

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

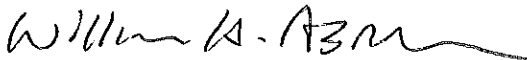
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that a regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 in the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
/s/William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director
May 13, 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 May 13, 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
Angela Robles
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

Jessica Quinonez

ALSO PRESENT

Michelle Booth
Priscilla Chesky, Atty., L&F
Nicole Contois
Christopher Curtis, PVPC
Jason Dyer

Andrew Gottlieb, Rain Bank (arrived at 4:33 pm)
Fidan Gousseynoff
Kathy Hardy
John Healy
Clifford Ike Jorgenson
Wallace Kisiel (arrived at 4:31 pm)
Michael Laprade
John Martin
Tim McCullough
Anthony Rosa
Alfred Santiago
Willie Serrano
JoAnn White

The Board reviewed the Minutes of April 19, 2016. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of April 19, 2016.

The Board reviewed the Memo regarding research about use of stun guns. The research was done following a request of Commissioner Warren at the previous Board meeting. It was decided to put on record that the follow up material, indicating that the SHA Public Safety officers are not allowed to carry stun guns, was received and reviewed by the Board.

Chairman Thomas decided to move item in the Correspondence Section before New Business and gave floor to Clifford Ike Jorgenson, Mechanic 1 from District A. Mr. Jorgenson expressed his gratitude to the Board for giving him an opportunity to speak before the Board members to express concerns about some expenditures of the Administration while the maintenance staff have to use the old trucks and equipment like snow blowers, plows etc. Ike Jorgenson indicated that most of the equipment is 15-16 years old which makes it much harder for the maintenance crews to clean the grounds, remove snow and fulfill other responsibilities. He informed the Board that there is only one truck to clean leaves which broke last year and the maintenance staff was unable to pick up leaves from last fall. He expressed his concern that without having properly working equipment it is not possible to keep the properties free of snow which is a major safety concern and can lead to tenants' injuries. He told that Richie [Daigneault] and other staff members work hard on repairing the equipment but it keeps breaking and needs to be replaced. He stated that in the past the old trucks were traded in for new ones but the current fleet has not been renewed in many years. Mr. Jorgenson stated that the maintenance was informed by the management that new equipment could not be purchased due to cuts in funding from DHCD and HUD and he expressed his concern that the cuts in funding are not reflected in the way the administration spends taxpayers money, for example, \$207 every month for watering plants in the main office, \$935 monthly for cleaning offices at Congress Street or for buying an expensive (over \$300) faucet recently installed in the Executive Director's bathroom. Ike Jorgenson also questioned why the administration out-sources some services (for example, legal services for the landscaping at Congress Street) instead of spending a third of the money they pay to the outside contractors to someone in-house. He stated that the SHA maintenance staff is capable of doing both the landscaping or cleaning as they were doing

when the main office was at Saab Court. He also questioned how it was possible that at the time of financial cuts the Executive Director's salary increased \$10,000 and Deputy Executive Directors' salary increased \$7,000 last year.

Mr. Jorgenson asked the Commissioners to meet with him (without members of administration being present) so that he could share his feedback and concerns about low morale of some staff.

Commissioner Warren questioned if there has been a discussion between the crew, foremen and managers regarding the equipment and if the management promised to work on a plan on gradual replacement the plower trucks, blowers and other equipment. Mr. Jorgenson responded that last year the maintenance crews were asked to make a wish list of the equipment that needs to be replaced but to the best of his knowledge no plan has been worked out because the staff was informed by the management that there is no budget for that. In response to Mr. Jorgenson's comment about hiring an in-house lawyer as a money saving measure Commissioner Warren indicated that this issue has been looked at in the past. He stated that the Board does not manage the agency but the opinion of the maintenance crew must be respected and the issues and concerns about sensible purchasing practice or lack of adequate equipment to manage the properties that were brought up by Mr. Jorgenson must be looked up.

In response to Commissioner Labonte's question if the issue of outdated equipment has been brought to the management's attention Mr. Jorgenson confirmed it has been but nothing has been done due to lack of money in the budget. Addressing Ike Jorgenson's comments about high expenses related to 60 Congress Street Mr. Labonte reminded that the expenses are being shared with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

Chairman Thomas stated that the Board will look into Mr. Jorgenson's concerns and will address them.

Clifford Ike Jorgenson, John Martin, Tim McCullough, Anthony Rosa, Alfred Santiago, and Willie Serrano left the Conference Room at 4:51 pm.

