

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON JUNE 26, 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 June 26, 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, June 26, 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
June 22, 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 June 22, 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 W. Abrashkin

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
R Willie Thomas
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

William Abrashkin
Priscilla Chesky, Lyon & Fitzpatrick (arrived at 4:40 pm)
Howard Coro
Alexandra Curet
Kassandra Curet
Lissandra Figueroa
Fidan Gousseynoff
Kathy Hardy

Mary Ellen Lowney
JoAnn White

The Board reviewed the Minutes of June 14, 2018. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of June 14, 2018.

Youth Program Coordinator Jimmy Mitchell presented the 2018 Farris Mitchell recipient - Alexandra Curet, who was chosen by the Committee consisting of Pam Wells, Kathy Hardy, Mary Ellen Lowney and himself. Mr. Mitchell thanked the Springfield Housing Authority for continuing to support young SHA residents - in the last 23 years 32 young men and women have received this scholarship. He reminded that 4 years ago Alexandra's sister, Kassandra Curet, was also a recipient of this scholarship. Mr. Mitchell also informed that the two scholarship recipients who were awarded in 2017 are doing really well and now are heading to their 2nd year at college.

Alexandra Curet expressed her appreciation to the SHA and the Mitchell family for awarding her this scholarship which will give a jumpstart to her new journey in college. She indicated that she we will be attending the early education program at Holyoke Community College and then will be pursuing her master degree at the Westfield State University so that she could become a kindergarten teacher.

Kassandra Curet introduced her family and indicated that she is still in school, employed and has been accepted to a medical assistant program.

Alexandra Curet, Kassandra Curret, Lissandra Figueroa and Jimmy Mitchell left the Conference Room at 4:38 pm.

Priscilla Chesky entered the Conference Room at 4:40 pm.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve the submission of the state reporting for FYE 3/31/18. Jo Ann White explained that this is a part of the fiscal year end submission, and in order to upload and submit the reports (operating statements and balance sheets) to DHCD, a formal vote from the Board is required. She indicated that in general all state programs are operating in the black.

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

VOTED: 1.) Adopt Resolution #9723 to approve the submission of the state reporting for fiscal year end 2018 for MRVP
2.) Adopt Resolution #9724 to approve the submission of the state reporting for fiscal year end 2018 for program 200-A
3.) Adopt Resolution #9725 to approve the submission of the state reporting for fiscal year end 2018 for program 400-1
4.) Adopt Resolution #9726 to approve the submission of the state reporting for fiscal year end 2018 for program 667-A
5.) Adopt Resolution #9727 to approve the submission of the state reporting for fiscal year end 2018 for program 689-C
6.) Adopt Resolution #9728 to approve the submission of the state reporting for fiscal year end 2018 for program 705-A

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to accept change order #1 and the Certificate of substantial completion for roof replacement at Pendleton 3 and Jennie Lane Apartments. Howard Coro explained that when the project started, the contractors discovered that tar had been put over the old flashing and change order is to replace the damaged flashing on 10 chimneys. He stated that with this change order the total cost of the project will make \$460693. Answering Chairman Thomas's question Mr. Horo indicated that flashing around ridge vents and at other parts of the roof was not damaged. Commissioner Labonte questioned whether it would make sense to put into all contracts that all old roofs shall be re-flashed.

Referring to item 1 ("remove and replace broken concrete landing") in the Punch List for Jenny Lane, Commissioner Warren asked if the issue with crumbling concrete at Riverview has been resolved. Howard Coro stated that John Healy has been working with the concrete company and can provide additional information.

