

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON FEBRUARY 20, 2018

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 February 20, 2018.

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, February 20, 2018 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

February 15, 2018

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 February 15, 2018 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

William Abrashkin
Michelle Booth
Priscilla Chesky, Lyon & Fitzpatrick
Nicole Contois (arrived at 4:35 pm)
Howard Coro
Fidan Gousseynoff

John Healy
Gail Turner (arrived at 4:36 pm)
JoAnn White

The Board reviewed the Minutes of January 23, 2018. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the Minutes of January 23, 2018.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to accept amendment #9 to the Formula Funding Contract with an award of \$781,479.07 to fund the SHA's Formula Funding for fiscal year 2020, Extraordinary maintenance fiscal year 2017, Accessibility project, and rebates for e-bidding previously completed projects. John Healy explained that the amendment will fund the SHA's Capital Plan for FY2020, and any projects that will be included into that Capital Plan for that fiscal year will be brought for the Board's approval. Mr. Healy provided information on the accessibility study project to create one fully accessible unit at project 689 and answering Commissioner Warren's question he explained that \$367,988 allocated for that purpose can only be used for an ADA project, not for any other capital needs. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9707 to accept Amendment #9 to the Formula Funding Contract with an award of \$781,479.07 to fund the SHA's Formula Funding for fiscal year 2020, extraordinary maintenance fiscal year 2017, accessibility project, and rebates for e-bidding previously completed projects.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a contract for accessibility upgrades at 258 Shady Brook Lane. Howard Coro reminded that this is the 2nd time the SHA had to bid this project - last time it was approved by the Board in the amount of \$325,900 but was rejected by DHCD due to lack of funds. The new bid came out \$22,525 less, mostly because 1st time there were three sub-bids and this time there was only one sub-bid (for electrician) and bidding contractors were requested to include HVAC and plumbing job into their bids. Commissioners Warren and Labonte commented about the high cost of the project and Mr. Coro explained that it is mostly due to the prevailing wages. He indicated that cost of all renovation projects have a tendency to increase due to climbing labor costs. He stated that last year the SHA was able to complete a big project, that included replacing roofs, windows, handicap rails and at all ten scattered handicap units, and the cost was less than this proposed project at one unit at Shady Brook Lane. He also explained that the project will include complete asbestos abatement of the entire unit, including the tile, sheetrock, compound etc. Chairman Thomas inquired if having asbestos currently poses any health risk and Mr. Coro explained that as far as it is not disturbed it does not. Answering Chairman Thomas's question John Healy explained that 258 Shady Brook Lane was chosen because of its elevation and choosing another unit for ADA project would cost much more money. Mr. Healy confirmed one more time that the money that was allocated by DHCD for accessibility project cannot be used for any other purposes. Answering Commissioner Robles's question Mr. Healy confirmed that the unit has been vacant since August 2017. Commissioner Robles commented that it is hard to compare the value of a fully accessible renovated unit that meets all the

handicap accessibility requirements and will be totally abated to the cost of other houses of similar type even if the cost of the project is more than the price of two houses in the same neighborhood.

The President of the Gentile Tenant Council Gail Turner introduced herself and inquired if the value of the house will go up after the project and Executive Director Abrashkin explained that even if it does the SHA will not be able to sell this house. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: to award a contract to the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, Inglewood Development Company, 123 Dwight Rd., Longmeadow, MA in the amount of three hundred three thousand three hundred and seventy five dollars (\$303,375) for 258 Shady Brook Lane 689-1 utilizing the funds from Department Of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) no. 281116; appoint Executive Director William H. Abrashkin as the contracting officer authorizing him to execute the contract.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve revision of the HCVP Administrative Plan. Michelle Booth explained that current Section 8 Administrative Plan does not include a specific timeframe for reporting an increase in earned income for the program participants. Normally most participants report income increase only at the time of their annual recertification. The proposed revision will establish a requirement for all participants to report their income increase within 10 days after a change occurs. In case there is a decrease in income, the proposed revision will allow the Administrative Plan to reflect that the SHA will decrease the family rent share following SHA receipt of verification of the income change. Ms. Booth explained that currently the Administrative Plan does not require the participants to provide actual verification of the decrease in income before annual recertification. Commissioner Warren inquired whether 10 days is enough time for the participants to report income change and Ms. Booth stated that it is considered reasonable and if somebody cannot do it within 10 days due to disability or if there are other extenuating circumstances, he/she can submit a request for reasonable accommodation. In response to Commissioner Warren's question regarding full-time students Ms. Booth explained that earned income of full-time students is excluded from the family gross income so all HCV households are required to report to the SHA of a change in fulltime student status within 10 days. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to Adopt Resolution #9708 to approve revision of the HCVP Administrative Plan for the HCV Program as follows:

