

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
- OPEN SESSION -  
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
HELD ON NOVEMBER 15, 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 November 15, 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

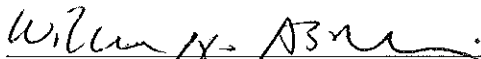
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that a regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, November 15, 2016 in the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
/s/William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director  
November 10, 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 November 10, 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

Thomas Labonte  
Jessica Quinonez  
Angela Robles  
Willie Thomas  
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

William Abrashkin  
Michelle Booth  
Craig Brown, Doherty Wallace Pillsbury

Sean Cahillane  
Siobhan Cauley (arrived at 4:58 pm)  
Priscilla Chesky, Lyon & Fitzpatrick  
Nicole Contois (arrived at 5:04 pm)  
Stephen Ethier  
Fidan Gousseynoff  
John Healy  
Wallace Kisiel  
Keith McBrien, GDS Associates Inc.  
Jay Minkarah, DevelopSpringfield  
JoAnn White

Chairman Thomas entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session and return to the Open Session. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez, it was by a roll call vote (Thomas - Aye, Labonte - Aye, Robles - Aye, Quinonez - Aye, Warren - Aye) unanimously

VOTED: to enter into Executive Session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and return to the Open Session

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 5:46 pm. The Board reviewed the Minutes of October 18, 2016. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was by majority vote (Commissioners Thomas and Warren abstained)

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of October 18, 2016.

By Executive Director Abrashkin's request Chairman Thomas moved item E-7 to the top of New Business. Nicole Contois introduced Keith McBrien from GDS Associates, Inc., a company hired as a consultant in 2015 when HUD came out with a new regulation that allow PHAs to enter into energy savings contracts. The new regulations allow PHAs to keep 50% of the savings on utilities costs. Ms. Contois explained that before that HUD was reimbursing for utility expenditures so if the SHA would be saving on utility costs it would be getting less utility allowance from HUD. Once the new regulations were published the SHA started getting many offers from different energy companies which were hard to navigate so an RFP was issued and GDS Associates was hired to assist with evaluating different proposals and finding best energy saving options. Ms. Contois stated that the agency already entered into an electric contract and now is asking for the Board's authorization to enter into a gas contract. Nicole Contois emphasized that the exact amount of the Contract is unknown because cost per term keeps changing all the time but the total amount will be higher than \$25,000. Mr. McBrien provided information about his company and explained how the SHA, was able to get the current rate (56 cent per term as per 11/11/16). He indicated that the gas prices have been dropping recently but are expected to go up in winter. He recommended locking the rates for a year and stated that based on the 4 year consumption history it is expected that the agency will save about \$50,000 a year. Answering Executive Director Abrashkin's question he stated that the Contract cannot be extended in one year on the same terms because the gas company would not agree to lock the current rate

for more than one year. Answering Commissioner Robles's question Keith McBrien stated that the SHA did compare rates for one, two and three year contract and found the one year contract to be most beneficial. In response to Chairman Thomas's question Nicole Contois explained how utility costs reimbursement works on DHCD side. Answering Commissioner Warren's question Wallace Kisiel stated that about 75% of all SHA properties are heated by gas. Nicole Contois asked to take out the rate portion of the recommendation. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED to authorize the Springfield Housing Authority to enter into a Contract with Direct Energy for one year effective 12/1/2016 to supply natural gas and authorize Executive Director William H. Abrashkin to sign the Contract.

Stephen Ethier entered the Conference Room at 5:46 pm. Keith McBrien left the Conference Room at 5:49 pm.

Stephen Ethier provided an update on the mainframe server project. He stated that only one response was received to RFQ issued earlier in order to find a partner to complete desktop virtualization project. Is it planned to re-issue RFQ again in December.

John Healy entered the Conference Room at 6:00 pm. Stephen Ethier left the Conference Room at 6:01 pm

