

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING  
- OPEN SESSION -  
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2017

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 September 26, 2017.

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 special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, September 26, 2017 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  
September 22, 2017

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 September 22, 2017 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

Priscilla Chesky, Lyon & Fitzpatrick  
Fidan Gousseynoff  
Kathy Hardy  
Mark Dorsey

Marilyn Felix (arrived at 4:33 pm)

The Board entered into a discussion regarding the process of hiring new executive director. Chairman Thomas confirmed that all Board members have received the binder with copies of DHCD regulations and other documents. Mr. Thomas shared information about his experience as the executive director of South Hadley Housing Authority and West Springfield Housing Authority and stated that when hiring new ED both his former employers used services of a consultant who was providing services like preparing marketing plan, reviewing applications and selecting applicants to be consequently interviewed by the Board.

He invited the Board members to share their opinion about using a consultant for hiring new SHA Executive Director. Commissioners Labonte and Quinonez supported the idea stating that it would better serve the interests of the agency. Commissioner Warren also supported the idea emphasizing the importance of having a consultant familiar with the DHCD regulations regarding hiring Executive Director. He stated that consultant is needed to market the position, collect and evaluate applications and process all the paperwork.

Chairman Thomas asked the Board to express their vision of on what level the search for new executive director shall be - local, regional or national. Commissioner Robles suggested that it has to be on at least regional level. Commissioner Warren stated marketing of the position through agencies like Mass NAHRO would allow to distribute information about the position availability to adjacent states as well and it is advisable to use publications of those agencies. Chairman Thomas stated that even if the agency decides to solicit the position on the regional level there will be no restrictions for candidates from other regions to apply.

Chairman Thomas reported that he had contacted Mass NAHRO to get a listing of consultants. He has spoken to two of them and both expressed interest in working for the SHA. He suggested that Human Resources Kathy Hardy and Attorney Chesky review the proposed draft of the Scope of Work and will provide a final version of the Scope of Work and a list of other consultants to the Board.

Commissioner Warren indicated that without knowing the range of costs of a consultant it is hard to determine what the process of hiring a consultant will be. He emphasized the importance of making sure that the consultant clearly understands that the Board wants to see in the new executive director - a strong leader rather than a bureaucratic chief, someone with strong analytical skills who understands the mission and demonstrates integrity and trust.

Attorney Chesky advised to involve the Procurement manager John Healy into the process of hiring a consultant to make sure the agency meets all the procurement requirements and guidelines. She stated Mr. Healy would obtain some quotes and will determine if issuing RFP is required.

Chairman Thomas suggested establishing a Selection Committee that would review all the candidates selected by the consultant and once there are three candidates the Board will be interviewing them. He stated that Commissioners Warren and Quinonez have agreed to participate in the Selection Committee.

Referring to DHCD PHN 2016-41, that contains requirements and recommendations to include residents to the process of hiring new executive director, Mr. Thomas indicated that the Board shall review involving representatives of Tenant Councils. He was informed that there are four Resident Councils - at Saab Court, Riverview, Jennie Lane and Gentile Apartments. He stated that the Board has to determine how many members of each Councils must be involved. Mr. Thomas also stated that it needs to be determined whether Commissioner Quinonez will be representing the Board or the residents in the Committee.

Attorney Chesky stated that when a consultant is hired, he/she might be able to advise on this subject to make sure the DHCD guidelines are met.

Commissioner Warren commented that the selection committee representatives must be familiar with all the challenges and problems the agency is dealing with on a daily basis. He suggested publishing on the web-site some documents such as the latest Audit report, the Executive Director's Annual Report, the presentation from Casterline about financial situation. It would demonstrate that the agency is transparent and would give the candidates a more clear picture of the agency and the challenges of the job they are applying for.

Mark Dorsey left the Conference Room at 5:20 pm.

Chairman Thomas emphasized the importance of updating the Job Description.

The Board discussed the projected timeline that includes hiring a consultant by November, then marketing the position and conducting interviews in January.

Marilyn Felix left the Conference Room at 5:26 pm.

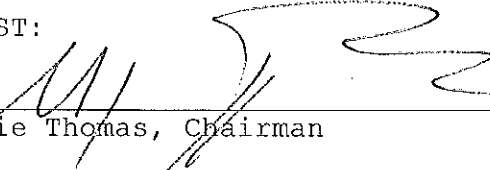
It was decided that Priscilla Chesky and Kathy Hardy will meet on Wednesday, September 27<sup>th</sup> to review the Scope of Work and Commissioner Warren will join them.


The Board agreed to meet in a Special meeting on October 10<sup>th</sup> to continue the discussion regarding hiring new Executive Director.

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 Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the Open Session of a Special Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 5:31 PM.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Willie Thomas, Chairman

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

