

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON OCTOBER 10, 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 October 10, 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

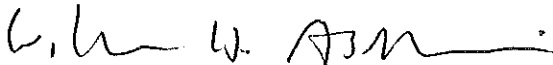
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that a special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, October 10, 2017 in the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
/s/William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director
October 5, 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 October 5, 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
Willie Thomas
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

Angela Robles

ALSO PRESENT

Priscilla Chesky, Lyon & Fitzpatrick
Fidan Gousseynoff
Kathy Hardy

The Board reviewed the Minutes of September 19, 2017. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of September 19, 2017.

The Board reviewed the Minutes of September 26, 2017. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of September 26, 2017.

The Board entered into a discussion regarding the process of hiring a new executive director. Chairman Thomas expressed his gratitude to Attorney Chesky, Kathy Hardy and Commissioner Warren for reviewing the Scope of Work and compiling a list of potential candidates for consultant position. Mr. Thomas asked Commissioner Warren to share information about a conversation two of them had earlier with regards to the Scope of Work and Job description.

Chairman Thomas left the Conference Room at 4:40 pm and returned to the Conference Room at 4:41 pm.

Commissioner Warren indicated that, to his opinion, the Scope of Work still needs some improvement, for example, instead of a classified advertisement it should require a marketing plan (use of web-sites, professional associations etc.). He also stated that even though it is important to comply with the DHCD requirements for hiring a new Executive Director, he was concerned about the very defensive language regarding DHCD requirements in the suggested Scope of Work. Mr. Warren also noted that the Scope of Work did not provide clear information about background check and a verification process of the resumes.

Commissioner Warren continued by sharing information about an announcement that appeared in Mass NAHRO web publication about an opening for the Executive Director position at the Falls River Housing Authority. Mr. Warren stated he liked the language of the announcement and the assessment of the FRHA that provides a clear picture of the Authority's background, its vision of what they are anticipating from a new Executive Director and what are their challenges. Mr. Warren shared information about a phone conversation he has had with a member of the staff of the Umass Center [for Public Management] who emphasized the importance of working with a Screening committee to consist of two Board members, staff members or other representative of housing industry, and a counsellor. The Board does not get the resumes, partially because the documents presented to the Board must be available for public review and some applicants might not want it. The Umass consultants review the resumes, do assessments and profiling and then recommend a few people to the Screening committee which subsequently recommends most qualified candidates for interviewing by the Board.

Commissioner Warren expressed his confidence in this agency, that provides searches primarily for town managers, city managers, high public administration positions and not exclusively or predominantly for public housing authorities. Mr. Warren found this agency to be very experienced in recruiting, screening, evaluating and managing the process of hiring new executive directors. Mr. Warren was informed that a representative of the Center is available to meet with the Board to provide more information at no obligation to the SHA.

Chairman Thomas thanked Commissioner Warren for his input and agreed to include Umass Center for Public Management to the list of consultants to be considered by the Board. He inquired if Attorney Chesky and Ms. Hardy are

familiar with other agencies on the list of consultants. Ms. Chesky responded that Joe Schiff from Schiff Group was providing services to the SHA with its Marble Street demolition/ disposition application; Andrew Daniels from New Haven submitted a proposal to Holyoke Housing Authority when they were hiring a new director 8 years ago and TAG Associates also worked with SHA during the federalization process. Chairman Thomas indicated that he is familiar with the work of Leo Dauwer who has an excellent track of record and is a recognized consultant at national level.

Attorney Chesky asked Commissioner Warren if he was aware whether Umass use services of graduate students and whether Umass Amherst provided the same services as Umass Boston suggesting it might reduce the cost of services due to proximity of Amherst to Springfield. Commissioner Warren responded that he knows that they do not use services of students but he was not aware if Umass in Amherst was offering executive recruitment services. Mr. Warren promised to get in touch with them to find out. Attorney Chesky stated that she was impressed by the assessment provided the Umass Center for the Fall Rivers Housing Authority. Commissioner Warren stated that the assessment is based on the conversations they had had with the staff, Board, resident councils to make sure they understand what are the issues the hiring housing authority have to face and what the Board wants from a new director to address those issues.

