

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON NOVEMBER 18, 2014

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 4:32 PM on November 18, 2014.

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 4:30 PM on Tuesday, November 18, 2014 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
November 13, 2014

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 November 13, 2014 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

Vice-Chairman Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM, and those present upon roll call were as follows:

PRESENT

Willie Thomas
Thomas Labonte
Angela Robles
Jessica Quinonez

ABSENT

Raymond Warren

ALSO PRESENT

William Abrashkin
Michelle Booth
Nicole Contois
Howard Coro

Mary Ellen Lowney
Fidan Gousseynoff
Wallace Kisiel

The Board reviewed the Minutes of October 21, 2014. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of October 21, 2014.

The Board reviewed the Minutes of November 10, 2014. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was by a majority vote (Commissioner Quinonez abstained)

VOTED: To approve the minutes of November 10, 2014.

The SHA'S Capital Improvement Project Coordinator Howard Coro presented to the Board a report and sketches on abutter at Janie Lane Apartments. He informed about long-term plans of the developer, Tom Bretta, who has been the owner of the property since 2010. The developer is currently selling lots for houses construction right next to Janie Lane Apartments. There are currently 39 lots left for sale and it is expected that the construction work on that property will last for the next 2-3 years. Mr. Coro indicated that part of the SHA's fence intrudes on his territory (6 feet on one part of the fence and 38 on another) and some of the objects that are owned by the SHA, including a light pole, clothes line, parking lot, and gasoline tank storage area, are on the developer's territory as well. Answering Commissioner Thomas's question Mr. Coro and Deputy Executive Director Wallace Kisiel explained that no information on how the fence and other objects ended up on that territory is available since the fence was put about 30 years ago. Referring to the term adverse possession, Executive Director Abrashkin indicated that the SHA may have a legal right to claim that territory but the agency is willing to negotiate with the current owner. Mr. Kisiel explained what the options are and how each one of them may affect the Springfield Housing Authority's residents and visitors, especially if the fence is moved and there will be no space left for the visitors' parking. Mr. Abrashkin emphasized the importance of having some space allocated for the visitors parking, especially to accommodate parking needs of visiting nurses and personal care attendants. Deputy Executive Director Michelle Booth suggested checking the number of parking stickers allocated to the tenants every year to see if any spaces at the resident parking may be allocated for the visitors' parking.

The Board reviewed the materials and recommendation regarding awarding a Contract for lead paint abatement to Mecho Contracting, Inc. Mr. Kisiel described it as a major step in meeting the requirements of the EPA and HUD as stipulated in the Special Environmental Project.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez, it was unanimously

VOTED: To award a contract to Mecho Contracting, Inc., 225 Broadway, STE 208, Methuen, MA 01844, in the amount of \$76,200.00, to abate lead based paint according to the SEP agreement TSCA-01-2012-0078, at Duggan Apartments, Robinson Gardens and Ashley/Gerrish Court, utilizing funds from each AMP's "contract cost" budget line items; appoint Executive Director William H. Abrashkin as the Contracting Officer authorizing him to execute the contract, subject to the review and approval of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Board reviewed the materials on Change Order # 1 to Contract #G-2014-3-1 in conjunction to create six handicap accessible units at Riverview Apartments. Wallace Kisiel presented to the Board some pictures and provided detailed explanation on each proposed change order, including credits on some work and extra charges for cellar asbestos, chase demolition, bathroom ceilings, carpentry works, flooring in hallways, and exterior site work. He explained that most of the changes were caused by some flaws in the work of the architect and engineer or by the damage caused during asbestos abatement. Answering Judge Abrashkin's question on the situation with the VCA compliance, Mr. Kisiel described further plans on converting more units into handicap accessible apartments, which would bring the agency in compliance.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve Change Order #1 to Contract #G-2014-3-1, in the amount of \$29,305.29 from Inglewood Development Corporation making the new contract amount \$1,256,166.29, and extend the Substantial Completion date by 45 days to 9 January, 2015, subject to the review and approval of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Board reviewed the materials and recommendation on awarding a contract for on call mechanical services, including plumbing and HVAC. Wallace Kisiel provided information on the bid, indicating that only two responses were received, one company was determined as a non - responsible contractor based on the past experience. The company to be awarded the contract - BG Mechanical- has been used by the SHA in the past and the feedback was always positive, though their services are pricey. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously.

VOTED: To award a Contract for on call Backup Mechanical Services to BG Mechanical. The contract is for three years with up to two additional one year terms for a maximum five year contract.

