

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON NOVEMBER 21, 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 November 21, 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 regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:30 PM on Tuesday, November 21, 2017 in the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY

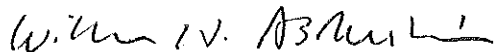
/s/William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director

November 17, 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 November 17, 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
Angela Robles
Willie Thomas
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

Michelle Booth (arrived at 4:33 pm)
Priscilla Chesky, Lyon & Fitzpatrick (arrived at 4:38 pm)
Nicole Contois
Fidan Gousseynoff
Kathy Hardy
John Healy (arrived at 4:31 pm)

Keith McBrien, GDS Associates
Timothy Murphy, Timothy Murphy Architects (arrived at 4:31 pm)
Autumn Snyder, GDS Associates
JoAnn White

The Board reviewed the Minutes of October 17, 2017. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the Minutes of October 17, 2017.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a contract to Inglewood Development Corporation in the amount of \$418,227 for unit renovation and roof replacement at Ashley Gerrish. John Healy introduced Timothy Murphy from Timothy Murphy Architects who provided brief comparative analysis of the project and other similar projects at Riverview high rise building (renovations cost per unit \$188,093) and Riverview Low Rise apartments (renovation cost per unit \$248,020). Mr. Murphy stated that the cost to renovate apartment at Gerrish Court is \$17,847 more than per unit cost at Riverview High Rise building and \$42,080 less than per unit cost at Riverview Low Rise building. Mr. Murphy indicated that the project cost at Gerrish Court Apartments also includes \$58,750 for roof replacement at the entire building, allowances of \$75,000 for miscellaneous and ornamental iron and \$30,000 for painting.

In response to Commissioner Warren's inquiry to provide more details about what the projects entails, Mr. Murphy explained that the project includes demolishing the kitchen and bathroom, replacing the windows, doors, plumbing, electrical and heating system in the unit as well as creating accessible egress. Commissioner expressed his concern about the high cost of the project and questioned if it would be more cost wise to make some other unit handicap accessible. John Healy explained that due to elevation problems in most developments picking some other unit would involve more expenses. Chairman Thomas questioned if the SHA staff has conducted a comparative analysis of would it cost to renovate units at different developments. Mr. Healy responded that making estimates for different developments will cost extra money. Mr. Murphy explained that HUD requires all handicapped units have two accessible means of egress and before choosing apartment [104 at 9 Gerrish Court] his firm and the SHA staff had reviewed all units on the first floor at Ashley Gerrish development to see what would be an easiest unit to renovate taking into consideration elevation concerns and egress requirements.

Answering Commissioner Labonte's question Mr. Healy confirmed that after getting a bid for any project the staff reviews proposed costs with the architect, taking into consideration technical specifications, market costs and considering if there is an opportunity to re-design or change the scope of work to save money. In response to Chairman Thomas's question John Healy stated that the project does not need to be reviewed or approved by HUD however HUD will review if the SHA is in compliance with the Voluntary Compliance Agreement. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to award a contract to the lowest most responsive bidder, Inglewood Development Corporation, 123 Dwight Road Longmeadow, Ma, 01106, in the amount of four hundred eighteen thousand two hundred twenty

seven thousand dollars (\$418,227.00) to renovate one unit and replace the roof at Ashley Gerrish Apartments; appoint Executive Director, William H. Abrashkin as the contracting officer authorizing him to execute the contract. Source of funding will come from the capital fund 2014, 2015, and 2017.

John Healy and Timothy Murphy left the Conference Room at 4:54 pm.

Chairman Thomas suggested moving to item D-4. Mr. Thomas stated that the Board members including himself are concerned about entering into a solar net metering agreement as this is a 20 years commitment and the benefits for the agency will not be substantial, especially in the first several years. Judge Abrashkin indicated that the staff recommends not entering into a solar metering agreement and not issuing a RFP. Nicole Contois added that Keith McBrien also supports this recommendation.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to enter into a contract with Direct Energy to supply natural gas. Keith McBrien explained that the SHA has to enter into a new agreement for gas supply each year. He indicated that at the last Board meeting he predicted the estimated savings would be \$68,000 and now due to the price drop the savings are estimated to be at \$76,000 annually. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: to authorize the SHA to enter into a contract with Direct Energy for one year effective 12/1/17 to supply natural gas at the pre negotiated rate of \$5.150/dekatherm.