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

VOTED: to accept the Certificate of Substantial Completion and along with Change Order #1 for \$8,393 from Cape-Way Roofing System, Inc. [for roof replacement at Jennie Lane and Pendleton 3] and authorize certification for payment in the amount of \$100,123.35 for contract Fed # 35-C-2017-19-8, hereby accepting these documents as of June 26, 2018.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to accept the Certificate of Substantial Completion for accessibility upgrades and roof replacement at 6 Gerrish Ct. Apt 104. Mr. Coro indicated that the project took almost 6 months but has been completed on time and under budget with total savings of \$6702. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was unanimously

VOTED: to accept the Certificate of Substantial Completion and Credit Change Order for \$4,885.27 from Inglewood Development, Corp. and authorize certification of payment in the amount of \$103,115.84 for contract Fed#35-C-2017-15-7 [for accessibility upgrades and roof replacement at 6 Gerrish Ct. Apt 104], hereby accepting the project, effective on June 19, 2018.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a contract for extermination services. Nicole Contois explained that the previous contract had to be terminated in December 2017 because the contractors were not meeting the requirements. There were many complaints from the residents and the staff because the contractors were demanding that residents would prepare their units (which required emptying all cabinets and drawers) and then they were failing to show up or were showing up at a later date and charged people for not preparing the units. Ms. Contois stated that the management had held at least 3 meetings with the vendors trying to come up with a plan to resolve problems however it had not worked, so the contract had to be terminated and a new RFP was issued in June. The evaluation committee reviewed responses from 5 bidders and it was decided that Eco System is the best choice. Their proposed cost was less than budgeted and the references were positive. Answering Commissioner Quinonez's question Ms. Contois confirmed that the new contract can be terminated any time if the new vendor does not provide expected quality of services. In response to Judge Abrashkin's question Nicole Contois confirmed that the new contract

will cover commercial spaces as well. Commissioner Warren inquired whether new contract covers bedbug extermination as well, and Ms. Contois explained that there is a separate contract for bedbug extermination and there have never been any issues with the vendor. In response to Chairman Thomas's inquiry Ms. Contois said that the technicians are supervised by property managers.

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

VOTED: to award a contract to Eco Systems Pest Control, Inc. This contract will be for three (3) years pending availability of funding for years 2 and 3. The contract will cover costs for cockroach and mice exterminations and will include a "not to exceed" annual cost of \$245,000.00 per calendar year.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to approve Memorandum of Understanding with the Sheriff's Department for the Vera Institute's Heading Home Initiative. Executive Director Abrashkin explained that this is a housing reunification program that will allow some people being released from incarceration to unite with their family members residing at housing authorities. The program will be conducted in partnership with the Hampden County's Sheriff's Department who will be performing preliminary screening and recommending candidates for the program. The candidates will be then screened by the SHA Applications Department which has the right to reject any candidates. The SHA will enter into a license agreement with those persons who passed the screening - there will be a probationary period during which they will have a right to occupy, but will not be considered members of household until they pass the probationary period. The HCSD staff will be providing supportive services and case management to the participants of the program and will be working with the families.

Mr. Abrashkin noted that the program is supported by HUD and will provide an opportunity for many people coming out of jail to successfully reintegrate to the society and will reduce the risk of recidivism. He indicated that the MOU presented to the Board has been reviewed by the SHA and HCSD legal departments. Judge Abrashkin explained that unlike the CHES Program, participants of this program will not have their own housing under Section 8 program but will be reuniting with their family members residing in public housing. He expressed his hope that this program will allow to address the issue of unauthorized occupants because many times people coming out on incarceration leave with their families illegally. In response to Commissioner Quinonez's comment Attorney Chesky indicated that even though the MOU does not state that people who were arrested for domestic violence or sex crimes are not allowed to participate in the program, the SHA ACOP and CORI policy have provisions stating that persons committed certain types of crimes cannot be approved for housing. She also reminded that the HCSD will be carefully selecting all candidates for the program and working with those who passed the screening to make sure the families they will be reuniting with are safe and as well as their neighbors (in case someone was arrested for an incident involving the neighbors).

Mary Ellen Lowney left the Conference Room at 5:00 pm.

