far beyond the expenses needed to rebuild them. It was decided

to try a different approach and request an approval from DHCD to dispose these 4 units and use all the proceeds in the amount around \$740,000 for other units within project 705 which are in desperate need of capital and operating funds. Judge Abrashkin explained that upon getting an approval from the Board and DHCD, a RFP will be issued and, in accordance with DHCD regulations, the 1st priority will be given to a qualified affordable housing developer who will be able to obtain the property for \$1. If no affordable housing developer submits a bid or does not qualify, the property will be sold to a highest qualified bidder. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was determined that the proposed 705-1 units located at 418, 426, 420 and 428 Eastern Avenue meet the Criteria for Selection in Section 3(a) of the RFP and unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution No 9646 to approve disposition of the proposed units and authorize the Executive Director William H. Abrashkin to submit to DHCD an Application for Disposition.

The Board reviewed a recommendation to approve application for Disposition of Marble Street Apartments. Judge Abrashkin indicated that this item has been discussed at the Board meetings many times and now a formal vote is required. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution no 9647 authorizing the SHA staff to file with HUD the application for disposition of the Marble Street Development to the City of Springfield, and authorizing staff to complete the sale to the City upon approval by HUD of the disposition application.

Michelle Booth requested to withdraw the next item on the agenda - requesting Board's authorization to use 689 Program Reserve Funds for the emergency replacement of two boilers at the Eagan Street. Ms. Booth explained that the SHA plumbers and Howard Coro were able to find a solution to the problem and the boilers were fixed.

The Board reviewed materials a recommendation to award a three year contract for legal services to Lyon & Fitzpatrick. Judge Abrashkin indicated that the RFP was issued in accordance with the procurement policy and the evaluation committee with three Deputies was established to review and evaluate the responses and references. He explained that having an extensive experience in working not only with the Springfield Housing Authority but other local housing authorities was a primary factor in the evaluation process. Referring to a discussion at one of the Board meetings earlier this year Commissioner Labonte inquired whether any measures have been undertaken to control/ limit on who from the staff has an authority to request legal services. Michelle Booth confirmed that only top management staff is authorized to contact Lyon & Fitzpatrick and, moreover, a new practice has been used for the last 4 months requiring the property managers and Attorney Priscilla to review all non-payment and cause cases and determine what measures (research, lease enforcement etc.) the management offices have to undertake to decrease the amount of time spent by legal counsels. Ms. Booth stated that each District has between 35-50 ongoing cases each month.

Commissioner Labonte inquired whether any research has been conducted to evaluate if it would be feasible to have an in-house counsel. Judge Abrashkin stated that no comprehensive research has been done but taking into account the amount and complexity of the SHA legal cases, hiring one full-time employee will not be sufficient and if hired, that employee must be very experienced. He reminded that the SHA's legal matters are currently being handled not only by Atty. Chesky but other lawyers as well. Michelle Booth stated that the staff will be considering whether hiring a paralegal would be a cost saving measure. Judge Abrashkin stated that even though the Board is voting on a three year contract, the agency has a right to cancel it any moment with a proper 30-day notice.

Commissioner Quinonez questioned how the time spent by Atty. Chesky in court representing not only the SHA but other housing authorities is being tracked. Judge Abrashkin expressed his confidence that the SHA is getting billed only for the time spent by L&F lawyers on the SHA cases.

Commissioner Warren shared that he was contacted by someone who expressed concern about the fairness of the bidding process especially the weights put on certain criteria in bids evaluation. For example, the application stated that one of the requirements was having experience in providing legal services to public housing agencies with 1000 and over units, which narrowed the number of potential bidders. Mr. Warren also stated there was some criticism about the way the prices submitted by the bidders were compared. He stated that, having discussed and reviewed these issues with the SHA staff he did not find any conflict and found that the process of selecting was fair and rigorous.

In response to Chairman Thomas's request the Executive Director Abrashkin stated that once the vote is taken he will be able to respond to a person to address the issues relayed to Commissioner Warren. Wallace Kisiel explained that it is a standard procedure for the Purchasing Department to send a Thank You note to all the applicants for the time and effort spent to submit bids and everybody can contact the Department if there any questions or concerns about the bidding process or evaluation procedures.

Answering Commissioner Warren's question Wallace Kisiel and Judge Abrashkin indicated that the application package did not specify in what format the bidders had to submit their quotes so both an hourly rate or a fixed annual amount could be accepted. Mr. Kisiel explained that in the evaluation process the rating was reviewed separately from the quotes. Judge Abrashkin indicated that awarding a contract to a company using only the price criteria might not be beneficial for the SHA because if a bid was too low, the company submitting it might not be quite aware about the scope of work to be dealt with and how much time consuming each case is.

Commissioner Warren expressed an idea (which was supported by Chairman Thomas) that conducting interviews with applicants could be another tool in the evaluation process. Judge Abrashkin stated that it can be included to the application package in the future but to his opinion the score system is more objective than personal interviews.

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

VOTED: to award the legal services contract to Lyon & Fitzpatrick, LLC for the term of three (3) years including (2) two additional (1) one year options (at the sole discretion of the SHA) for the amounts proposed in the attached pricing sheet (Attachment 1).

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to award a Contract for 2016 automobile insurance coverage to Travelers Property Casualty which was the only bidder as described by Wallace Kisiel. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to award a Contract to Travelers Property Casualty in care of Housing Authority Insurance Group 189 Commerce Court, PO Box 189, Cheshire, CT 06410, in the amount of \$35,506.00 based on a \$500.00 per occurrence deductible for the coverage period January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016; 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 accept Amendment to Formula Funding Contract for Financial Assistance. Wallace Kisiel explained that the Amendment will give the SHA financial assistance in the amount of \$300,000 for the abatement work required to replace the heating zone valves at many state developments. Mr. Kisiel stated that the abatement portion will be funded through a special DHCD program that provides funds for any works with hazardous materials.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution No. 9648 accepting the Amendment to the Formula Funding contract. This will award \$300,000.00 in funds to pay for the abatement portion of the heating zone valve project. The funds will come from the Public Housing Compliance Reserve from DHCD.