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to accept DHCD Positions and Compensation Form for FYE 3/31/16. Nicole Contois explained that it is a DHCD requirement that the form is signed by all Board members. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED to authorize the Board Members and Executive Director William H. Abrashkin to sign the DHCD Certification Of Salary And Compensation "Top Five" Form.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a Contract for cleaning services at 60 Congress Street to T&S LLC. John Healy provided information about the bid, indicated that the new annual contract amount is \$330 more than the current contract expiring soon. He stated that all the references for T&S LLC are very positive. Referring to the presentation of an SHA employee at one of previous Board meetings, Commissioner Warren inquired if any consideration was given to SHA employees willing to compete for an opportunity to provide cleaning services at 60 Congress Street. Mr. Healy responded that the management did discuss that opportunity and the major concern was what would happen if a staff member who will be chosen to provide these services is out sick or takes a day off. He explained that there have been issues with the current cleaning crew attendance which caused so much trouble to the staff and brought so much criticism from the management of Pioneer Valley Planning Commission because apart from cleaning the SHA offices the vendor is also responsible for cleaning restrooms and common areas on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Mr. Healy also stated that the new Contract allows SHA to cancel it any time so the SHA management can go back to

that discussion about hiring SHA staff member(s). Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to award a three (3) year contract in the amount of \$34,650.00, pending funding availability, to T&S Professional Cleaning Service Inc, Westfield, MA. This contract will be paid for utilizing funds from the Central Office Cost Center (COCC); appoint Executive Director, William H. Abrashkin as the contracting officer authorizing him to execute the contract.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a Contract for relocation advisory services for Marble Street residents to Housing Opportunities Unlimited. John Healy provided information on the bid and Michelle Booth added that Chapter 76 A of the State law requires hiring a consultant for relocation services. Ms. Booth informed the Board that she has received excellent references from Boston Housing Authority, District of Columbia Housing Authority and Newark Housing Authority to whom Housing Opportunities Unlimited provided similar services. BHA had several projects with this vendor and praised their job. In response to Commissioner Warren's question Michelle Booth provided information on what kind of services will be provided by HOU, including advising on final relocation plan DHCD has to sign off, overseeing SHA work with Marble Street tenants, attending sessions held by SHA staff with the tenants, and assisting with connecting residents with relocation services. Answering Judge Abrashkin's question Ms. Booth confirmed that the funding will come from the proceeds from the sale of Marble Street Apartments. Judge Abrashkin also inquired about the timeline for relocation and Ms. Booth explained that it might take up to the end of June to complete the process because many tenants will be entering private market for the 1<sup>st</sup> time and many have to go through financial literacy classes and credit repair process. In response to Commissioner Warren's question about what form of guarantee for vouchers is available Ms. Booth indicated that HUD has sent an official approval letter. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez, it was unanimously

VOTED: to award a contract to Housing Opportunities Unlimited, 50 Redfield Street, Boston, MA, in the amount of \$34,875.00, for relocation advisory services to relocate residents at Marble Street Apartments, utilizing operating funds; appoint Executive Director, William H. Abrashkin as the contracting officer authorizing him to execute the contract.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to accept the Certificate of Final Completion from BG Mechanical for zone valve replacement at Carpe Diem and Forest Park Apartments. John Healy informed the Board that the punch list has been completed, all the valves are working good. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the Certificate of Final Completion from BG Mechanical Contractors for Fish # 281110, hereby accepting the Project, effective on November 1, 2016.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve Purchasing Policy revision. John Healy reminded that earlier this year the Policy was revised to reflect changes in federal procurement regulations. This time a new revision is required in order to be in accordance with new procurement regulations issued by the State on 11/7/2016. It is recommended to amend the SHA Procurement Policy to increase the small purchase procedures limit to solicit quotation from \$25,000 to \$50,000 to match statutory change. Mr. Healy also indicated that according to new regulations the SHA is required to post requests for proposals at Commbuys in order to attract more vendors. In response to Commissioner Warren's question Mr. Healy and Mr. Kisiel confirmed that the agency will still follow the SHA's procurement policy that requires all purchases over \$25,000 to be approved by the Board even if those purchases will be procured differently now. Mr. Healy indicated that the agency still will be soliciting for better price but new regulations will allow SHA to get at least three quotes instead of sealed bids thus simplifying procurement process for purchases less \$50,000 instead of \$25,000. It will also save money on advertising of bid proposals. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution 9676 to amend the attached Procurement Policy to reflect the highlighted changes that have been presented.

John Healy left the Conference Room at 6:24 pm.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to enter into a Contract for a loan with the Regional Employment Board to fund the TRS Outreach Coordinator Position. Judge Abrashkin explained that the loan will allow to keep Lynn Cimino as a TRS outreach coordinator. He reminded the Board that DHCD is still holding the money for earmark in case there are will be 9C Cuts: In response to Wallace Kisiel's inquiry Judge Abrashkin confirmed that since the SHA is entering into a loan and not a Contract with the REB, this matter is not subject to the Procurement procedures. Answering Commissioner Robles's question Finance Director JoAnn White explained why it is easier to pay for this position through COCC rather than SHA, Inc. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to authorize Executive Director to enter into a contract for a loan in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 with the Regional Employment Board Of Hampden County, Inc., in order to fund the Talk/Read/Succeed! Outreach Coordinator Position through the end of FY '17. Funds to come from the COCC and to be reimbursed by the REB upon release by DHCD of funds for Talk/Read/Succeed! included in the state budget.

