

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON JANUARY 19, 2016

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 January 19, 2016.

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, January 19, 2016 in the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY

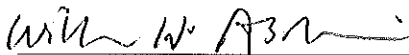
/s/William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director

January 14, 2016

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 January 14, 2016 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

Loleta Collins
Nicole Contois
Michelle Decoteau
Dan Glaun, Masslive
Fidan Gousseynoff
John Healy
Mary Ellen Lowney
Wallace Kisiel

The Board reviewed the Minutes of December 15, 2015. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of December 15, 2015.

The Board reviewed the materials on renewing SHA sponsorship package for the 5th Annual Develop Springfield Gala and Dinner. Executive Director Abrashkin requested the Board to support this important organization as it was done in previous years. He invited the Board members to attend this event. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve spending \$1500 from the COCC to purchase a Bronze Sponsorship Package to support the 5th Annual *Celebrate Springfield* Dinner fundraiser to take place on March 10, 2016 at the MassMutual Center.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to accept the Certificate of Substantial Completion from RAC Builders. Wallace Kisiel explained that all the works on renovating ten handicap accessible apartments at Riverview were completed around November 25th. He informed that the date of the Substantial Completion marks the date when the 12-months warranty starts. Answering Commissioner Warren's question Mr. Kisiel confirmed that the items on the provided punch-list have been resolved. In response to Chairman Thomas's question he informed that the contractors have been paid already and no payment is due. Judge Abrashkin, supported by Chairman Thomas, thanked Wallace Kisiel, John Healy and their staff on completing this big project that involved so much work. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the Certificate of Substantial Completion notification from RAC Builders Inc., to renovate ten (10) handicap accessible units at Riverview Apartments under Contract # C-2015-3-2, hereby accepting the partial completion of the project effective at Noon on 25-November 2015.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to accept Change Order #5 from NL Construction Inc. John Healy indicated that the Change Order of \$3,312.00 was for the addition of a floor drain and installation of sheet vinyl flooring instead of VCT tile in the handicapped bathroom at Pendleton Avenue. The Change Order request also proposed for the contract extension of 21 days. Answering Chairman Thomas's question Mr. Healy stated that he is satisfied with the Contractors work and how the project is moving forward.

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

VOTED: to approve contract Change Order No. 5 in the amount of \$3,312.00.00 and a time extension of 21 days to Contract # 35C-2015-15-5 with NL Construction Inc. making the new contract amount \$305,247.00.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to approve the 1st year extension for Contract with Lynch Electrical Contractors for On Call Backup Electrical Services. In response to Chairman Thomas's question John Healy and Wallace Kisiel explained what kind of situations require calling for back up electrical services, stating the importance of the Contract in dealing with big or complicated projects like electrical panel replacement or changing outside lightbulbs at Congress Street where a lift is needed. Answering Commissioner Warren's question on how much out of \$100,000 per year allowed by the Contract has been spent for Lynch Electrical services, John Healy stated that only \$53,000 was spent last year which was not too much taking into consideration that the agency was without an electrician for several weeks. Mr. Healy stated that having back-up electrical services is necessary to allow the in-house electrician to take care of many work orders and service calls he gets from all the Districts every day. Responding to Commissioner Warren's inquiry on who is authorized to place a service call with Lynch Electric, John Healy said that only the property managers (after consulting with their foremen and in-house electrician) are allowed to request back up services. The Executive Director Abrashkin added that all the trades, including in-house electrician and plumbers have been recently transferred under the supervision of Wallace Kisiel's Department, thus providing an extra measure for ensuring checks and balance system is in place. Chairman Thomas inquired about how emergency calls for electrical services are accepted and handled and Mr. Kisiel explained that a Property Manager takes the call, sends a mechanic to assess the problem, the mechanic will contact the electrician and, depending on nature of the problem and the in-house electrician's current workload, a decision will be made whether to call for back up services. Mr. Kisiel emphasized that having back up a contractor is very important because the in-house electrician has to take care of many health and safety related work orders that cannot be delayed. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve Contract extension to Contract No. G-2012-26-20 with Lynch Electrical Contractors for On Call Backup Electrical Services; appoint Executive Director, William H. Abrashkin as the contracting officer to execute the contract extension. The contract extension shall be for the period January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016 for a not to exceed amount of \$100,000.00 at the hourly rate \$77.50 for hours 8:00 AM-4:30 PM, \$104.75 an hour for nights and Saturdays, and \$132.00 an hour for Sundays and holidays.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to accept Proof of Loss Statement for 425 Central Street. Wallace Kisiel explained that accepting this Recommendation will formally give the Springfield Housing Authority an authorization to settle the claim and request FEMA and the City of Springfield to provide funds to re-build at least 50% of the property lost in 2011 tornado. Judge Abrashkin described this process to be another

