

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING  
- OPEN SESSION -  
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 19th, 2023

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 and with Zoom video conference option for public access at 4:00 PM on September 19th, 2023.

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

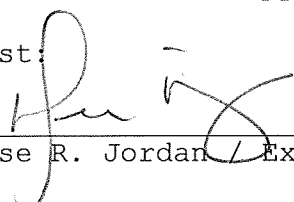
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that the Annual Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:00 PM on Tuesday, September 19th, 2023 via Zoom video conference call for public access and at the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress St., Springfield, Massachusetts.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
/s/Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director  
September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

CERTIFICATE AS TO SERVICE OF THE NOTICE OF MEETING

I, Denise R. Jordan, the duly appointed and qualified Secretary of the Springfield Housing Authority, do hereby certify that on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 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:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Denise R. Jordan / Executive Director / Secretary to the Board

Chairman Labonte called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM, and those present upon roll call were as follows:

PRESENT

Thomas Labonte  
Jessica Quinones  
Angela Robles  
Willie Thomas (arrived at 4:03 pm)  
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

Fidan Gousseynoff  
Austin Harris  
John Healy (arrived at 4:07 pm)  
Denise Jordan

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Matthew Rogers

The Board reviewed the Minutes of August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. With no questions or comments and upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez and following a board roll call, it was by unanimously (Commissioner Thomas absent at the time of voting)

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The Board moved to the 1st item of the New Business - Election of Officers. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez and following a board roll call, it was by unanimously (Commissioner Thomas absent at the time of voting)

VOTED: to nominate Thomas Labonte as the Chair of the Springfield Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez and following a board roll call, it was by unanimously (Commissioner Thomas absent at the time of voting)

VOTED: to nominate Angela Robles as the Vice-Chair of the Springfield Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Thomas entered the Conference Room at 4:03 pm.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Labonte and following a board roll call, it was by unanimously

VOTED: to nominate Raymond Warren as the Treasurer of the Springfield Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Warren and following a board roll call, it was by unanimously

VOTED: to nominate Jessica Quinonez as the Assistant Secretary of the Springfield Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners.

Executive Director Denise Jordan presented to the Board the SHA's Annual Report that was prepared with input from all Department heads. Commissioner Thomas thanked the SHA staff for their work on the report.

Deputy Executive Director John Healy entered the Conference Room at 4:07 pm.

In response to Commissioner Thomas's comment and Commissioner Warren's question, Ms. Jordan confirmed that hiring and retaining staff, rent collection as well as software transition are the most challenging issues that the agency is dealing with. Denise Jordan praised the work of the IT Department on all their hard work on addressing the software issues, training the staff and providing daily support to the agency. Commissioner Warren commented that it would be good to include to the report an update on the status of the building at 60 Congress Street.

Rental Assistance Manager Matthew Rogers presented information about new Utility Allowances. He explained that the SHA has conducted a review using energy consumption data compiled and calculated by Happy Software. The scheduled allowances include allowance for heat, electricity, cooking etc. and vary depending on types of a unit. He reminded that the allowances included to the rent calculation.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez and following a roll call, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9784 to approve the Summary Allowance for Tenant-furnished utilities and other services prepared by Happy Software.

The Board reviewed the materials and a recommendation to adopt new Fair Market Rents. Mr. Rogers explained that the new rents will go to effect October 1<sup>st</sup> and will apply to situations when a tenant moves-in or when a landlord requests a rent increase. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question, Mr. Rogers stated that some participants do experience trouble finding an affordable apartment and end up having their vouchers expire but lack of affordable units is not the only reason why some participants are unable to move in - for example, some applicants do not pass the background check. He explained that with the rents being at 120%, the SHA currently is able to compete with Wayfinders which traditionally had their FMR at 120% comparing to SHA's 110% and their new rents will go into effect only in March of next year. Deputy Kane clarified that the SHA is currently offering payment standards at 120% because of a waiver authorized by HUD due to COVID. In response to Commissioner Warren and Chairman Labonte's questions, Matthew Rogers confirmed that rents are increasing rapidly due to the overall cost of living, utilities increase as well as the increase in the cost of materials and repairs for landlords. He said that for some small programs, the payment standards are at 100% and it is really hard to find housing. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question, Executive Director Jordan stated that rent control initiatives are just on the stage of proposals and the SHA is following HUD's instructions.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Robles and following a roll call, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9785 to adopt the following new Fair Market Rents and Payment Standards effective 10/01/2023 - 09/30/2024.

<b>Bedroom Sizes</b>	<b>NEWFMR2023 100% Effective 10/1/2023- 9/30/2024</b>	<b>2023 Payment Standards 110% Effective 10/01/23 - 9/30/24</b>
0 Bedroom	934	1027
1 Bedroom	1115	1226
2Bedroom	1375	1512
3 Bedroom	1669	1863
4Bedroom	1954	2153
5Bedroom	2247	2472
6Bedroom	2540	2830

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to accept the Certificate of final completion from Larochelle Construction presented by Deputy Healy. He informed the Board that all punch-list items are done, the project is closed and the SHA is receiving a credit.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez and following a roll call, it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the Certificate of Final Completion from Larochelle Construction, for the Roof Replacement project at Morris School II (667-2) here by accepting the project as complete and release the final payment.

Denise Jordan presented her Executive Director's report, including information about attending the Western Massachusetts Housing Authority Executive Directors' meeting; meeting with Property Managers and Attorney Chesky to discuss any issues they were dealing with, with the most pressing one being non-payment of rent; attending the Nan McKay HOTMA (Housing Opportunity Through Modernization) Conference together with Deputy Kane to learn about new changes coming to HUD's rental assistance programs and public housing. Ms. Jordan notified the Board that, by an invitation from Senator Gomez, SHA hosted a roundtable discussion with the Senate Chair of the Joint Commission on Housing at Robinson Gardens. The lack of affordable housing, homelessness, and lack of funding for capital improvements were the hot topics.


Executive Director Jordan reported about the audit that was conducted last week and that she will be starting her regular annual meetings with the staff of each Department in October. She completed her report by notifying about the situation with the water main break on SHA property behind Jennie Lane which is being handled by DPW and also about the lead abatement project at Duggan Apartments. Deputy Healy provided a brief overview of the project implementation.

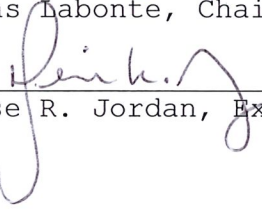
The Board accepted the Accounts Payable report for the month of August.

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 Robles, and following a board roll call, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the Open Session of the Annual Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 4:33 PM.

ATTEST:

  
Thomas Labonte, Chairman

  
Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director