

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
- OPEN SESSION -  
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
HELD ON AUGUST 20th, 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 August 20<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 regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:00 PM on Tuesday, August 20<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  
August 16<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 August 16<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

Thomas Labonte  
Jessica Quinones  
Angela Robles  
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

Willie Thomas

ALSO PRESENT

Priscilla Chesky  
Fidan Gousseynoff  
Denise Jordan  
Austin Harris  
John Healy

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Matthew Rogers

The Board reviewed the Minutes of August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024. With no questions or comments and upon a motion made by Commissioner Quinonez, seconded by Commissioner Warren and following a board roll call, it was by a majority vote (Commissioner Robles abstained)

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Rental Assistance Manager Matthew Rogers presented the 1<sup>st</sup> item. He provided brief information about the CHESS program which is run in collaboration with the Hampden County Sheriff's Department. Mr. Rogers explained that the HCSD staff provides extensive monitoring to program participants to support their re-entry to the community and refers them to the SHA which provides project based vouchers after they complete their one year program. The SHA needs is ready to issue a new RFP to find community housing providers and in order to proceed, the Section 8 Administrative Plan has to be updated to include language on CHESS. In response to Commissioner Warren's question, Rogers stated that there are currently 8 CHESS units (7 one-bedroom and one two-bedroom apartments) and 6 participants and it is expected that there will be some interest from local landlords to support the program because of guaranteed payments and the case management provided to tenants. In response to Chairman Labonte's question, Mr. Rogers stated that once housed in a project-based unit, program participants continue receiving support from the Sheriff's Department and the SHA's role is limited to administering vouchers. He added that the program success rate is pretty high.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9804 to approve including language on the CHESS (Community Housing: Earned, Safe, Secure) program to the Springfield Housing Authority's Section Eight Administrative Plan

The Board reviewed materials and recommendation to approve a new Tenant selection Plan. HR Director and Executive Department Manager Fidan Gousseynoff explained that this plan was developed by a consulting firm specializing in project based housing. The plan is designed specifically for the SHA's multifamily units, including Gentile Apartments, 50 units at Reed Village and 16 units at scattered sites. Up until now, the SHA has been using federal ACOP but during one of the PMRs, it was determined that a separate Tenant Selection Plan is needed for project based Section 8 developments. In response to Commissioner Warren's comment, Applications manager Jacque Banks confirmed that the SHA has been complying with all the requirements of the plan.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9805 to approve new Tenant Selection Plan for its State Section 8 Multifamily units.

Deputy Executive Director John Healy presented the next item on the agenda. He explained that Aegan Builders completed the project for the Scattered sites in January and now a formal vote is required to accept the Certificate. He stated that the project was successful and received a good response from tenants.

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

VOTED to accept the Certificate of Substantial Completion from Aegean Builders, LLC for the Window Replacement project for the Scattered Site 705-1's, here by accepting the project as substantially complete as of January 31, 2024 and release final payment.

The Board reviewed materials and recommendation to award a contract for architectural and engineering services for the Gentile elevator modernization project. Deputy Healy explained that the remainder of ARPA funds will be used to pay for this project and once the contract is awarded, SHA will start negotiation process. He praised the work of the architect who provided some services to the SHA in the past, including for the Tri-Towers elevator project. Chairman Labonte inquired about the current status of the elevators and what parts will be replaced. John Healy responded that Gentile elevators use hydraulic system, both elevators have been working and there have not been a lot of service calls, but the system is dated and needs to be modernized. He explained that the project will include breaking and rebuilding the walls, replacing all mechanical systems, machine room, cabs installing new controls. The existing shaft will continue to be used but all the equipment will be modernized. In response to Chairman Labonte's question, Mr. Healy stated that one elevator will be done at a time and the SHA will be in communication with the EMS and Fire Department.

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

VOTED: to allow the SHA staff to negotiate a contract to provide design/bid documents and contract Administration with Architectural Solutions for the Gentile Elevator Modernization project; appoint Executive Director, Denise R. Jordan, as the Contracting Officer authorizing her to execute the contract

Blanca Berrios entered the Conference Room at 4:17 pm.

Executive Director Denise Jordan reported about her meeting with residents at Gentile Apartments and Riverview Apartments. Tenants at both developments expressed their concerns about trash, pest infestation, also complained about preparing units for extermination and it seemed that a lot of residents did not have clear understanding about what the SHA's maintenance staff role is and that it is tenant's responsibility to keep their units clean and free of clutter and to follow the directions from the extermination company to prevent infestation. Ms. Jordan reported about addressed the issue of keeping

the restrooms at Community Room locked and explained that it's done to prevent homeless people using them to sleep.

In her report, Ms. Jordan also touched such topics as the Governor's Bond Bill that is passed but no information about allocations is available yet; update on the mural project at Gentile; the work with PH Webb on preparing for the conversion as well as housing affordability issue caused by raising rents by local landlords which affects so many voucher holders . The Applications manager Jacque Banks stated that a lot of people who have been approved for a voucher are unable to find an apartment and apply for public housing. Denise Jordan thanked SHA staff for all their work on the corrective action plan and providing the requested information, specifically, the Finance Director Harris. She assured the Board that the SHA not a failing agency, it will continue providing quality services, being transparent and able to meet all the challenges and HUD has confirmed that the recent rating was a procedural step.


The Board accepted the Accounts Payable reports for the months of May, June and August and income statements for 2023 and 2024. In response to Commissioner Warren's question, Finance Director Austin Harris stated that on overall, the SHA's financial situation is good but some more adjustments to the numbers will still to be made. Mr. Harris also responded to Commissioner Warren's question whether net income would be turned into reserve and what restrictions are there.

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 Robles, and following a board roll call, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the Open Session of the Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 4:45 PM.

ATTEST:

  
Thomas LaBonte, Chairman

  
Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director