step, one of many that the SHA has had to take, including multiple submissions and appeals to FEMA. He also praised the City about all the efforts to bring many positive changes in the area of Central Street. Judge Abrashkin indicated that he had assured the City officials that the agency will do its best to align its re-building plans with the City plans in the neighborhood. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept and sign the attached "Proof of Loss" Statement, which will allow the SHA to begin replacement activities of 425 Central Street property, subject to the review and approval of the Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD).

Attachment 1 (Proof of Loss Statement).

The Board reviewed the materials to approve revision of the SHA Assistance Animal Policy. Michelle Booth stated that the revision was prepared in order to close Voluntary Compliance Agreement. She praised the assistance and guidance she received from HUD staff members in working out the new SHA Assisted Animal Policy. Ms. Booth stated that even though the current policy, adopted in 2012, met the laws and regulations, it needed to be amended in order to make it more simple and comprehensible for the residents, especially about how they can ask for reasonable accommodation and how their request will be processed. The major change in the new Policy is that the SHA cannot deny a specific animal species or breed, only if the animal's behavior poses threat to safety of people or if a resident wants to keep an exotic animal (like alligator) which are banned in the state. Michelle Booth also indicated that the revised policy does not require a written request for an authorization to keep an assisted animal, an oral statement is sufficient. Another change eliminated a provision prohibiting assisted animal from accompanying residents in certain common areas on the property. Responding to Commissioner Quinonez's question about weight limit Michelle Booth explained that only the Pet Policy but not the Assisted Animal Policy stipulated a weight limit. In response to Commissioner Labonte's question on how the agency will be dealing with a situation when a resident needs an assisted animal who can pose a threat or cause lots of noise and other disturbance to the neighbors, Ms. Booth stated that each request for an assisted animal authorization will be evaluated on the basis of reasonableness. Commissioner Quinonez inquired whether under the new Policy residents will be still required to provide any kind of proof from a health care professional. Ms. Booth explained that the agency reserves a right to request such a documentation from a doctor, therapist or psychiatrist. Referring to Ms. Booth's statement that the new policy was supposed to meet the VCA standards, Commissioner Warren inquired if the Springfield Housing Agency was not in compliance. Michelle Booth stated that it was found to be not in compliance several years ago, when one of the staff members mistakenly applied some provisions of the Pet Policy instead of the Assisted Animal Policy thus denying a resident in reasonable accommodation. That case of 2011-2012 resulted in the need to revise the Policy and provide some training for the staff. No similar complaints have been reported since that case.

The Executive Director Abrashkin indicated that the agency has a difficult task because it has to accommodate tenants who need assistance or comfort

animals without inflicting other tenants' rights. The staff has to deal with other tenants' concerns or complaints about pets or animals on the property as well as with making sure the residents with animals are aware that their animals must be properly restrained, licensed, vaccinated and taken care of. Responding to Chairman Thomas's question Michelle Booth stated that most complaints that the staff receives is related to issues like noise, disturbance or not cleaning the pets waste. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Warren, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution # 9649 to approve the revisions to the Assistance Animal Policy and implement the new policy effective January 21, 2016.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to adopt new Fair Market Rents and Payment Standards for Section 8. Michelle Booth stated that even though the Board approved new FMR in October, the HUD published its final standards in December, increasing FMR, so the SHA now has to update its standards. Ms. Booth indicated that as per Section 8 Director Blanca Berrios's recommendation, the SHA is suggesting increasing its standards up to 98.9%. Michelle Booth explained that not increasing them up to 100% is considered to be a measure to give more room to serve as many tenants as possible. Establishing FMR at 98.9% will not require HUD's permission since it is below the 110% cap. She indicated that unfortunately the current FMRs do not give tenants many opportunities to find apartments in the areas with less poverty concentration. Answering Commissioner Warren's question she confirmed that the Section 8 tenants get utility allowance. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt the following new Fair Market Rents and Payment Standard to be effective as of December 10, 2015 through September 30, 2016