Chris Curtis from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission presented to the Board information about a grant their agency had received from the State Executive office of Environmental Affairs. The major goal of the grant is to find a solution on serious water pollution problem caused by combined sewer / storm water system. Mr. Curtis explained how during precipitation the water treatment plants cannot filter all the water going to the combined system and it results in Connecticut River's contamination. One of the solutions is to build water tanks on flat roofs that would hold the precipitations and then release it at the time when it is not raining. He invited the SHA to participate in a small scale demonstration project through allowing to use the roof at Congress Street for storing rain banks. He expressed his hope that the successful implementation of this innovative idea will demonstrate how this system can work efficiently on a larger scale. Andrew Gottlieb from Rain Bank provided more details on how the system will work and assured that a proper engineering study will be conducted to make sure the structural integrity of the building is not compromised. He indicated that similar projects are currently being

implemented in Philadelphia, Lawrence, New Orleans and a new project has just started in Milwaukee. He reported that they have never received any requests to cancel the project, remove rain banks and there have never been any complaints about leaks or other damage. He also indicated that the drain units to be used to control water on the roof at 60 Congress Street will be separate from the electrical and communicative wiring, they will be solar powered and backed up by a battery.

Chris Curtis explained that the Project is expected to consist of two phases. First, an extensive engineering study will be conducted to evaluate if the roof top is capable to hold 2 inches of water and if additional sealing is needed. Mr. Curtis stated that in response to the SHA's request the PVPC has agreed to add conducting an independent study to the Scope of Work. Once the results of the studies are received the Board will have a chance to review them and only after their approval the 2nd phase will start when the tanks will be fabricated and installed. Mr. Gottlieb stated that the deadline for the project was June 30, 2016 - by that time the works must be completed and the grant money to be expended.

Commissioner Labonte expressed his concern about the project being rushed without giving the Board enough time to review and evaluate it. Mr. Curtis apologized for that and explained that even though the PVPC has been involved in many other projects on resolving the problem of contaminating local rivers due to combined sewer / storm water drainage system, it was only recently when they received grant from the State for this pilot. The main reason for such a short deadline was that funds for this grant came from the FY16 budget with a term that the money must be spent before the end of fiscal year on 06/30/16. Mr. Gottlieb stated that if the Board approves the Contract they still will be able to complete the study by the end of May, then present it to the Board, fabricate the devices, install them and complete the project by the end of June.

Commissioner Warren indicated that even though he is willing to support the PVPC's initiative and develop partnership he is also concerned about the short deadline and lack of support from the SHA staff. He stated that he is not approving an idea of putting the entire building in jeopardy only because some funds are available and must be spent within a short period of time.

Wallace Kisiel suggested a possible solution for the dilemma by offering the Board to approve Executive Director's signature upon completion of independent study. In that case the Board will not need to gather for a Special meeting. Chris Curtis reminded that the Contract stipulates two phases of the project and at this point the Board only needs to approve Phase One. According to the Contract no rain banks can be installed before the study is completed, reviewed and the second phase is approved by the Board. He also emphasized that there is no financial obligation to SHA and all the expenses on the independent review will be covered by PVPC. Attorney Chesky stressed the importance of making some changes into the Contract before the Board approves it and stated the SHA must receive a new Certificate of Insurance.

Mr. Curtis stated that he is sympathetic to all the concerns about not being comfortable on authorizing the project and suggested to only

authorize conducting a study the results of which the Board members will be able to review and discuss without any rush. The study then could be used for another grant if PVCP receives it. Chairman Thomas supported the idea and promised to get back to Mr. Curtis after a discussion with Attorney Chesky and the management.

Kathy Hardy, Chris Curtis and Andrew Gottlieb left the Conference Room at 5:37 pm.

The Board reviewed materials and recommendation to approve the revised SHA parking policy presented by Michelle Booth. She explained that the only change in the Policy was proposed in order to give the tenants a clear idea that they are not allowed to use the visitors' parking spots. She also explained about special parking passes that are issued for residents requesting reasonable accommodation, for example, to allow night PCAs to park overnight on the SHA property. Answering Commissioner Labonte's question Ms. Booth confirmed that a proper signage is present at all properties so parking spots for visitors and residents are clearly marked. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution # 9663 to approve the Revised SHA Parking Policy.

John Healy presented to the Board his recommendation to award Contract for plumbing supplies to various vendors responded to the annual bid. Answering Commissioner Labonte's question about an expensive faucet bought for Judge Abrashkin according to the information presented earlier at the meeting by Mr. Jorgenson, Mr. Healy responded that he was not aware about it. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to make the following Contract award recommendations totaling \$83,313.50:

Suppliers	PO Amount	#Awarded Items
Baystate Plumbing Supply Co 15 Mill Street Springfield, MA 01108	\$2,143.30	7 items
Bender Plumbing 197 Wawarme Ave. Hartford, CT 06114	\$13,768.45	41 items
FW Webb Co. 145 Performance Blvd. Springfield, MA 01104	\$12,360.20	16 items
United Plumbing Supply 210 Hickory Street Springfield, MA 01109	\$10,025.55	34 items
Springfield Plumbing 660 Broadway St. Chicopee, MA 01104	\$45,016.30	61 items

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to approve the Section 8 Management Assessment Program Certification for FYE 3/3/16. Michelle Booth explained that this year Mike Laprade and Stephen Ethier from IT Department, Blanca Berrios and Joseph Dumpson from the RAO and Colleen Shea, an internal RAO auditor, worked together on collecting and analyzing data from 24 randomly chosen folders. The analysis revealed problems with same indicators as last year. In Rent Reasonableness Indicator three files did not have any RR forms at all and some others had forms which were not printed out with correct information due to a technical glitch which was reported to the HUD regional office. In the Housing Quality Standard Enforcement Indicator three cases did not have a proof that deficiencies noted in an inspection were cured within 30 days. In all cases a re-inspection was scheduled but did not take place because the tenants were absent so the deficiencies were not verified as cured within 30 days. In this Indicator the agency was still able to reach progress - the enforcement rate was 88% comparing to a 32.5% last year.

