

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
- OPEN SESSION -  
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
HELD ON MAY 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024

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 4:00 PM on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

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

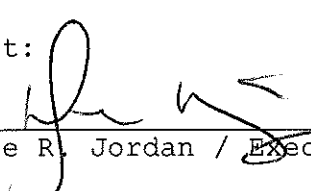
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that a regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:00 PM on Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 at the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress St., Springfield, Massachusetts.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
/s/Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director  
May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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 May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 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  
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

Priscilla Chesky (attended by Zoom)  
Fidan Gousseynoff  
Denise Jordan  
Austin Harris

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John Healy  
Nicole Kane  
Britt Ruhe

The Board reviewed the Minutes of May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024. With no questions or comments and upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez and following a board roll call, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Britt Ruhe from Commonwealth Murals provided brief information about her organization, the mural project funding and the artist. She explained that the proposed concept is supposed to celebrate Springfield's history with a basketball themed design and will represent the South End Community. Commissioner Warren inquired why Gentile Apartments building was chosen for the project and Ms. Ruhe explained that her organization has been working with the City's Department of Planning and Economic Development and the west wall of the building was proposed for the project because of its visibility from the highway. The idea was supported by the Mayor's office and was discussed at the meeting with the SHA Executive Director Jordan and Gentile residents. Ms. Jordan reminded that the project was first proposed for Riverview, then for Gentile and its implementation has been delayed due to the artist not being available and after that, due to COVID. She stated that when the project was discussed, the SHA emphasized the importance of having a concept that would reflect the history of the community and she expressed her opinion that the suggested design does not represent the heritage and community of the South End or the people who live in the building, for example, veterans, seniors, persons with disabilities. Ms. Ruhe explained that the proposed design was made with the notion that it will be visible from I-91 and it might be hard to replace it with a design with many small details and pictures of a lot of people. In response to Ms. Ruhe's note that the demographics of the South End has been changing in the last decade, Ms. Jordan expressed her hope that the artist would be able to come with a concept that would reflect the Italian heritage as well as Puerto-Rican culture and the community as a whole.

Ms. Ruhe stated that a new concept will be developed and brought to the Board for approval. Chairman Labonte stressed the importance of making sure the Executive Director is involved in every step of the project.

In response to Chairman Labonte's question, Ms. Jordan confirmed that the final concept will have to be approved by the Board.

Finance Director Austin Harris presented the next item on the agenda. He explained that adopting the top 5 Compensation Form is a state requirement. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles and following a roll call, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9797 to accept and submit to Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities the Springfield Housing Authority's Top 5 Compensation Form for FY2024.

Austin Harris presented information about the SHA operating budget - a product of the work done by the SHA Finance and Executive team and Marcum LLP. In response to Commissioner Warren's inquiry, he explained briefly how the numbers are calculated. He stated that the fee accountant works with a lot of housing authorities and evaluates a lot of SHA data and market data to project budgets. Mr. Harris stated that the overall budget looks good and there have not been a lot of major changes. He confirmed that the presented budget includes salaries and benefits cost that went into effect on 4/1/2024. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question, he confirmed that the Executive Director's salary is approved by the Board, some salaries are negotiated with the Union and some are approved by the management.

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

VOTED to adopt Resolution #9798 to approve the Springfield Housing Authority's operating budget for FY2025.

Commissioner Thomas provided brief information on the next item on the agenda. He stated that for 4 years that he has represented SHA at the Community Preservation Committee, a lot of work has been done and he would like to continue serving. He explained that due to the recent changes, current members of the Committee are now allowed to be re-appointed for 3 more years.

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

VOTED: to appoint Commissioner Willie Thomas to serve as a member of the Springfield Community Preservation Committee.

Executive Director Denise Jordan started her Executive Director's report by expressing gratitude to the IT Team for bringing the server and all systems back in order. All three members of the team stepped up, worked really hard, coordinated efforts with Yardi, the cyber security firm, staff, wired up all laptops, helped to resolve phone issues and rebuilt all systems. Ms. Jordan also thanked Austin Harris and the Finance Department, the RAO management team, deputies Kane and Healy, the HR Director and other staff members for continuing servicing SHA clients with limited resources and computer access.

Director Jordan continued her report by informing the Board about a successful NSpire inspection at Katheryne Jones Apartments - the SHA scored 88 points which is a big progress when comparing to the previous score of 44. She explained that it was the 1<sup>st</sup> inspection under the new system and five more are expected to be done by the fall. Ms. Jordan relayed the compliments shared by Congressman Neal about how well the grounds at Reed Village are kept thanks to the hard work of the crew lead by foreman Eddie Morales.

Ms. Jordan reported about Deputy Healy's meeting with the Foremen and Trades in preparation for the spring /summer season and equipment readiness.

Ms. Jordan informed that SHA was mentioned as a supporter and recipient of the services that will be provided to the community by the new AIC Financial Literacy Center on State Street. The SHA has been awarded 75 trees for Robinson Gardens from the State and City's joint forestry program. Director Jordan completed her report by providing an update on the RFP process for new software. She explained that a committee comprised of 9 staff members has been established and is looking through the proposals. In response to Commissioner Warren's question, Deputy Healy provided information about the bidders.

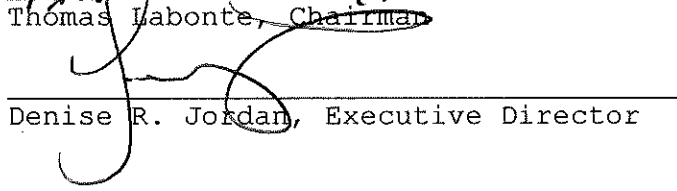
The Board accepted the Accounts Payable report for the month of April.

There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Robles, and following a board roll call, it was unanimously

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

ATTEST:

  
Thomas LaBonte, Chairman

  
Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director