Bedroom Sizes	FMR and Payment Standards	FMR and Payment Standards
	100% Effective 10/1/15 - 9/30/16	98.9% Effective 10/1/15 - 9/30/16
0 Bedroom	633	626
1 Bedroom	803	793
2 Bedroom	1001	989
3 Bedroom	1242	1227
4 Bedroom	1461	1444
5 Bedroom	1679	1660
6 Bedroom	1930	1890

John Healy left the Conference Room at 5:10 pm.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to amend the Homeownership Program Payment methods in the Section 8 Administrative Plan. The Section 8 Participants Services Director Loleta Collins informed the Board that the current plan allows SHA to make payments to the lender on behalf of the family. Not having other payment options has presented many challenges to the lender, the SHA staff and the participants especially those who have two mortgages. Ms. Collins stated that 80% of financial institutions work through Mass Housing for which dual payments are OK, but 20% do not accept

them, so it is a challenge for those tenants who have their mortgage from one of those banks.

Ms. Collins suggested that four payment options to be included into the Admin Plan, that would allow the SHA to 1) pay the homeownership assistance payments directly to the family (eliminating the two separate payments); 2) pay the lender directly on behalf of the family; 3) make the monthly check out to the lender, but send it to the family so that the family could send both payments in the same envelope ensuring that the full monthly mortgage amount is received at the same time; 4) open a limited access account to which the family can deposit, but not withdraw - SHA and the family will be both depositing their share of the monthly mortgage payment in the account, from which the bank would be withdrawing money electronically.

Michelle Booth indicated that these new options would allow to attract more financial institutions, especially small banks which do not have a software to process two payments. Answering Commissioner Robles's question she indicated that with the limited access account the tenant will be responsible for all fines and penalties and for making sure there are sufficient funds for their mortgage payments withdrawal.

Commissioner Warren expressed his support to the recommendation that would eliminate some hurdles to this great program and provide more opportunities for all the parties involved. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt the change to the SHA Section 8 Administrative Plan for the Homeownership Program payment method to include the following options:

1. The SHA may pay the homeownership assistance payments directly to the family, eliminating the two separate payments. (on a case by case basis)
2. SHA may pay the lender directly on behalf of the family. If the assistance payment exceeds the amount due to the lender, the SHA must pay the excess directly to the family.
3. SHA can make the monthly check out to the lender, but send it to the family.
4. The SHA on behalf of the family opens a limited access account to which the family can deposit, but not withdraw. SHA and the family both deposit their share of the of the monthly mortgage payment in the account, which is then electronically swept by the lender on an agreed upon date for the monthly mortgage payment.

Mary Ellen Lowney left the Conference Room at 5:22 pm.

Judge Abrashkin invited the Board members to support to the STCC Event on February 25, 2016.

The Board reviewed and accepted the Accounts Payable and Financial Report for the month of November, 2015. In response to Commissioner Warren's

question Michele Decoteau informed that the mileage reimbursement rate decreased from 57 to 54 cents per mile and confirmed that the reimbursement is calculated based on whether an employee works for a state or federal program.

Chairman Thomas thanked the Accounting Department staff for accommodating the Board's request to make the format of Financial Reports more user-friendly.

Nicole Contois left the Conference Room at 5:26 pm.