The Board reviewed a recommendation to award a contract to R.A.C. Builders for renovations associated with structural work at two units at Sullivan Apartments. Mr. Kisiel provided an explanation on why this item had to be added to the agenda at the very last moment and stated that due to the fact that R.A.C. Builders's performance with other projects they had done for the SHA has been always satisfactory, the agency decided to expedite the due diligence process and present this

recommendation to the Board without a delay. Vice-Chairman Thomas also provided a positive feedback on the contractors' work. Mr. Wallace described the nature of the problem stating that initially the walls in the kitchen and bathroom were not framed properly. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Labonte, it was unanimously

VOTED: To award a Contract to R.A.C. Builders Inc. of Agawam, MA, in the amount of \$69,690.00 for renovations associated with structural work at two units at Sullivan Apartments, utilizing operating funds; appoint Executive Director William H. Abrashkin as the Contracting Officer authorizing him to execute the contract.

William Abrashkin started his Executive Director's report with an update on fundraising activities for the Talk/Read/Succeed! Program. He informed about the plans on utilizing some funds discovered at the SHA, Inc. account for the program purposes. He also informed that a 3rd article on the TRS program will be published in the NAHRO magazine in December and that after a year of attempts a phone call with HUD official has been scheduled for 11/21/14 to discuss a possibility of getting funds for the program from the Department. He also informed about a mini-contract signed with Beverly Santicola who will be assisting the Springfield Housing Authority with grant applications. Mr. Abrashkin also reminded that the SHA and Head Start have been accepted to a training program in December which is organized by the Children's Investment Fund, an agency that funds building educational centers.

Vice-Chairman Thomas reminded the Board about a fundraising through FL. Roberts.

Howard Coro left the Conference Room at 5:38 pm.

The Board reviewed and accepted Financial Statements and Accounts Payable report for the month of September. Executive Director Abrashkin commented that information in the statements is hard to understand and he has been holding many discussions with the Finance team on how to make the statements more user friendly, especially for the managers, who have to rely on their experience on how to manage the assets in their districts. Deputy Executive Director Nicole Contois answered Vice-Chairman Thomas's and Mr. Abrashkin 's questions on the financial statement of 400c project, explaining that the numbers in question were associated with federalization.

The Board reviewed and accepted the Public Safety report. Deputy Executive Director Michelle Booth informed about 30% decrease in crime for District E, which can be explained by increased police presence and lease enforcement by the new Deputy Manager. She told about an incident at Pine Street when a female resident was robbed and informed that the Resident Services Department and District office will be working with the victim to provide some assistance. She also informed that the Police Department is seeking SHA's assistance in providing some funding for the Shotspotter system.

The Board reviewed and accepted the Rental Assistance Office report. Ms. Booth indicated that the 54 Massachusetts Rental Vouchers that were frozen for 6 years, have been unfrozen by the state 54, and the Rental Assistance Department is working on allocating those vouchers. She also informed that a new Assistant Director of RAO, Libby Hernandez, who has a great experience in Section 8 homeownership and family self-sufficiency programs. Ms. Booth also shared with the Board that the RAO staff has completed the Nan McKay cross-training that will improve the case management, customer service and will bring much more efficiency into the work of the whole department.

The Board reviewed and accepted the Occupancy Waiting List. Michelle Booth indicated that in August the agency faced an unusual high number of vacancies - more than 50 units vs regular 30-32, which was a huge challenge for the maintenance staff who had to work very hard to turn the units back for renting. She stated, that even despite such a situation, the agency maintained its occupancy level at 98% thus satisfying the HUD's requirement of having at least 97% of occupancy level. Ms. Booth also explained that due to extensive repairs some units at the Scattered Sites have been vacant for a long time. Another factor that contributes to the occupancy level is that some units are being treated for mold and asbestos removal and even though it is a lengthy and costly process, HUD does not authorize putting those units off-line anymore. Ms. Booth also indicated that a delay in turning units from vacant into occupied has been caused also by the fact that many applicants did not pass the screening.

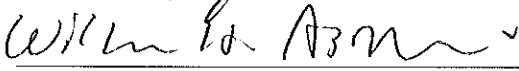
Michelle Booth also provided to the Board a report on the plans of the owner of the lot in front of Jenny Lane Apartments to build a 4 store office building and a parking lot there. As per General Counsel Chesky, the zoning will allow the owner to build up to the property line but such a construction will require a public hearing so the SHA will have to encourage the residents to attend the hearing to express their concern that constructing such a tall building right in front of the development will create too much shadow and traffic.

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

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 6:08 PM.

ATTEST:


Willie Thomas, Vice-Chairman


William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director

