

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON MAY 29th, 2025

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 29th, 2025.

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 29th, 2025 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 27th, 2025

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 25th, 2025, 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 Quinonez
Angela Robles
Willie Thomas (arrived at 4:10 pm)
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

Prsicilla Chesky
Betty Evans
Fidan Gousseynoff
Austin Harris
John Healy
Denise Jordan
Nicole Kane

Matthew Rogers

The Board reviewed the Minutes of April 29th, 2025. With no questions or comments and upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Warren and following a board roll call, it was by a majority vote (Commissioner Robles abstained; Commissioner Thomas absent at the time voting took place)

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of April 29th, 2025.

The 1st item on the agenda was the Updated HCVP Administrative Plan hearing scheduled for 4 pm. There were no attendees and the Board closed the hearing and moved to the next item on the agenda presented by Deputy Executive Director Nicole Kane who explained that the updated Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan is a product of the several months work done by the RAO staff, including Betty Evans, Matthew Rogers, and Sara Rivera. Ms. Kane expressed her gratitude for all their hard work and the guidance from General Counsel Chesky. The Plan was updated in order to bring SHA in compliance with all current regulations and to address and correct the findings identified by HUD. Ms. Kane added that the rent calculation element of HOTMA that was supposed to go into effect on July 1st, had to be put on hold until HUD obtains a certain piece of software.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9835 to approve the updated Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan effective June 1st, 2025.

The Board reviewed materials and recommendation to accept the SHA's Section Eight Management Assessment Program certification. This item was presented by the RAO Matthew Rogers who stated that the score of 130 is a big improvement in comparison to previous year and it makes the SHA a high performer. In response to Commissioner Robles's question, Mr. Rogers explained that Indicator 10 was for certification process and even though the results were much better this year and show a lot of improvement, SHA still could not score the required 5 points even though was very close to it. In response to Commissioner Warren's questions, RAO Manager Rogers and Deputy Kane explained that the score is a combination of self-grading and what HUD had provided and even though normally it's not subject to further review from HUD, due to the current designation as a troubled agency, HUD can potentially question or audit it.

Commissioner Thomas entered the Conference Room at 4:10 pm.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Robles and following a roll call, it was by a majority vote (Commissioner Thomas abstained)

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9836 to approve the Section Eight Management Assessment (SEMAP) Certification for the fiscal year ending 3/31/25 and authorized the Executive Director to execute the certification and file it with HUD.

HR Director and Executive Department Manager Fidan Gousseynoff presented the next item on the agenda. She explained that there are currently 20 employees with access to the state income verification system Wagematch. Employees are required by the State to periodically review and certify compliance with the EOHLIC requirements for accessing and using the data to ensure protection of confidential information as well as to prevent accessing anyone's information without obtaining authorization. All 20 users have recently reviewed the notices related to using WageMatch and certified their compliance with the signed acknowledgement forms on file.

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

VOTED: to certify that the Springfield Housing Authority is in compliance with laws and regulations regarding utilizing Wage Match System and authorizes the Executive Director Denise R. Jordan and the Board Chairman Thomas Labonte to sign the Attachment A - *Executive Director/Board Approval Regarding Wage Match, V3.*

Betty Evans and Matthew Rogers left the Conference Room at 4:13 pm.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a contract for cleaning services at the Rental Assistance Office. Deputy Executive Director John Healy explained that it's the same vendor as SHA has been using in the last years. In response to Commissioner Robles's question, Mr. Healy said that the quality of services provided by Environmental Control has been pretty satisfactory and they were addressing all issues. In addressing Commissioner Thomas's question, Deputy Healy stated that the total contract cost might be less than the last one but cost per year will be more because the contract is being renewed for only 2 years this time due to lease's expiration in 2027.

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

VOTED: to Award a Two (2) Year contract to Environment Control of 15 Benton Drive, East Longmeadow, MA in the amount of Twenty-Six Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety-Six Dollars. This contract will be paid for utilizing funds from the Rental Assistance Office budget; appoint Executive Director, Denise R. Jordan as the Contracting Officer authorizing her to execute the contract.

A Section 8 landlord joined the meeting via Zoom at 4:14 pm.

Deputy Healy presented the next item on the agenda by explaining that SHA soon will be implementing a project of installing hard wired fire alarm systems funded by the state money. Majority of SHA developments have Notifier fire alarm equipment and SHA is looking into purchasing same brand equipment to assist in repairs and replacements and also due to having parts in stock. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question, Mr. Healy clarified that no bid for new equipment has been issued yet - in accordance with EOHLIC requirements, proprietary specification solicitation must be approved by the Board. If the Board approves it, the bid will specify that SHA is looking for Notifier equipment.