The Board reviewed and accepted the Rental Assistance Office Report. Michelle Booth provided details about the most important items on the report, including getting 20 Alternative Housing Program Vouchers; activities within the Homeownership Program; plans to issue RFP for 4 vouchers available for the Chronically Homeless Program and 3 vouchers for the CHESSE Program; work being done to allocate MRV vouchers re-issued after the freeze was lifted by DHCD. Ms. Booth reported that the agency maintained the vouchers utilization level of 97.2% which is 2.2% more than HUD requirement. She reminded that the SHA cannot utilize 100% vouchers due to sequestration impact. Answering Chairman Thomas's question about the Homeownership Program she informed that only a few participants had left the program, one due to tornado and two more were excluded from the Section 8 program due to fraud. In response to Commissioner Warren's question Michelle Booth confirmed that all program participants are required to submit verifications for their annual / interim recertification.

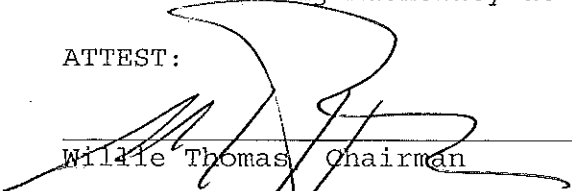
Chairman Thomas asked for the Board's consideration to enter into Executive Session. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Warren it was by a roll call vote (Warren - Aye, Thomas - Aye, Labonte - Aye, Robles - Aye, Quinonez - Aye) unanimously

VOTED: To enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation; to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to not reconvene in Open Session.

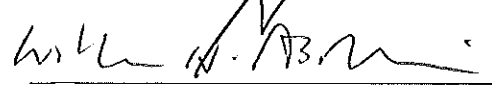
There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 5:30 PM.

ATTEST:



Willie Thomas, Chairman



William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director

SWORN STATEMENT IN PROOF OF LOSS *sworn*

AMOUNT OF POLICY AT TIME OF LOSS	PART 242 25350R-2020
DATE ISSUED	POLICY NUMBER
05/01/2010	
DATE EXPIRES	AGENCY AT
05/01/2011	AGENT

To: Housing Authority Property Insurance, A Mutual Company
 Of Chesire, CT
 At time of loss, by the above listed policy of insurance you insured Springfield Housing Authority

Against loss by All risk to the property described under schedule "A" according to the terms and conditions of this said policy and all forms, endorsements, transfers and assignments attached thereto.

1. Time and origin: Aired damage loss occurred about the hour of on the 1st day of June, 2011. The cause and origin of the said loss is storm/weather
2. Occupancy: The building described or containing the property described, was occupied at the time of the loss as follows, and for no other purpose whatever: residential
3. Title and interest: At the time of the loss the interest of your insured in the property described therein was no other person or persons had any interest therein or encumbrance thereon, except:
4. Changes: Since this said policy was issued there has been no assignment thereof, or change of interest, use, occupancy, possession, location or structure of the property described, except:
5. Total Insurance: The total amount of insurance upon the property described by this policy was, at the time of this loss, \$1, more particularly specified in the apportionment attached under schedule "C" besides which there was no policy or other contract of insurance, written or oral, void or voidable.
6. The Actual Cash Value of said property at the time of the loss was \$ 3,300,817.58
7. The Who's loss and Damage was \$ 3,255,524.21
8. Less Amount of Deductible \$ Inductly applied
9. Net Recoverable Depreciation \$
10. The Amount Covered under the above numbered policy is \$ 1,955,524.21
11. Holdback \$ 354,705.34
12. The said loss did not originate by any act, design or procurement on the part of your insured, or this affiant; nothing has been done by or with the privity or consent of your insured or this affiant to violate the conditions of the policy or render it void; no articles are mentioned herein or in annexed schedules but such as were destroyed or damaged at the time of said loss no property thereof has in any manner been concealed and no attempt to deceive the said company, as to the extent of said loss, has in any manner been made. Any other information that may be required will be furnished and considered a part of this proof.

The furnishing of this list, or the production of proofs by a representative of the above insurance company is not a waiver of any of its rights.

State of _____; County of _____

X _____ Insured

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____ 20____.

X _____ Notary Public