Ms. Booth indicated that this year's SEMAP score improved - 120 points comparing to 105 last year making the agency a Standard Performer but some measures must be taken to prevent losing points for the next year's Certification, including training on using the Go Section 8 database, monitoring re-scheduling inspections, conducting SEMAP-style random selection audits twice a year and working with the software vendor to develop means of capturing data about participants moving from high poverty to low poverty areas. Michelle Booth explained that SHA did not claim any de-concentration points or points for mandatory Family Self-Sufficiency program. Michael Laprade emphasized the importance of making sure that the Section 8 staff is aware about how much their performance and attention to small details like inputting full amounts instead of rounded numbers affect the SEMAP score. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the SHA SEMAP Certification for FYE 3/31/16 and authorize the Executive Director to sign and file the Certification with HUD prior to 5/31/16.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to approve the policy for the SHA security staff carrying and use of mace. Attorney Chesky explained that the Policy was prepared after similar policies used by other organizations (e.g. Springfield College) had been reviewed. Michelle Booth indicated that even though all current Public safety officers are trained to use mace, they all will have to go through a training with the Springfield Police Department and no mace will be issued until a new certificate is received. The maces will be kept in a locked safe in the office of Public Safety. Answering Chairman Thomas's question Ms. Booth indicated that an additional insurance was purchased with regards to using mace. In response to Commissioner Warren's question Michelle Booth said that the Public Safety staff's reaction to carrying mace is positive. They are trained to use de-escalation techniques when handling some problematic situations and people but in some cases it cannot be enough and their safety might be at jeopardy. Wallace Kisiel inquired if the maintenance staff can be allowed to carry mace and Attorney Chesky responded that it is against the Policy. If a maintenance staff member, who has a FID card and owns a mace, enters a unit and decides to protect himself in a threatening

situation he will be acting upon himself and this situation will not be covered by the SHA insurance. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Policy for Carrying and Use of Mace.

Mary Ellen Lowney left the Conference Room at 5:55 pm.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to approve the SHA Policy for handling the Wage Match information in accordance with the DHCD Notice 2016-09. Fidan Gousseynoff explained that for many years the Springfield Housing Authority has been providing the tenants with a proper notification on what is Wage Match system, how income information is being collected, how it can be used and disclosed. The staff has been having all adult members of households sign the Authorization Form (now also available in Spanish) at the time of annual or interim recertification. District Management offices with state units in their portfolio will be asked to check the tenant folders to make sure signed Authorization Forms are on file. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the SHA Policy For Handling the Wage Match Information; acknowledge receiving and understanding DHCD PH Notice 2016-09 and authorize the Executive Director William H. Abrashkin and the Board Chairman Willie Thomas to sign the Notice.

The Board accepted Accounts Payable report for the month of March 2016. JoAnn White informed that due to the closing of fiscal year Financial Statements are not available and will be submitted later.

The Board entered into a discussion regarding the issues raised by Ike Jorgenson. Commissioner Warren emphasized the importance of Judge Abrashkin and other management staff meeting with Mr. Jorgenson and other crew members to review the complaint and evaluate the need for new equipment. He stated that he is willing to know how foremen and other maintenance workers assess the situation with equipment, is it not adequate to maintain all the big properties or still can be used.

Commissioner Labonte stated that at a recent meeting with the District B foreman Jason Guyer he asked him about the morale and Mr. Guyer described it as positive. As for the equipment, the foreman stated that even though the equipment is old but still running and there is no equipment that is not being used because it is not in operable condition.

Referring to the Wish List mentioned by Mr. Jorgenson JoAnn White said that the Wish List presented by the District managers at the budget preparation meetings with Mike Petro contained mostly capital improvement related items, like boilers and there was only one request for a new truck.

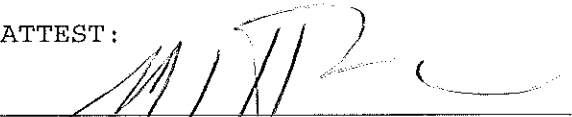
Commissioner Warren indicated that once meetings with the foremen are conducted, preferably, by the end of June, there will be a clearer picture of the needs. Chairman Thomas thanked Commissioner Labonte for volunteering to participate in those meetings and stated that if his involvement is required he would be delighted to join as well. Commissioner Robles stated

that she made a list of the concerns expressed by Ike Jorgenson so that it would be easier for the Board to address each of them.

There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, 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 6:21 PM.

ATTEST:



Willie Thomas, Chairman



William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director (based on the staff's report)