

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON AUGUST 16, 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 August 16, 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, August 16, 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
August 11, 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 August 11, 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

Stephen Ethier
Fidan Gousseynoff
John Healy
Wallace Kisiel
JoAnn White

The Board reviewed the Minutes of June 21, 2016. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of June 21, 2016.

Chairman Thomas congratulated Commissioner Robles and Commissioner Quinonez on their reappointment.

Commissioner Labonte provided his report on site visits conducted by him and Commissioner Warren in presence of Judge [Abrashkin] and Deputy Executive Directors. He reported that he found the maintenance shops to be clean and well-built, the work stations to be adequate and neat, the supply rooms to be stocked, and the grounds well maintained. There is an average of 8 maintenance employees in each District including the foremen and these little crews manage to get their jobs done. No surplus in staff was found. The maintenance staff admitted they rely on the Sheriff's crews and it is very important to continue receiving assistance from the Sheriff's Department. The foremen reported that they have good communication with their Districts staff and the management.

Mr. Labonte relayed the staff's concerns about most of the equipment (especially snow plowers and lawnmowers) and vehicles being too out-of-date. Richie [Daigneault] works hard to keep all the equipment running but it is aging quickly. Commissioner Labonte noted that a consideration should be given to standardizing all the equipment and buying commercial grade type of tools and machines. He also stated that another item the management should be reviewing is updating the present communication system which is unreliable and inefficient with the maintenance staff preferring to use their cellphones instead of old walkie-talkies. A suggestion was made to organize a training for maintenance personnel so that they would learn new skills and will be able to replace their fellow employees in case of their promotion. Mr. Labonte reported that none of the foremen found any morale problems to affect their staff performance. The biggest complaint was about not having a Union Contract. One of the District's staff was concerned about having too many vacant units due to high number of transfer requests.

Commissioner Labonte shared his opinion that the SHA's foremen are very experienced and dedicated. Commissioner Warren added that he also was impressed by the staff's talent and motivation despite high demand and the fact that properties are spread around the city that requires lot of traveling. He emphasized the importance of providing the maintenance staff with more up-to-date tools they need to do their job.

Chairman Thomas thanked Commissioners Labonte and Warren for meeting with the staff and for preparing the report which seems to address most of the concerns expressed by some maintenance employees at one of the previous Board meetings. Mr. Thomas requested the SHA staff to provide a list of all equipment owned by the Springfield Housing Authority. Wallace Kisiel

indicated that all the equipment is commercial grade and Michelle Booth promised to clarify with the foremen at the next Managers/ Foremen meeting what pieces of equipment they classify as "domestic". Executive Director Abrashkin reported that Richie Daigneault and Mike Petro will be working on determining priorities in replacing the old equipment.

The Board reviewed the materials and recommendation to approve Change Order #1 to DHCD Contract with Diversified Construction Services. John Healy explained that the Contract was for window and roof replacement at 689 scattered sites. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve Change Order #1 to Contract DHCD FISH #281105, in the amount of (\$655.00), this will decrease the amount of the Contract and the new Contract amount will be \$214,915.00, and maintain the substantial completion date at June 20, 2016.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to accept the Certificate of Final Completion for the same DHCD Contract with Diversified Construction Services. John Healy expressed his satisfaction with how the project was implemented. He informed that the job was completed in spring and accepted by the architects. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the Certificate of Final Completion from Diversified Construction Services and authorize Certification of payment in the amount of \$10,123.85 for contract DHCD FISH #281105, hereby accepting the project, effective on June 20, 2016.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve Change Order No. 1 to Contract with BG Mechanical for the abatement of asbestos insulation at Carpe Diem apartments. John Healy explained that once the contractors started replacing zone valves at Carpe Diem they had to stop their work because some insulation with asbestos started falling off. The Change Order was requested from BG Mechanical to cover the abatement of asbestos insulation and re-insulation of the domestic water pipes in the basement of 11 buildings. The Change Order was approved by DHCD. In response to Commissioner Warren's request Mr. Healy clarified that the SHA applied for additional funds from DHCD Hazmat Reserve Fund to cover the expenses on abatement and re-insulation. Answering Commissioner Quinonez's question Mr. Healy indicated that the tenants are not affected by the project since all the works are done in the basement and crawl space. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve Contract Change Order No. 1 in the amount of \$163,164.00 to Contract # 281110 with BG Mechanical Contractors Inc. making the new Contract amount \$163,164.00.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a contract for 2016 On-Call Architectural and Engineering Services. John Healy explained that every few years the SHA advertises a RFQ for architectural and engineering services. This year the scope of work included engineering services for parking lots, sidewalks, and roofs. 4 firms out of 36