Keith McBrien left the Conference Room at 5:03 pm.

John Healy entered the Conference Room at 5:03 pm.

Mr. Healy provided an update on the matter of 258 Shadybrook Lane project explaining that the project is still on hold and pending a decision from DHCD.

Michelle Booth presented an update on provisions for providing support to the victims of federally declared major disasters. She informed the Board that currently there are 28 applicants who are preliminary eligible for a natural disaster preference and 38 Section 8 voucher holders (37 from Puerto Rico and one from Virgin Islands). 38 applications are in the process of being screened for preliminary eligibility for the preference. In general the SHA has received less applications for housing assistance than anticipated. According to the District managers, tenants at only two Districts (D & E) reported that family members relocated from the areas affected by the hurricanes are staying with them and no guests have been reported by Section 8 participants though it is possible that some tenants and voucher holders have not informed that they have guests staying with them. Ms. Booth indicated that the managers do not consider tracking information about the guests to be burdensome. Michelle Booth reminded that even though the SHA does allow its tenants and participants to provide shelter for their families evacuating from the disaster area, all the visitors will have to provide a proof that they have to relocate due to a disaster, pass CORI check and the SHA has to make sure that the units

where the evacuees are staying are in compliance with the state sanitary code.

Ms. Booth reminded that the SHA has a preference for victims of natural disasters in its state (mandated by DHCD) and federal (adopted a provision in 2005) waiting list but in order to accommodate interests of those people who have been on the waiting list for a long time, it is recommended that Board considers whether the SHA shall alternate housing two victims of natural disasters and one applicant from regular waiting list. She explained that most people who have been on the waiting list for many years spend more than 50% of their income to pay their rent and utilities. Commissioner Labonte suggested changing the 2:1 ratio to 1:1 to make it more fair for those people who are not victims of a disaster but who also endure hardship. The suggestion was supported by other Board members.

Commissioner Warren questioned whether there is a coordinated effort in assisting the victims of the disasters and if other housing authorities have started undertaking any measures to accommodate their needs. Michelle Booth responded that there is still no guidance from HUD and DHCD; Holyoke Housing Authority is the only local housing authority that has amended its policy, no other agencies have made changes to their admission preferences and a few are considering extending their guest policy. Ms. Booth added that the coordinated assistance provided by state so far has affected health care and DTA benefits but not public housing system.

Ms. Booth stated that next month it will be more clear what the situation looks like and if a new wave of applications is expected. Commissioner Robles commented that many people in Puerto Rico cannot afford to buy air tickets and it can be a reason why there have not been too many applications yet. Commissioner Robles also questioned whether the SHA shall consider establishing any expiration term for the new provisions of the policy and it was agreed that the sunset period should be six months from the date of the event. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to amend the [SHA's federally-aided public housing tenant selection] policy to house one person/ family that passes the test as a hurricane applicant for each applicant from the established waiting list and to establish the sunset period for the amendment to be 6 months.

Michelle Booth stated that even though the SHA lease allows in some circumstances extending the guest period with the manager's approval, it is still recommended that the Board takes a vote to formally amend the policy. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to amend the [guest] Policy to extend the guest stay from 21 days to 90 days. The sunset period for the amendment is six months.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a contract for architectural services for Carpe Diem Kitchen Cabinets and Electrical Panel Replacement. John Healy explained that this is a project for the State Capital Funds Program. The project includes replacing the cabinets,