Judge Abrashkin stated that SHA will continue contacting DHCD and state legislature representatives to expedite release of funds for TRS.

Commissioner Warren left the Conference Room at 6:32 pm.

Executive Director Abrashkin started his report by providing an update on the work being done by the Institute for Community Health to provide evaluation and metrics for TRS program. Judge Abrashkin informed that they are close to the completion of elogic model.

Commissioner Warren returned to the Conference Room at 6:33 pm.

Judge Abrashkin continued his report by informing the Board about an upcoming meeting with former Secretary of Education Reville. Mr. Abrashkin stated that he met with Mr. Reville 6-7 years ago when he was presenting a keynote speech on Public Housing and Public Education at Umass. Judge Abrashkin contacted Mr. Reville in 2016 to discuss issues of early education for children age 0-3 for which no state budget is provided and former Secretary of Education and now a professor at Harvard School of Education agreed to meet. The meeting scheduled for 11/29/16 will also be attended by Superintendent Warwick, just retired STCC President Ira Ribenzhal, Sean Cahillane and Colleen Jones from the Center for Budget & Policy in Boston.

Judge Abrashkin provided an update on ConnectHome program and informed about recent visit from HUD Regional Boston. He informed the Board that despite all the work done with the tenants and other agencies it was decided to put this program on hold due to lack of money to buy the equipment and provide Internet connection. Commissioner Warren praised all the efforts done on this project.

The Board was informed that the 2016 Holiday Party has been scheduled for 12/21/16 at Theodore's.

By Executive Director Abrashkin's request Nicole Contois provided information about winter preparedness plan.

In response to Chairman Thomas's question to provide an update on the equipment list Judge Abrashkin stated that all the equipment has been assessed and all items found to be in working condition. Richie [Daigneault] came up with the order of priorities to determine what equipment needs to be replaced first however at this point it was decided not to buy any new equipment and advise the AMPs to look into their expenditures. Mr. Abrashkin emphasized the importance of the Districts finding cost saving measures (for example, reducing over-time) that would allow to buy new equipment. Referring to the list of 5 Top Paid Employees distributed to the Board earlier Executive Director indicated that one of the highest paid employees was a foreman who earned over \$27,000 for over-time. Answering Commissioner Labonte's question if the problem has been addressed with the manager of the District and any measures have been undertaken to prevent such a big over-time. JoAnn White stated that that situation has been discussed with the foreman and the manager and Michelle Booth added that the management did look into what was behind the problem and a plan worked out to prevent problems in the future, including providing preventative maintenance measures (especially for boilers), making the procedures for responding to emergency calls more efficient and less costly.

The Board reviewed an email from the HUD Regional Office regarding tornado units replacement and a Notice from DHCD regarding Performance Management Review Launch.

The Board accepted Accounts payable report and Financial Report for September 2016. JoAnn White commented that all the AMPs except for three are operating under the budget with expenses being low than projected and there has been some progress in managing the finances better comparing to previous periods.

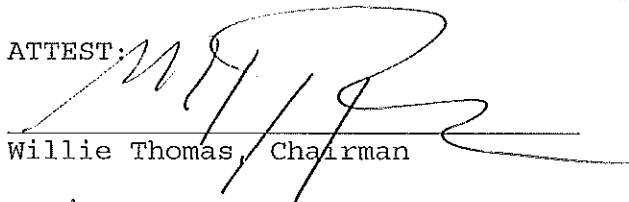
The Board accepted the quarterly Waiting List, Occupancy, and Public Safety report. Commissioner Warren expressed his concern that the SPD is not providing arrest reports anymore. The Board accepted the Rental Assistance report Michelle Booth suggested inviting [RAO Director] Blanca [Berrios] and some of her staff members to provide more information about the work of Section 8.

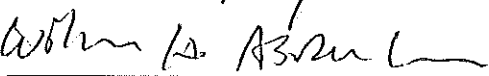
Chairman Thomas asked the Board to confirm the date of a Special meeting. It was decided to schedule it for 11/22/2016.

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 Quinonez, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 7:11 PM.

ATTEST:

  
Willie Thomas, Chairman

  
William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director

Attachment 1

Revised Procurement Policy