Chairman Thomas suggested contacting all the consultants on the list prepared by Kathy Hardy and Priscilla Chesky plus the agency recommended by Commissioner Warren to provide the Scope of Work and request them to provide a proposal.

Commissioner Warren suggested that instead of sending out the Scope of Work, the SHA would contact the candidates from the list of consultants to ask them to do a presentation for the Board about their services, their approach to the recruitment process and their costs. This would give an opportunity for more open conversation not limited by the language in the Scope of Work.

Commissioner Quinonez emphasized the importance of contacting as many consultants as possible to get more quotes and specifics about services offered by them. Commissioner Labonte inquired if there is a budget for this item and whether it has to be determined before the Board starts looking for a consultant. Chairman Thomas responded that there is no budget yet and the DHCD guidelines must be reviewed to get an idea about some latitude for budget limits for this type of project.

Commissioner Warren noted that the Board is responsible for hiring a new director and it is a big and complicated job and the value is really high. He indicated that he expects the cost of services to be between \$10,000 and \$20,000 and there are enough reserves to pay for this important project.

Attorney Chesky suggested amending the Scope of Work to reflect some of the suggestions by Commissioner Warren and sending it to as many consultants as possible to request them to provide their plan and vision on hiring a new director; once all the proposals are received they can be invited to meet with the Board. Ms. Chesky stated that once the Scope of Service is approved John Healy can issue a RFP by the end of the week. The Board will review the proposals, references and quotes and taking into account the character of the job the SHA is not obliged to accept the lowest bid but

choose a consultant who seems to be most qualified. Ms. Chesky also indicated that it is important that the Board determines the evaluation criteria and decides what factors shall be taken into consideration to compare the candidates - experience, location, knowledge, expertise, years in business etc.

Commissioner Warren emphasized the importance of getting some kind of assessment, similar to the one prepared by Umass for the Falls River Housing Authority. He said he would like to know what is the responding consultants experience, what is their approach to the process of hiring a new executive director, how they envision their work with the SHA, what support they are planning to provide to the Screening Committee and the appointing authority in selecting a candidate, what is their marketing plan, and what assistance will be provided to make sure the SHA is in compliance with the state regulations.

In response to Commissioner Labonte's question regarding one of the sections of the Scope of Work, Attorney Chesky provided information on how she thinks the vendors will be attracting qualified applicants who may be hesitant to submit an application generated by an advertised position.

In response to Commissioner Warren's comments regarding some points of the Scope of Work being unclear, Ms. Chesky and Ms. Hardy suggested to review it and present a revised version at the next Board meeting. It was also agreed that the Job Description will be revised once a consultant is hired.

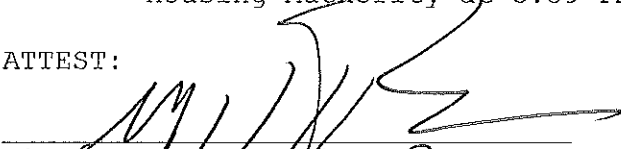
The Board reviewed some parts of the DHCD Summary of Qualifications, specifically what factors shall be taken into consideration when determining the salary and what is the Board's position on evaluating candidates experience versus education. Priscilla Chesky suggested that these issues will be discussed after a consultant is hired since he/she may provide some guidance on this matter.

Commissioner Warren underlined the significance of the task for the Board that needs to make a right decision in choosing a right candidate to make sure the agency continues moving in a right direction.

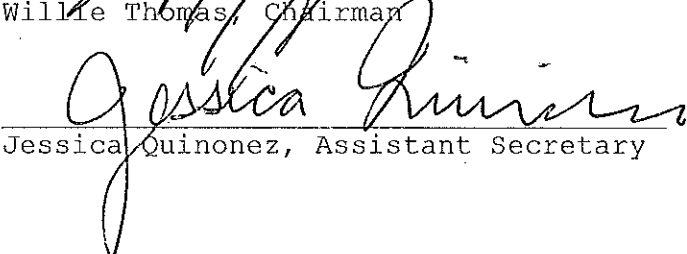
There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the Open Session of a Special Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 5:39 PM.

ATTEST:



Willie Thomas, Chairman



Jessica Quinonez, Assistant Secretary