sinks, electrical panel and subpanels in each unit. Since the cost of the project was estimated to be over \$500,000, the results of the bids were reviewed by the Massachusetts Designer Selection Committee. Answering Commissioner Labonte's question Mr. Healy explained that unlike contract awards for federal CFP, this project does not have an award amount, only estimated expenses. Once the contract is awarded, DHCD will be negotiating the costs with the contractor and if they can't reach an agreement, DHCD can go to the next bidder. Mr. Healy indicated that DHCD is the ordering authority for this project but the SHA has its input. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: to award a contract to Architectural Solutions of 375 Atherton Street, Milton, MA to provide plans, specifications, contract administration and construction supervision, for architecture services for Carpe Diem Kitchen Cabinet And Electrical Panel Replacement; appoint Executive Director, William H. Abrashkin as the contracting officer authorizing him to execute the contracts; as advertised in the request for services, funding to come from the Capital Improvement Program from DHCD.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve supporting the "Lift the Cap on Kids" campaign. Executive Director Abrashkin explained that this is a state wide effort to reverse the policy that denies additional \$100 month EAEDC benefits to family to have a child when they already receiving the benefits. He recommended joining the long list of organizations to encourage legislators to lift that cap. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to support the "lift the cap on kids" campaign and authorize the SHA be listed as a supporter of legislation for that purpose.

Judge Abrashkin requested to move the last item in the New Business to the end of the meeting. He started his Executive Director's report by informing that the building at Marble Street is vacant, all the residents have been relocated (one chose to be was transferred to a public housing unit and the rest became Section 8 participants). Mr. Abrashkin reminded that no applicants on the long Section 8 list were affected as HUD allocated extra vouchers for this project. Now the City Council has to approve the transfer and then the Legal Departments of the City and the SHA will be working on it.

In response to Commissioner Warren's inquiry regarding the long list of relocation payments in the Accounts Payable report, it was confirmed that with the HUD's approval the agency is using the funds from its accounts in anticipation of sale proceeds.

Judge Abrashkin continued his report by stating that with DHCD's approval the agency has sent out the special RFP for Eastern Avenue. He reminded that the bid has a restriction to educational purposes.

Mr. Abrashkin reported that a request for proposals for new software has been prepared and is currently being finalized by Mike Petro and the IT Department. New software will be purchased using a combination of parts of the proceeds from Marble Street and Capital, operating, and COCC funds.

Judge Abrashkin informed the Board that he will not be able to attend the next Board meeting on December 19th and asked if the Board would like that meeting to be re-scheduled. It was decided to keep the date.

The Board accepted Accounts Payable and Finance Reports for the month of September. JoAnn White provided quick review of the reports stating that the agency is still operating under the budget and there are no concerns.

John Healy, William Abrashkin, Nicole Contois, JoAnn White, and Michelle Booth left the Conference Room at 5:54 pm.

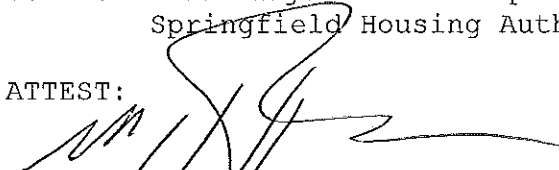
The Board entered into a discussion regarding consultant service proposals for new Executive Director's search. Chairman Thomas summarized the responses received from different service providers. He stated that out of the 4 proposals received he is giving his priority to Leo Dauwer and to Umass because the cost of services from Edgemont is too high (33% of the annual base salary of the successful candidate) and the proposal received from Rick [Leco] was short of information and did not have enough references.

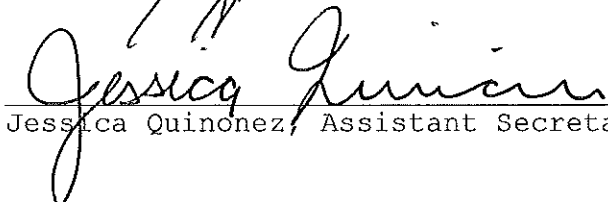
Board members supported Chairman Thomas's selection and it was decided to invite Leo Dauwer and a representative of Umass Boston to an interview at a special Board meeting. The Board agreed to schedule that meeting for 12/12 with 12/14 to be a backup date in case one or both consultants are not available. Attorney Chesky indicated that both consultants must be asked the same questions and Chairman Thomas suggested that the Board will prepare their questions and discuss before the interview.

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 Warren, it was unanimously .

VOTED: to adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 6:17 PM.

ATTEST:


Willie Thomas, Chairman


Jessica Quinonez, Assistant Secretary