

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON APRIL 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 April 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

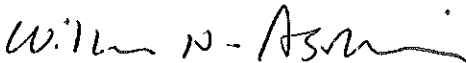
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that a regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, April 19, 2016 in the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
/s/William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director
April 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 April 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 Labonté
Jessica Quinonez
Angela Robles
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

William Abrashkin
Michelle Booth
Nicole Contois

Fidan Gousseynoff
Mary Ellen Lowney
Wallace Kisiel
JoAnn White (arrived at 4:45 pm)

The Board reviewed the Minutes of March 15, 2016. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinones it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of March 15, 2016.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to approve the materials and supplies write-off. Nicole Contois explained that at the end of each fiscal year the staff goes through the inventory of materials and supplies at all maintenance shops and the total variance made \$6,134.19, a decrease from last year's count (.60% vs last year's 1.15%). Commissioner Quinonez questioned what measured had been taken to make the decrease possible. Ms. Contois explained that last year the largest variance was for the District with new foreman and Michelle Booth worked with that foreman who did a good job over the last year thus resulting on less variance. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Material and Supplies write-off of the overage in inventory of \$6,134.19.

The reviewed the materials and a recommendation on approving the write off of Tenant Account receivables. Answering Judge Abrashkin's question Nicole Contois confirmed that writing off does not mean that the SHA staff won't be proceeding with trying to collect the debts owned by vacated tenants. She informed that there are 76 former tenants who left with a balance and the increase of the amount owed is explained by active fraud investigation and discovering through EIV new information on some tenants' income. Answering Chairman Thomas's question Ms. Contois informed that the write-off amount only includes balances left by the public housing tenants, state and federal, but not Section 8. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Warren, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the write-off of \$71,145.42 of Tenant Account Receivables for FYE 2016.

Michelle Booth presented to the Board information on the proposed Contract for Supplemental Policing Services. Ms. Booth indicated that there have not been any major changes to the old the Contract except for a potential rate increase, subject to the SPD Union negotiations. She stated that even if the overtime rate does increase, the SHA staff will be working around the approved Contract amount. Michelle Booth expressed her satisfaction with the services provided by the SPD. Commissioner Warren inquired whether there is a demand for expanding the contract and any support from the Board is required. Michelle Booth responded that the current Contract is working well and the SHA has some collaboration programs with the SPD and State Police so no there is no need to expand at this point. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Warren, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Springfield Housing Authority entering into a Contract for Supplemental Policing Services, in the amount of \$150,000 with the City Of Springfield Police Department and authorize the Executive Director William H. Abrashkin to execute the Contract. The period of the Contract is 4/1/16 - 3/31/17.

Commissioner Warren left the Conference Room at 4:43 pm.

Judge Abrashkin started the Executive Director's report by updating the Board on the reappointment of Commissioner Robles and Commissioner Quinonez. He reported that he had sent to the City of Springfield all the documents, including the letters and the list of Tenant Organizations that must be contacted as a part of the process for reappointing Resident Commissioner. Chairman Thomas reported about a recent conversation he had with Denise [Jordan, Mayor's Chief of Staff].

Commissioner Warren returned to the Conference Room at 4:44 pm.

JoAnn White entered the Conference Room at 4:45 pm.

Judge Abrashkin reported to the Board about a request from Ike Jorgensen, a maintenance employee from District A to speak to the Board about an issue of the morale of the maintenance employees, especially young ones. Executive Director Abraskin told about a two hour meeting he had with Ike to listen to his concerns for example, about old equipment the maintenance crews have to work with or why only licensed electricians are allowed to work on some work orders that the maintenance workers are capable to complete. Judge Abrashkin told about the City's regulations and restrictions on electrical work and explained how the budget for each District is prepared and how actively the managers and foremen are involved into the process. He explained to Mr. Jorgensen that the administration encourages communication between the staff and the Board and everybody is welcome to attend the Board meetings but some issues must be discussed and addressed very carefully because of the ongoing Union negotiations and Open Meeting Law. He suggested the Board members to meet with the maintenance crew and spend some time in the field and expressed his gratitude to Commissioner Labonte who indicated he would be interested. Commissioner Warren also expressed his willingness to meet with the maintenance crew to hear their feedback and suggestions.