Mr. Abrashkin suggested providing the Board with periodic updates on the program and inviting representatives of the Sheriff's Department to one of the meetings. Answering Commissioner Robles's question Mr. Abrashkin

indicated that there is no definition of the "family member" for this program. Ms. Contois added that this issue was discussed in the past and, even though it is not stated in the MOU, only close relatives (a child or a significant other) will qualify. In response to Commissioner Quinonez's question Nicole Contois confirmed that families, who will be under-housed after the reunification, will be transferred to a bigger apartment. Commissioner Robles inquired on what happens to those participants who comply with all the terms of the lease but refuse to have case management services and Judge Abrashkin explained that their license agreement will be terminated.

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

VOTED: to adopt resolution #9724 to approve the attached MOU with the Hampden County Sheriff's Department and authorize Executive Director William H. Abrashkin to finalize the MOU with the Sheriff's Department.

Attachment 1

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a contract for after school and summer vacation youth enrichment program at Riverview, Duggan and Moxon Apartments. Nicole Contois explained that the previous contract with ADC expired at the end of the past school year and ADC was the only bidder to a new RFP issued in June - their bid was for \$48,593 per year per site. Ms. Contois indicated that the program expenses had been already budgeted for this year. Pam Wells explained that ADC have been providing enrichment services to SHA kids for the last 13-14 year and the program operates 3 weeks a day during school year and 5 times a week during summer vacation. The staff works closely with Springfield schools to make sure the kids performance is up to the grade level and if it is not, they provide tutoring and homework assistance. Effective September ADC staff will have access to the Springfield School Department's Data Warehouse and will be able to review (with the parents' permission) report cards and grades, so program participants could be evaluated and individual plans for improvement could be developed. In response to Chairman Thomas's question Ms. Wells confirmed that the program is connected to Talk/Read/Succeed! Program at Duggan.

Chairman Thomas asked to provide information about how many kids participate in each program, and Ms. Wells explained that some programs are small because there is not enough space, for example, no more than 15 kids can be accommodated at Duggan. There is no Community Room at Moxon so the kids get transported to Milton Court. The largest community space is at Riverview and most of the participants of the youth program there are children from Somali families. Ms. Wells emphasized the importance of providing assistance to Somali kids whose parents often do not speak English. Ms. Wells added that the Resident Services Department works closely with the District Management Office at Riverview to better understand cultural differences and needs of Somali families.

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

VOTED: to award a contract to the ADC Prevention Services of Springfield for three years to provide After School Youth Enrichment Programming and Summer

Vacation Youth Enrichment Programming at Riverview, Duggan, and Moxon Apartments for the total three (3) year amount \$437,337.00; to authorize Executive Director William H Abrashkin, the contracting officer, to execute the contract.

Pam Wells left the Conference Room at 5:25 pm.

William Abrashkin started his Executive Director's report by providing an update on the Eastern Avenue project. He informed that as per DHCD yet another revision of the contract had to be made and it has been forwarded to DHCD for approval.

Mr. Abrashkin expressed his belief that the Educare project will prove to be not only viable and successful but also will provide a great model for educating kids in need. He requested the Board to take a vote. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Warren, seconded by Commissioner Labonte it was unanimously

VOTED: to authorize signing off the deed [for Eastern Avenue] upon DHCD approval of the deed language.

Attorney Chesky provided update on Central Street. She explained that HUD is questioning on some discrepancies between the address listed in the City's assessor's database (421-427 Central Street) and the address listed in the deed (421-425 Central St.) so she is currently working on clarifying this matter.

William Abrashkin continued his report by informing that a \$50,000 earmark was allocated for TRS program this year. He also informed that the SHA received a CDBG grant from the City in the amount of \$12,000 that will allow to hire a part-time (9 hours per week) youth engagement coordinator at Duggan Apartments. In response to Commissioner Robles's question it was noted that SHA's match will be providing funds for supplies, field trips and other transportation as well as supervision hours. Kathy Hardy informed that 88 applications for the position have been received and she is currently reviewing the resumes.

Judge Abrashkin and Nicole Contois informed that a check for \$820,000 for Marble Street was received from the City and the staff will be working on making a comprehensive plan [on spending the funds] to be submitted for HUD's approval.