Judge Abrashkin started his Executive Director's report by informing the Board about the software needs assessment conducted by Cambridge Housing Authority's consultant. Mr. Abrashkin explained that the CHA has been recently providing these services at no charge to assist the SHA with evaluating the scope of work for the IT system's upgrade. He expressed the significance of this problem and expressed his concern that currently only one person runs the SHA's IT Department serving needs of so many employees, offices and developments. Michelle Booth indicated that the CHA's Consultant is working on drafting job descriptions through determining goals, requirements, capabilities and training needs of the IT staff. Ms. Booth stated that if any of Board members are interested in liaison in this project they are welcome to get involved and share their feedback.

In response to Commissioner Warren's inquiry about the \$46,000 software expense in the Accounts Payable report Ms. Booth explained that it's a fee that is being paid to current software vendor for services like software update and maintenance.

Judge Abrashkin continued his report by informing the Board about the upcoming visit of the CHA RAD consultants. He also expressed his

satisfaction that the 2016 earmark contract for TRS Program has been finally fully executed and received from DHCD. He finished his report by passing to the Board members best regards from former Chairman Babcock.

The Board reviewed a letter from the Amherst Housing Authority in which the AHA Executive Director expressed her appreciation to the SHA Participants Services Director Loleta Collins on the Homeownership presentation she organized.

The Board reviewed the Accounts Payable report. In response to Commissioner Warren's question Accounting Manager Michele Decoteau explained how big payments are paid through the LOCCs system.

Wallace Kisiel left the Conference Room at 6:10 pm.

Answering other questions by Commissioner Warren Deputy Accounting Manager JoAnn White explained how situations with uncashed checks are being handled and that the numbers in parenthesis in the Financial Report represent non-cash adjustment/ corrections made following the auditors' recommendation with relation to the bonds that the agency received many years ago and is still required to pay back. Ms. Decoteau also explained that the negative \$3 million for project 400 C is a result of the federalization. Judge Abrashkin indicated that he would like the financial report to reflect the situation with actual money that one or another AMP has so that it would be easier to see if that AMP is ending its fiscal year with a deficit or a surplus and whether it is operating within its means and is prepared for some unexpected big expenses in case of emergency. In response to his comment and Commissioner Warren's request Ms. White stated she would be formatting the Financial reports to include into them not only data about the reserves but also about the actual money available to AMPs.

Howard Coro left the Conference Room at 6:16 pm.


The Board reviewed and accepted the Public Safety and Investigation Services Department Report. By Chairman Thomas's request Michelle Booth provided a brief overview of the most important items of the report. She expressed her concern about an increased number of shooting incidents at Robinson Gardens and explained how the agency and the SPD and State Police are working together to address the issue. She indicated that despite the shootings at RG and Pine James, some gang-related activity in the Forest Park Manor and increased number of break-ins, the overall situation in the public safety area for the last months was good and majority of the complaints were related to disturbance, parking and smoking policy violations.

The Board reviewed and accepted the Occupancy and Waiting List Report. Answering Commissioner Warren's question about how long does it take for someone filing an emergency application to get an apartment Ms. Booth stated that it depends on bedroom size. She explained that it is easier to get a two-bedroom apartment than 3 or 4 for which there's much longer waiting list. She also informed that even if the SHA in many cases is not able to provide an immediate emergency housing, the Applications Manager Jacquie Banks refers applicants to other housing authorities and provides information on where and how to apply.

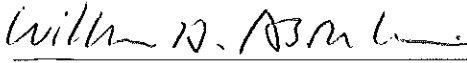
There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 6:22 PM.

ATTEST:



Willie Thomas, Chairman



William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
PRICE PROPOSAL FORM
ATTACHMENT

YEAR ONE: L&F -- Hourly rate of \$185.00 One hundred eighty-five dollars and 00/100 --
Monthly retainer option available of \$16,000.00/per month (Sixteen thousand
And 00/100 Dollars)

SH&Q -- Hourly rate of \$240.00/hour Two hundred forty and 00/100 Dollars
Monthly retainer option available of \$2,666.58/per month (Two thousand six
Hundred and sixty-six and 58/100 Dollars).

YEAR TWO: L&F -- Hourly rate of \$190.00, One hundred ninety and 00/100 --
Monthly retainer option -- same as Year One

SH&Q -- Hourly rate of \$245.00 per hour -- Two hundred forty-five and 00/100
Monthly retainer option - same as Year One

YEAR THREE: L & F -- Hourly rate of \$195.00 -- One hundred ninety-five and 00/100 per hour;
Monthly retainer Option of Seventeen thousand and 00/100 (\$17,000.00) per month

SH& Q -- hourly rate of \$250.00 per hour -- Two hundred fifty and 00/100 Per hour;
Monthly retainer amount -- same as Year One and Year Two;

Option Year Four -- L & F -- Hourly rate of \$200.00 per hour -- Two hundred and 00/100 per hour;
Monthly retainer Option - same as Year Three;

SH&Q -- hourly rate of \$3% increase to hourly and retainer amount

Option Year Five -- L & F -- Hourly rate of \$210.00 per hour -- Two hundred ten and 00/100 per hour
Monthly retainer Option -- same as Year Three;

SH& Q -- hourly rate -- 3% increase to hourly and retainer amount.