- 1) HCV households are required to report any changes in household income to the SHA, in writing, within 10 days of the date of the change in income;
- 2) HCV households are required to report to the SHA, in writing, of a change in fulltime student status. This written report of this change must be received by the SHA within 10 days of the date of the household member ceases to be a fulltime student;
- 3) The HCV Program households are required to report any changes in the household composition to the SHA, in writing, within 10 days

(this refers to additions and removals) of the date of the change in household composition; and

- 4) In terms of optional reporting of a decrease in income by program participants, when the SHA receives a request by a participant for an interim recertification due to reduced family income, it will conduct this requested recertification upon receipt of verification of the decrease in income from the participant.

The Board entered into a discussion regarding the SHA Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy concerning applicant placement and selection from the waiting list. Michelle Booth explained that the SHA is looking into revising its ACOP to make information about preferences for federal waiting list more transparent and easy to understand as well as to take out some preferences that are no longer allowed to be offered by PHAs, such as witness protection which is now handled by HUD and IG office. Ms. Booth also indicated the need to continue the discussion regarding disaster relocation and referred to the Memo that describes preference 4A (Federally Declared Disaster Displacement). Ms. Booth asked the Board to determine what ratio (4:1 or 3:1) for every placement of one Preference 4A applicant to Preference 4B applicants (living or working in the City of Springfield) shall be reflected in the ACOP. Ms. Booth stated that the revision of ACOP will also address an issue of making information on how tenants who qualify for transfers are selected from the waiting list versus other applicants more clear. She added that once the Board decides about the proposed changes, the Policy will be sent to HUD's Fair Housing to make sure it meets the standards. In response to Commissioner Warren's question about the demand Ms. Booth indicated that there were 28 applications from the hurricanes evacuees in October, 63 in November, 95 in December, 49 in January and if in the beginning most applicants were elderly/disabled, now there are more applications for family housing. As of 1/19 8 applicants were housed, 3 in elderly, 5 in family housing. Commissioner Warren expressed his concern that with such a high demand (over 3000 applicants) and very limited supply (around 300 unit turnover throughout a year) and taking into consideration that disaster evacuees are preceded in the waiting list by people who qualify for higher preferences, the SHA's ability to accommodate most of the tragedy victims is extremely low.

Michelle Booth stated that the City is discussing with DHCD whether it is possible to issue extra MRVP vouchers to assist the evacuees. She indicated that it is up to the Board to change the rank of the preferences however one factor shall be taken into consideration that changing rank for Housing First program is not recommended because of the funding the agency receives for this program. In response to Chairman Thomas's question Nicole Contois explained that this program houses people from shelters and hotels and provides them with case management services. In the past all program participants were housed at Marble Street and now will be housed in other developments. In response to Chairman Thomas's question about other housing authorities in the region Michelle Booth explained that some do not have a preference for natural disaster victims, some do have but might not advertise it. Answering Chairman Thomas's question Ms. Booth indicated that approximate wait time for a 2 bedroom apartment is 18 months - 2 years and the wait time for units with larger number of bedroom is longer, for example - over 5 years for a 5 bedroom apartment.