The report was continued by informing the Board that it was determined that it will cost \$1.5 mln to convert Hobby Club into office space for the RAO. Judge Abrashkin stated that he had requested Peter Serafino from Wayfinders to assist with identifying potential funding sources for this project.

The Board was also provided with an update on the software project. Mr. Abrashkin and Ms. Contois explained that it was decided to go with a basic contract but not to exclude a possibility for add-ons as needs for additional components will be identified. Ms. White and Ms. Contois explained that adding all the options to the software will be very expensive and will make learning the new program more difficult. It was decided to conduct a survey among the residents at the time of their annual recertification to identify how many tenants would be willing to use the system for some tenant related features. Answering to Commissioner Warren's

question JoAnn White explained that payroll and managing employees' timecards will not be a part of Yardi software at this point but employees currently have access to electronic payroll system through Checkwriters. She confirmed that the managers will have access to budgets and work orders system.

Executive Director Abrashkin informed the Board that all the problems identified in the course of the recent investigation have been resolved. He informed that a RAO employee filed a complaint with the MCAD. By Chairman Thomas's request he provided an update of staffing changes. He explained that recent investigation revealed some problems but also opened an opportunity to evaluate operations of some departments. Some changes have been implemented to ensure the agency is functioning smoothly. Judge Abrashkin explained in details about all the recent staffing changes as follows:

- After the Director of Public Safety resigned it was decided to reorganize the department with reassigning fraud investigators to the Section 8. Former Public Safety administrative assistant was promoted to the position of Public safety manager;

- Having assessed the situation at the most demanding PH management office - District B, which has three big family developments in its portfolio, it was decided to create a new District F which will be managing Duggan and state units which are a part program 689. Nicole Contois and Attorney Chesky explained that Duggan Apartments is a very hard development to manage with its very high number of lease violations, problems with rent collection, multiple arrests, demanding capital needs, many night calls, incidents with homeless people living on its territory. The development's terrain also makes it really hard to monitor and maintain. Creating a separate District would allow better facilitation of the development's needs. Ivette Otero, a veteran employee, an experienced Assistant Property manager and a former resident at Duggan was selected to be the District F manager.

- Having evaluated the needs of another demanding Department - the Rental Assistance Office - it was decided to have two directors instead of one. One director - Blanca Berrios - will be responsible for compliance with the regulations and supervising inspections. Anna Smith will become the director of operations supervising all the case managers. The assessment of the Participants Services Department showed that the family self-sufficiency program is not working due to lack of resources. As to the homeownership program, it was determined that the agency shall concentrate more on improving the quality of services to the participants of the program rather than expanding it. The Participant Services Department was eliminated and its manager Loleta Collins was offered a Position of Rental Assistance Program Manager and her decision to accept it is still pending.

Commissioner Labonte questioned why the reorganization of several departments had to be done now without an input from the new Executive Director, and Judge Abrashkin explained that in the course of recent investigation many problems were revealed and it became clear that there is a strong need to undertake administrative measures and make changes to address the problems urgently rather than waiting until the new director starts. Commissioners Labonte and Quinonez also inquired whether promoting some people without posting the positions they were promoted for was legally justified and not in violation of the regulations. Kathy Hardy explained that the proposed measures had been discussed with the labor counsel and

verified with the Employee Handbook. Ms. Hardy also indicated that the reorganization did not involve creating new managerial positions that were not in the budget though it did involve increasing salaries for promoted employees.

Commissioner Quinonez expressed her concern about the agency not having public safety officers on staff. Ms. Hardy explained that the position of public safety officers had been posted several times and it is extremely hard to fill it in because of the late and week-end hours so it was decided to outsource security services, and a RFP for Security contract was issued recently.

The Board accepted a Memorandum from BDO and the Rental Assistance Report.

JoAnn White, Howard Coro, and William Abrashkin left the Conference Room at 6:52 pm.