responded to RFQ and the top three ranked firms for "On-Call" A&E services were selected. In response to Commissioner Warren's question about the amount of the contract Mr. Healy and Mr. Kisiel explained that the amount was included into the budget and actual costs can be less. They indicated that the RFQ did include anticipated amount and scope of work. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to award three (3) "On-Call" Architectural and Engineering Contracts with task order fees being determined on a project by project basis for a not to exceed three (3) year amount of \$450,000.00 to; Waterfield Design Group, 50 Cross Street, Winchester, MA 01890; CBI Consulting Inc. 250 Dorchester Ave., Boston, MA 02127; Reinhardt and Associates 430 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001 to provide plans, specifications, contract administration and construction supervision, for "on-call" architecture & engineering services; appoint Executive Director, William H. Abrashkin as the contracting officer authorizing him to execute the contracts; as advertised in the request for qualifications, funding to come from the Capital Grant Program, subject to the review and approval of HUD.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to authorize Board Chairman Thomas and Vice-Chairman Labonte to execute the Contracts for Units C & D. Executive Director Abrashkin indicated that it took over 2 years to come to an agreement with the Union. He provided brief explanation on the most important aspects of the Contract, including retroactive wage increases, establishing better controls over unscheduled sick time usage, raises by a certain number of cents rather than percentage. Judge Abrashkin described the Contract as an agreement providing fair balance for everybody. He informed the Board that two other units - A & B - have also recently ratified the Contracts and the Board will be requested to authorize its execution at the next meeting. Answering Chairman Thomas's question Judge Abrashkin confirmed that all the increases are included into the budget. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution # 9669 to authorize Chairman Willie Thomas and Vice-Chairman Thomas Labonte to execute the contracts for Unit C and Unit D.

Executive Director expressed his appreciation to the SHA negotiating team - Michelle Booth, Nicole Contois and Kathy Hardy - for all their efforts on achieving the agreement.

The Board reviewed materials and recommendation to accept the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Loan Agreement. Judge Abrashkin explained that this kind of loan will become a grant upon the expiration and a formal approval is required to access the CDBG funds to rebuild four of the eight tornado damaged units at Central Street Apartments. In response to Judge Abrashkin's request to provide information on the status of the project Wallace Kisiel stated that one building has been framed and another one has a foundation ready. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9670 to accept the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Loan Agreement & Affordable Housing Restrictions with the City Of Springfield, as amended by Attorney Priscilla Chesky; appoint William H. Abrashkin as the contracting officer, allowing him to execute said documents and to complete the exhibits as needed.

Executive Director Abrashkin reminded the Board 8 units from the federal portfolio were lost due to tornado. The agency filed an application for FEMA money to re-build the units; the application was denied and appealed again in November 2015. In accordance with the regulations, the second appeal was filed with MEMA, a sub-contractor of FEMA. MEMA was supposed to file the appeal with FEMA within 60 days however it was recently found out that the appeal was lost at MEMA and never filed with FEMA. The SHA has requested to waive the deadline and accept the second appeal to review SHA's position that the SHA cannot be held responsible for the subsequent damage to the building because the contractors could not perform any work there due to safety concerns and the building was demolished by the City.

With the Board's permission Judge Abrashkin turned floor to Stephen Ethier who provided an update on the desktop virtualization project. Mr. Ethier informed that the project is moving along - the IT & Purchasing Department have been working together to issue a RFQ which will be published next month and it is expected that by the beginning of October a partner will be chosen to install the computer virtualized system. The IT Director also provided information about another project the SHA is involved in - ConnectHome. Mr. Ethier explained that this pilot project initiated by HUD is not funded by the Department so the SHA is working together with the City, school systems, libraries, colleges and other entities in the community to produce solutions for providing low income families with access to digital world. The SHA and its ConnectHome partners are negotiating with Comcast if they could offer affordable Internet services to the SHA residents. Stephen Ethier completed his update by informing the Board that an RFP for new Software to be issued soon. He reminded that the current software used in all departments except for Section 8 goes back to 1976. A new software would allow to simplify many tasks, will make work faster and more efficient, will provide a better access to metrics data, and even will give an opportunity to better track employees' performance.

Michelle Booth informed the Board that the agency is planning to collect data on how many SHA households have computers and then reach out to some vendors and charities asking to donate some used or refurbished devices.