Mary Ellen Lowney left the Conference Room at 4:54 pm.

Michelle Booth informed about two meetings scheduled in the next two weeks with District B and District E foremen which Commissioner Labonte also will be attending. Chairman Thomas indicated his support to the initiative and stated he is open to a discussion with the maintenance crew as far as it is in compliance with the Open Meeting law.

Mary Ellen Lowney returned to the Conference Room at 4:56 pm.

Judge Abrashkin continued his report by informing the Board about upcoming visit to the HUD Regional office in Boston where he and Michelle Booth will be meeting with the whole team including the Regional Director Marilyn O'Sullivan and the Division Director Maura O'Brien. The purpose of the

meeting is to present to HUD a detailed plan on a new office for the Rental Assistance Office. Judge Abrashkin informed the Board about an RFP for office space which is being prepared in case there might be any available properties apart from 90 Carew Street. Judge Abrashkin also explained that once the deal goes through it will be in the SHA interests to use the Section 8 reserves to build out the offices in order to get a lower rent because right now there are over \$3 million reserves which do not generate income. He also stated that an option to buy out the building will be included into the deal and even though at some point the HUD stated that Section 8 reserves could be used for renting but not for purchasing real estate, such a statement is not supported by any regulations. The Executive Director also reminded the Board about the plans to use the current Section 8 office space to build 4 handicap accessible apartments instead of 4 units at Central Street destroyed by tornado in 2011.

The Executive Director continued his report by presenting to the Board information from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission offering the SHA to become a part of a PILOT program through the Smart Blue Roof Technology. He explained how this new technology can resolve a problem of extreme pressure on the City's sewage system during the time of storms and thus will prevent significant volumes of raw sewage to be discharged directly into the Connecticut River because during times of heavy rain, the sewage treatment facilities can't handle big volumes of water. One way to solve this problem is to dig up the system and to install separate piping for sewage and surface runoff but this solution is very expensive. An alternative approach is to install waterproof boxes on the roofs of flat-roofed buildings, and storing the water on the roof during times of heavy precipitation, then discharging the water through a computer-controlled system of valves during drier periods. The PVPC invited the SHA to support this technology as a pilot.

Judge Abrashkin informed to the Board that he had requested the PVPC to conduct a structural engineering study to see if the technology is good for the roof at 60 Congress Street and also consider if the SHA can be provided with administrative costs to compensate the staff's time and efforts.

Answering Chairman Thomas's question he said that the rain banking system has been successfully installed in some communities but the SHA's decision will depend on the engineering report.

Commissioner Warren supported the idea but urged the staff to be very careful and review all the long-term factors like repair, service, maintenance costs, liability issues etc. Commissioner Labonte advised to conduct an independent study rather than relying on the one provided by the initiators of the project. He also questioned if the boxes will be able to hold large amounts of water if heavy precipitation lasts for several days in a row.

Judge Abrashkin continued his report by stating that the application on Marble Street disposition is still pending. Answering

Commissioner Robles's question about roofs replacement Wallace Kisiel stated that if the decision is not taken before winter the agency will be in a bad situation because the roofs at Marble Street are in a desperate need of repair.

The Executive Director provided the Board with an update on the Rental Assistance Demonstration assessment conducted by the Cambridge Housing Authority. According to their report only Moxon Apartments (52 units) could qualify for the RAD. Reed Village was close but still did not get enough points despite all the money invested during the federalization. He explained that the key factor for determining if a development qualifies for the RAD is the total development cost equation and explained how it is calculated.