Chairman Thomas entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Robles it was by a roll call vote (Thomas - Aye, Labonte - Aye, Quinonez - Aye, Robles - Aye, Warren - Aye) unanimously

VOTED: to enter into Executive Session to enter into Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel and not to reconvene in Open Session.

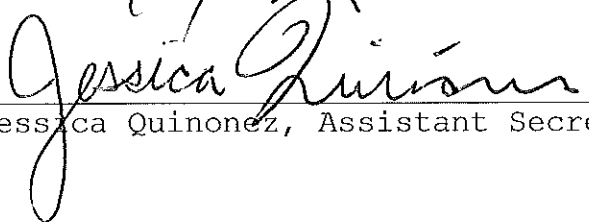
There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, upon a motion made by Commissioner Labonte, seconded by Commissioner Warren, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the Open Session of a Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 6:53 PM.

ATTEST:



Willie Thomas, Chairman



Jessica Quinonez, Assistant Secretary

Attachment 1

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE HAMPTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT AND THE
SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is between the Hampton County Sheriff's Department (hereinafter referred to as "HCSHD") with its principal place of business located at 627 Kanawha Road, Ludlow, MA 01056 and the Springfield Housing Authority (hereinafter referred to as "SHA") with its principal place of business located at 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104.

WHEREAS, the HCSHD operates a jail and custody facility for individuals who are in the custody of the criminal justice system;

WHEREAS, in 2017, approximately 1600 individuals, who were incarcerated within the criminal justice system were released from the custody of HCSHD into the neighborhoods of Springfield;

WHEREAS, research by HCSHD and criminal justice system across the country demonstrates that approximately 4 percent of persons released from such custody will re-offend and re-enter the criminal justice system unless they have support in the community that fosters gainful employment, stable housing, access to substance abuse and mental health counseling and connections to family and friends in the community; and

THEREFORE, due to said research both the SHA and the HCSHD have developed a program, called the Vera Housing Home Initiative Program, which will provide housing reconnection with Hampton County clerks of the HCSHD and their families residing in SHA public housing apartments. Initial reconnection may include a License Agreement, referred to by all parties, which will allow said clients to reside with their families for a period, initially not to exceed 6 months during which time said individual will receive wrap around services and case management services offered by the HCSHD, under terms that will allow either party in its discretion to terminate the license agreement without cause stated and, in the case of termination by the SHA, require the individual to vacate, including, if necessary, through a court order enforcement by the SHA for that purpose; and

WHEREAS, the SHA is a public Housing Authority duly created under M.G.L. c. 231B which owns and manages multiple housing units and programs within the City of Springfield which are funded through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and the United States of America, Housing And Urban Development;

WHEREAS, the HCSHD will review the CORI records of individuals it arrests and identify potential candidates for the Program. The HCSHD will provide extensive case management services to participants in said Program.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the above, the parties agree as follows:

1. The HCSHD shall screen each participant/applicant prior to admission into the Vera Housing Home Initiative. This selection process will determine individuals suited to participate in the License Agreement. The SHA will make the final determination as to whether a particular individual will be accepted into the program and be permitted to reside in an apartment under said License Agreement.
2. A participant's income, if any, shall be included in the household rent calculation throughout the period in which he or she is part of the License Agreement. After successful completion of the License Agreement period, the individual is eligible to become a participant of the Vera Housing Home Initiative Program and, at that time, the SHA may agree that said individual can become a tenant and be included in the lease of said household.
3. The SHA and HCSHD shall maintain open lines of communication regarding participants in this Program and either the SHA or the HCSHD may terminate this Memorandum of Agreement and discontinue involvement in the VERA Housing Home Initiative Program for any reason upon 60 days written notice to the other party.
4. This agreement shall become effective for the SHA upon approval of same by its Board of Commissioners.

HAMPTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT

By: _____
Nicholas Cooke, Sheriff

Date: _____

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY

By: William H. Abraham
William H. Abraham, Deputy Executive Director

Date: _____