Executive Director Abrashkin added that even though Internet access provides so many opportunities for families and especially for kids, it also can bring a lot of harm through cyberbullying, cybercrime, identity theft and other type of abuse so the SHA shall be considering educating its residents on how to protect themselves. Ms. Booth added that the SHA is considering creating a peer network so that a group of parents who received a special training would be educating other parents and their children on how to prevent becoming a victim of Internet crimes.

Judge Abrashkin continued his report by informing the Board that Attorney Arch Battista, a long-time friend of the SHA and a partner at Lyon & Fitzpatrick passed away at the age 70.

Judge Abrashkin informed the Board about a call from the Governor's office and that he was happy to report to the Governor's office that the SHA Board meetings always have a quorum and only rarely the attendance is not at 100%.

Judge Abrashkin continued his report by notifying the Board that 1) it is expected that HUD office is going to approve the Marble Street Disposition application; 2) the project on Carew Street is moving along and more comprehensive report will be provided to the Board soon; 3) the SHA received two checks in the amount of \$10,000 each from the District Attorney's Forfeiture Fund and from another charity - the SHA is considering opening a position of Youth Engagement Coordinator at Reed Village and the \$20,000 will be used for that position; 4) the earmark for TRS was renewed in the amount of \$75,000 and another \$50,000 was received from the Springfield Collaborative Fund - this will allow to continue paying wages of the TRS coordinators.

The Executive Director Abrashkin and Michelle Booth provided information that HR Manager Kathy Hardy graciously offered to expand her responsibilities and in addition to serving as an ADA Coordinator for employees she, together with Marieli Roman, now will be working with tenants as a Compliance Coordinator. Ms. Hardy and Ms. Roman will be investigating discrimination complaints and requests for reasonable accommodation to make sure the agency is in compliance with Fair Housing and ADA laws and regulations. A special database on reasonable accommodation requests will be created and Ms. Hardy together with the Deputies Executive Director will be working on ensuring the requests are processed on a timely manner by the District managers and all the necessary measures are undertaken to satisfy the requests (e.g., a proper equipment is installed or required modifications to an apartment are completed). Ms. Booth notified that Ms. Hardy and Ms. Roman will be attending a training from Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination as well as other training program on Fair Housing. Ms. Booth also stated that Ms. Hardy together with Rosa Lebron will be reviewing discrimination complaints.

Ms. Booth informed the Board that many staff members recently attended a very interesting and informative training from the Mass Commission for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing and the SHA is currently working with the MCAD to schedule two trainings - for general staff and for the supervisors.

On the Correspondence the Board reviewed a Letter from HUD regarding the Departmental Enforcement Center's Snapshot Review; information about Pension payment history; Robinson Gardens Community Garden newsletter and a letter from HUD Regional Office about an informal management visit on 6/9/16. In response to Commissioner Warren's question Judge Abrashkin and JoAnn White provided brief explanation on the SHA's contribution to the Retirement Fund. Ms. White stated that each employee with salary under \$35,000 contributes 9% from each paycheck, employees with salary over \$35,000 contribute an additional 2% and the SHA contributes \$2.1 million annually.

The Board reviewed and accepted the Accounts payable report for May 2016, financial statements for FYE March 2016 and Financial Report for May 2016. Judge Abrashkin informed that if any Board member has questions or needs a clarification about the statements and reports Ms. White would be glad to offer one-to one meeting or training. Commissioner Warren expressed his concern about depleting reserves. Judge Abrashkin confirmed that the underfunding is pretty significant and even though the agency is currently in a stable condition, if the situation does not change it will be in a very bad shape in two years.

JoAnn White stated that during meetings with the managers and foremen the importance of proper controlling expenditures and not going over the budget was emphasized.

Chairman Thomas left the Conference Room at 6:03 pm.

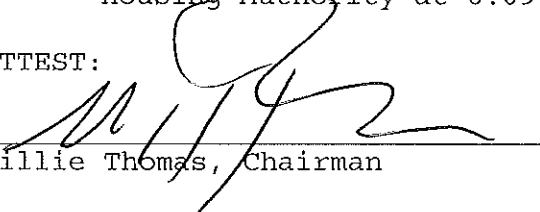
The Board accepted the Public Safety, Occupancy and Waiting List report. Michelle Booth provided information on the tornado units replacement plan.

Chairman Thomas returned to the Conference Room at 6:06 pm.

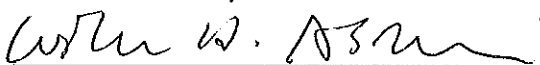
There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 6:09 PM.

ATTEST:



Willie Thomas, Chairman



William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director

