

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING  
- OPEN SESSION -  
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
HELD ON MAY 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

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 special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:00 PM on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 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 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 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

ABSENT

Thomas Labonte  
Jessica Quinones  
Angela Robles  
Willie Thomas  
Raymond Warren(attended on Zoom)

ALSO PRESENT

Blanca Berrios  
Priscilla Chesky  
Fidan Gousseynoff  
Austin Harris

John Healy  
Denise Jordan

The Board reviewed the Minutes of April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024. With no questions or comments and upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Quinonez and following a board roll call, it was by a majority vote (Commissioner Warren abstained; Commissioner Thomas absent at the time of voting)

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Commissioner Thomas entered the Conference Room at 4:04 pm.

The Director of Rental Assistance Office Blanca Berrios provided information on the Section Eight Management Assessment Program. She informed that the SHA has improved on two indicators (Rent Reasonableness and Annual Re-Examinations) and received maximum points for both of them. The audit of files revealed some deficiencies on Indicator 3 - Determination of Adjusted Income on which only zero points were received. The improvement plan has been identified, including using spreadsheets, internal audit documents and having managers and the performance auditor carefully inspect all paperwork and signing off on each file. Improvement plan for indicator #6 - HQS Enforcement - has also been identified and the Inspections Department is being fully staffed now. Ms. Berrios stated that even with getting zero points on some indicators, the SEMAP results show that SHA is still a standard performer.

In response to Chairman Labonte's inquiry, Ms. Berrios provided more information about what was missing that resulted in scoring zero on Indicator 3, including income verifications, utility verifications and copies of correspondence between the staff and the program participants. She explained that due to the high cost (\$20,000 per month), the SHA stopped using services of The Work Number that provided 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification and many files that were audited for SEMAP did not have a 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification or a copy of the income verification request sent by SHA staff members to employers or program participants which might be explained by having too many new staff members. The staff has been instructed to properly document all attempts to obtain a 3<sup>rd</sup> party income verification - even if no actual income verification is available, each file must contain at least a copy of correspondence sent out by case workers.

In response to Commissioner Robles's question, Blanca Berrios explained the protocol for getting an extension for a failed inspection.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9796 to approve the Section Eight Management Assessment (SEMAP) Certification for the fiscal year ending 3/31/24 and authorized the Executive Director to execute the certification and file it with HUD.

Deputy Executive Director John Healy presented the next agenda item on comprehensive modernization project, including upgrading fire alarm systems at multiple sites (current systems at some sites became obsolete), replacing furnace and hot water system at Pendleton, replacing kitchens at Central Street Apartments and cleaning ventilation system at Sullivan Apartments. Mr. Healy explained that 3 vendors showed some interest to the project and took out plans, but only one company ended up bidding. Commissioner Warren acknowledged the work of Inglewood Corporation that completed a lot of projects for the SHA, but expressed his discouragement that only one bid was submitted. Deputy Healy stated that it is common now not to get a lot of bids because there is a lot of construction projects being implemented currently in the area with ARPA money and other grants and also due to the fact that a lot of general contractors that used to work with the SHA are not in business anymore. He assured the Board that the staff will continue looking for and reaching out to more vendors. In response to Chairman Labonte's question, Mr. Healy explained how subcontracting will work with the project.

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

VOTED to award a Contract to Inglewood development of Longmeadow, MA, in the amount of Four Million Forty-One Thousand Four Hundred Sixteen Dollars and Thirty-Five Cents (\$4,041,416.35) for a Comprehensive Modernization Project at multiple sites; appoint Executive Director, Denise R. Jordan as the Contracting Officer authorizing her to execute the contract.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a contract for site work at Patrick Harrigan and Johnny Appleseed Apartments. Deputy Healy explained that the project is funded by the Capital Plan and will include excavating, removing trip hazards, renovating sidewalks, catch basins, dumpster pad, drainage, and repairing a bulging wall. The project will involve a lot of supervision and coordination that will be done by the staff members of the Capital Improvement Department. Mr. Healy informed the Board about upcoming staffing changes in the Department, including offering the Project Coordinator position to an internal candidate from the maintenance department who has some experience in construction and supervision.

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

VOTED: to award a Contract to Peter Amorello Construction of Sutton, MA, 01590, that includes Alternate #1, in the amount of Seven Hundred Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$735,000.00), for the Site Work Project at Harrigan and Appleseed Apartments; appoint Executive Director, Denise R. Jordan as the Contracting Officer authorizing her to execute the contract.

Executive Director Denise Jordan provided update on the computer systems issue. She informed the Board that all servers and work stations are restored, checks are run and submissions are being done and thanks to the hard work of the IT Department and other staff members, the agency is


operating in full capacity. In response to Chairman Labonte's question, Ms. Jordan stated that the SHA will be looking into getting a cyber insurance and upgrading the systems.

There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, and following a board roll call, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the Open Session of the Special Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 4:33 PM.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Labonte, Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director