It was decided to indicate in the Minutes that it is the sense of the Board that suggested changes to the ACOP will be appropriate subject to HUD Fair Housing approval. After the revisions are approved by HUD and reviewed by public the Board will hold a final vote.

The Board reviewed and accepted a Memo from Leo Dauwer with regards to the status of the Executive Director's search.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation regarding approving the offer of the City of Springfield of just compensation for 112-118 Marble Street and 111-117 Marble Street. Attorney Chesky indicated that the process of disposing of Marble Street that started 3 years ago is about to be completed. Ms. Chesky and Commissioner Warren praised Michelle Booth and her team for all the work on relocating Marble Street tenants and handling this project. Attorney Chesky reminded the Board that in 2016 HUD approved disposing Marble Street development for \$810,000 and in the letter that was provided to the Board this month the City is offering to pay \$820,000 for taking the building through friendly eminent domain. The proposal has yet to be approved by the City Council at its next meeting scheduled for March 5th. In response to Gail Turner's question Ms. Booth indicated that in total 45 families were relocated - one opted to be transferred to a public housing unit and 44 took Section 8 vouchers. Attorney Chesky stated that no demolition has been scheduled yet but the SHA has given the City's contractors a permission to visit the site to prepare bids. Michelle Booth inquired whether the proceeds can be anticipated before the end of FY18 and Ms. Chesky responded that most likely the proceeds will not be received before 3/31/18. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the offer of the City of Springfield of just compensation for 112-118 Marble Street and 111-117 Marble Street in the amount of \$820,000.

William Abrashkin started his Executive Director's report by informing the Board that two items - conveyance of two lots at Eastern Avenue to Springfield College / Educare and federalization compensation - are still pending a response from DHCD which is going through a shift in leadership after Crystal Kornegay left the agency to become the executive director of Mass Housing. JoAnn White indicated that DHCD might be planning a statewide change on managing the reserves and there is a possibility that the delay in making a decision on the federalization compensation is somehow connected to DHCD plans.

Judge Abrashkin continued his report by informing that the SHA staff pictures project is almost complete. He also informed about an event scheduled for 2/23/18 in honor of Senator Welch. The purpose of the event is to inform Senator Welch about what is going on with TRS program and thank him for the support to this early education initiative. Mr. Abrashkin informed the Board that the SHA senior staff invited new Springfield fire commissioner to meet with them to discuss SHA fire safety measures and ways for improving communication between the two agencies. Referring to an article about Cabrini Towers in Chicago distributed among the Board members Judge Abrashkin indicated that the article provides an interesting picture of the history of housing authorities and many challenges they face.

With regards to the quarterly reports Judge Abrashkin indicated that in the past apart from submitting reports in writing with the Board packages, the staff was summarizing what was written in those reports at the meetings. He suggested that with the approval of the Board the reports will not be reviewed at the meetings unless the Commissioners have any questions/ comments/ concerns or need to follow up. Judge Abrashkin's idea was supported however as per Chairman Thomas's suggestion it was decided that AP/ Finance reports will still be reviewed at each meeting.

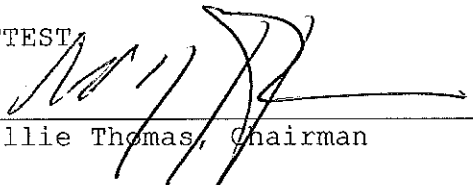
Commissioner Warren expressed his appreciation for the quality, depth and amount of information in the quarterly reports especially the public safety report.

Finance Director JoAnn White provided brief review on the Financial report. She indicated that overall situation is still pretty good, with only Marble Street operating in red due to relocation expenses. Answering Commissioner Quinonez's question Ms. White stated that the work on sending refunds for security deposits is almost complete.

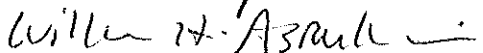
There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Robles, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 5:51 PM.

ATTEST



Willie Thomas, Chairman



William H. Abrashkin, Executive Director