Judge Abrashkin also informed the Board about contracting the Institute for Community Health for collecting and evaluating metrics for the TRS program. The procurement was conducted and the ICH rate (\$100 per hour) came the lowest. The Contract will be funded by SHA, Inc. The report was continued by informing the Board about recently released HUD Notice about changing the way the COCC funds are managed. According to the Notice all federal dollars in COCC funds are now to be subject of control and approval from HUD. It is still unclear what items have to be brought to HUD's approval and when the Board's vote will be enough.

The Board entered into a discussion on the subject of Annual Report and Consent Agenda. It was agreed that even though the Annual Report requires lot of time and effort it will be helpful for the Board to get it on the annual basis though a shorter version providing most important highlights is more desirable. Judge Abrashkin suggested sending out to the Board a list of items for the Consent Agenda and invited them to add any items they would like to get an update about. It was agreed that the Board will provide enough time for the staff to prepare the updates.

Judge Abrashkin informed the Board about promoting JoAnn White to a newly created position of the Finance Director. He explained that Michele Decoteau remains at the position of Accounting Manager. He praised the competence of Ms. White and all her efforts on taking upon more responsibilities of Mike Petro and thus reducing the SHA expenses. Judge Abrashkin and the Board members congratulated Ms. White on the promotion.

Executive Director Abrashkin also congratulated former Chairman and now Commissioner Warren on receiving an honorary degree from STCC. Mr. Warren was recognized for many years of his community service. Judge Abrashkin recognized Mr. Warren's contribution (alongside with former Chairman Babcock) into turning the agency in the direction of positive changes.

Chairman Thomas presented to the Board the DHCD Notice on March 7, 2016 and reminded about the Board certification requirements.

The Board accepted the Financial Statement and Accounts Payable report for the month of February 2016. In response to Commissioner Labonte's question about some extraordinary maintenance charges Wallace Kisiel explained that the charges were for resurfacing and recoating the parking lot at 60

Congress Street and Nicole Contois added that 57% of that expense is to be paid by PVPC. JoAnn White promised to provide the Board members with information about some lead costs charged to COCC.

The Board accepted the Communications and Community Relations report presented by Mary Ellen Lowney. She positively evaluated the media attention and told the Board to contact her in case they need copies of some articles about SHA published the Republican.

Michelle Booth presented to the Board the Public Safety & Investigative Report and explained that unusual high number of drug related crimes is an outcome of very active investigation. She informed that two families involved into gang related activities at Robinson Gardens are in the process of being evicted and are expected to moved out by the end of April. She informed the Board that the agenda item on accepting a Policy about authorizing the SHA security officers to carry mace for their protection was pulled out because Attorney Chesky needed more time to review the Policy and research all the associated safety and liability issues. Ms. Booth explained that three SHA security officers are former police officers and one is a former prison guard so they are trained to use mace and are certified to carry it which is very helpful though if the Policy is accepted all the officers will still have to go through regular training with the SPD, MSP or the Sheriff's Department. Answering Commissioner Warren's question Ms. Booth indicated there have not been any requests for tasers which, for her opinion, are beyond the security guards role to observe, contact police or other authorities. She promised to investigate on whether the SHA security personnel can be allowed to carry tasers.

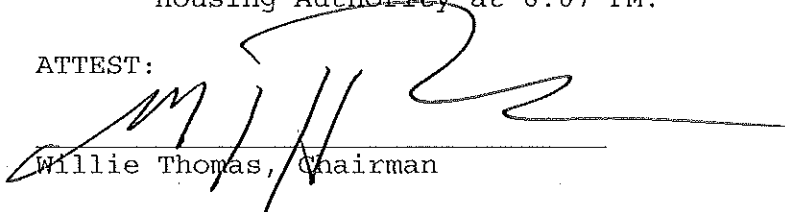
Mary Ellen Lowney left the Conference Room at 5:54 pm.


The Board accepted the quarterly Waiting List and Occupancy report presented by Michelle Booth who explained about all the efforts being done by the maintenance staff, managers and the Applications Department in order to keep the occupancy level at least at the current 98.5%.

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

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 6:07 PM.

ATTEST:


Willie Thomas, Chairman


William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director