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

VOTED: to approve the public solicitation of a "proprietary specification" for the ARPA targeted fire alarm installation project.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve submitting to the state the revised budget certifications. Director of Finance Austin Harris explained that the budget that submitted earlier was reverted by EOHLIC due to recent changes in the ED salary and some unit changes.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #98367 to approve the submission to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities of the revised state budget certification for fiscal year ending 3/31/2026 for the following programs: 400-1, 689-C, and MRVP.

Finance Director Harris presented the next item on the agenda and explained that normally, Board votes on writing off tenant account receivables annually, but SHA has not been able to add this item to the agenda in the past 3 years due to some discrepancies between the reports and general ledger caused by software issues. Now with the new software and more confidence in submitting accurate numbers, SHA is looking to write off all inactive tenant rent owed. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question, Mr. Harris said that writing off TAR is not required but it is advisable. Commissioner Warren inquired about how the agency is addressing the high balance issue. Deputy Kane responded that most of those high balances are due to fraud, unreported income and also eviction moratorium during COVID. SHA has been addressing nonpayment of rent diligently by bringing them to court and getting evicted. The 77% of rent collection that Commissioner Warren questioned was for the state Section 8 program which has a limited number of units - the percentage for other programs is higher. Executive Director Jordan added that as an agency serving needs of low-income people, SHA uses various resources to try to resolve the issue. Attorney Chesky stated that there are currently 200 active court cases for SHA for both non-payment and cause. In response to Commissioner Warren's question, Denise Jordan and Nicole Kane stated that high rent balances is not a subject of criticism from HUD, and it is reflected in the performance review that efforts are made to address this issue. Attorney Chesky added that the Financial Literacy Advisor Jeimer Parrilla has been actively working with tenants to help them to improve their financial situation and reduce rent delinquency. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question, Executive Director Jordan confirmed that SHA provides assistance to residents with applying for RAFTA. In response to Chairman Labonte's question, Ms. Chesky told about mediation process and payment agreements.

The landlord who appeared at the meeting after the Administrative Plan hearing was closed tried to make a remark about a matter that was not related to the Admin Plan topic. She was not recognized by the Board due to the fact that the hearing was closed at the time she joined the meeting and the matter she was planning to discuss was not a part of the Admin Plan hearing.

The landlord left the Conference Room at 4:38 pm.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #98368 to approve FYE2025 Public Housing and State Tenant Accounts receivable write off.

Finance Director presented the FYE2025 year end certifications and asked the Board to approve them. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Thomas and following a roll call, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #98369 to approve FYE2025 EOHLIC Year End Certifications.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to authorize purchasing a new van. Deputy Healy explained that the process of renewing SHA fleet is nearing its end. This vehicle will be used at several developments, including Reed Village, Pine James and scattered sites. It will be equipped with shelves to store supplies/ materials. In response to Chairman Labonte's question, Mr. Healy said that the new van is available but customizing will take a couple of weeks.

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

VOTED: to award a contract to Marcotte Ford of 1025 Main Street Holyoke, MA to purchase a 2025 Transit 250 Van with shelving/storage upfit for Fifty-Three Thousand One Hundred Thirty Dollars. (\$53,130.00).

Denise Jordan started her Executive Director's report by informing the Board that SHA is finishing all the correction action reports for HUD and EOHLIC. The vote taken by the Board and the signed form will allow to submit everything on time. Ms. Jordan stated that it is becoming increasingly difficult to manage some items without getting quick guidance and responses from HUD and EOHLIC when needed. Ms. Jordan continued her report by informing that she is now representing SHA on a new task force spearheaded by SPS, a National Public Safety Partnership. Ms. Jordan reported about attending Mass. NAHRO Federal Housing Roundtables. She also told about an invitation to participate in a podcast to talk about impact of recent events on Section 8 program and that she had to reject the invitation due to the lack of information supplied by HUD on the matter.

Ms. Jordan reported about the meeting with the Resident Services staff and Vitra Health to discuss services for elderly support services. The report was continued by informing about the CPR training for the SHA Maintenance Staff. Ms. Jordan informed the Board that SHA received notices about NSPIRE inspections for the properties that were supposed to be exempt due to the previous high score and has been trying to get assistance from HUD to get this matter resolved.

Ms. Jordan completed her report by informing about the Staff Appreciation day on May 16th.

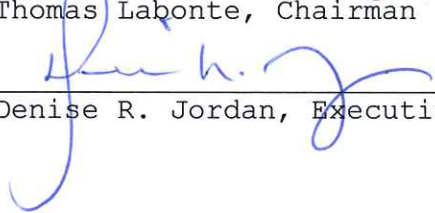
The Board accepted the Occupancy Report, Waitlist Report, Work Order Report Rent Collection report and AP Report. Commissioner Warren expressed his gratitude for providing helpful information.

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 Quinonez, 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 4:54 PM.

ATTEST:


Thomas Labonte, Chairman


Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director