

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
- OPEN SESSION -  
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
HELD ON NOVEMBER 19<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 November 19<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

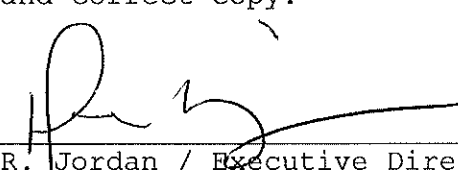
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that a regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:00 PM on Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress St., Springfield, Massachusetts.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
/s/Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director  
November 14<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 November 14<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  
Willie Thomas  
Raymond Warren

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

Fidan Gousseynoff  
Nicole Kane  
Denise Jordan  
Austin Harris

John Healy

The Board reviewed the Minutes of October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. With no questions or comments and upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Warren and following a board roll call, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Deputy Executive Director Nicole Kane presented the first item in the New Business and explained that as a part of HOTMA regulations, the SHA is required to adopt a new Over Income Policy for federal public housing due to HUD changing how an over-income family is determined - it used to be at 80% of family's median income but HUD has recently updated it to 2.4 times of the very low income. As a result, the allowable income for public housing program has increased. Mrs. Kane referred to the chart in the Memo that shows that, for example, for a one-person household the maximum allowable income is \$92000 and for an 8-persons family it is now \$173,000. She added that there are not too many SHA families that meet the criteria. Ms. Kane explained that if a family's income exceeds the limit for the period of 24 months, their lease must be terminated within six months or a new lease must be executed in accordance with applicable regulations. In response to Commissioner Warren's question, she confirmed that if someone's income stays above the limit for almost all 24 months and then decreases 2 months before they reach the 24-months threshold, a new 24-months cycle will start.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9817 to adopt the SHA's Over Income Policy.

Deputy Executive Director John Healy presented the next item in new Business. He explained that the contract for on-call backup electrical services was for extraordinary maintenance or some big projects that cannot be handled only by SHA electricians. He stated that this is a "not to exceed amount contract" and the previous contract with the same vendor has just been completed. Mr. Healy praised the work of ML Schmitt Electric. In response to Chairman Labonte's question about how much has used for the current contract for on-call back-up electrical services, John Healy said that it was around \$100,000. He added that unlike similar contract for backup plumbing services that the SHA uses a lot due to the issues with heating and plumbing systems, the need for electrical back-up services is not that high. In response to Commissioner Robles's question, Deputy Healy stated that there has not been a situation with exceeding the contract amount - when the services cost reaches \$140,000 he issues a request for bids. Chairman Labonte inquired how services are authorized and Mr. Healy explained that usually, a service call starts with the Electricians but everything must be authorized by the Deputy Executive Director.

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 ML Schmitt Electric of 371 Taylor Street, Springfield, MA; appoint Executive Director, Denise R Jordan as the contracting officer to execute the contract. The contract shall be for the period November 1, 2024 through October 31, 2027 for a not to exceed amount of \$150,000.00.

The Board reviewed materials and a recommendation to award a new contract for trash services. Deputy Healy stated that the new contract cost has increased on almost 90%. Some changes will be implemented comparing to the current contract, such as removing trash chutes at high-rise buildings to help with the infestation problems and adding rollover dumpsters at some properties. In response to Commissioner Quinonez's question, he explained what the trash company drivers are not expected to pickup trash left outside the dumpsters, their job is mostly to tip the container and most of the time, the maintenance staff have to remove trash that was not discarded properly, otherwise, the trash contractors won't empty the dumpsters if they are barricaded with bulk items. Executive Director Jordan stated that at her recent meetings with residents, she reminded them that properly discarding trash is residents' responsibility and they have to report to their property managers if they see someone not doing it the right way. Deputy Healy stated that illegal dumping is a big challenge for the SHA and it is hard to fight it, even with cameras installed at some properties because many times, people just throw out their trash out of a vehicle and without knowing the time and date when someone discarded their trash illegally, it is very time consuming to catch them on cameras. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question, John Healy confirmed that there are signs on the property that cameras are in use. Deputy Kane added that a lot of bulk items that are left on the SHA properties are not from the SHA residents. Ms. Jordan added that the City's mattress ordinance continues causing problems to the SHA with a lot of people using SHA dumpsters to discard their mattresses. Commissioner Warren questioned what caused such a significant increase in the trash services cost and Mr. Healy explained that after the trash processing facility in Chicopee closed, some trash has to be hauled to Ohio by railroad.

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

VOTED: to award a five (5) year contract to Casella in the total amount of two million four hundred sixty-two thousand seven hundred sixty-six dollars and ninety-eight cents (\$2,462,766.98); authorize the Executive Director, Denise R Jordan, as contracting officer to execute the contract.

The Board reviewed materials and recommendation to accept the certificate of substantial completion from Aegean Builders for the scattered site window project. Mr. Healy reminded that the same contractor had completed similar project for project 705-1 and their work on projects 705-2 and 705-3 also went well and the tenants were very cooperative.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Robles 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 705-2's and 705-3s, here by accepting the project as substantially complete as of October 13, 2024 and release final payment.

John Healy presented the next item on the New Business agenda with regards to the exterior painting project at Tri-Towers. He provided brief information about the project that included power-washing, sandblasting, recaulking and painting. He expressed his satisfaction with the work done by the contractor which the SHA used for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. In response to Commissioner Warren's question, Deputy Healy stated that about \$800,000 was spent on the project.

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 Alpha Contracting Associates Inc. for the Exterior Painting Project at Tri-Towers Apartments, here by accepting the project as substantially complete as of September 30, 2024 and release final payment.

The Board reviewed materials and recommendation to accept the certificate of substantial completion from Pittsfield Pipers for the boiler replacement project at Sullivan Apartments. Mr. Healy praised the work of the contractor and stated that the project was challenging and included replaced the boiler, removing the Polaris hot water tank, installing a storage tank, replacing pumps and associated piping. In response to Commissioner Thomas's questions, Mr. Healy explained that there is a one-year warranty on workmanship, 5 years warranty on certain parts and 10-years warranty on the boiler and all minor repairs are done by the SHA staff. Deputy Healy added that the staff also does preventative maintenance to prevent problems with acidity and because high efficiency boilers produce a lot of condensation.

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

VOTED: to accept the Certificate of Substantial Completion from Pittsfield Pipers Inc. for the Boiler Replacement Project at Sullivan Apartments, here by accepting the project as substantially complete as of September 25, 2024 and release final payment.

Deputy Healy provided information about the last item on the New Business agenda regarding the elevator modernization project at Riverview Apartments. He explained that the Phase one was for the buildings at 120, 122 Clyde Street and 98, 100 Division Street and its implementation was delayed due to supply issues after the pandemic. The 1<sup>st</sup> crew who worked at 120 Clyde Street for a while was replaced by the

SHA's request and the new crew completed the job in 3 months. Phase 2 is being implemented by Associated Elevators and is expected to be completed after Thanksgiving and then the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase at 67-69 Sanderson Street will start and is expected with most of the work to be completed in April. It is expected that all 10 elevators will be done after July 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Healy explained that unlike Saab Ct., there is not much modernization that can be done with the elevators at Riverview, for example, the speed cannot be increased as it was done at Tri-Towers. With a lot of units in every building at Riverview, there is a lot of usage and some elevators that have been recently replaced, already show some signs of wear and tear. Commissioner Warren reminded about the problems with spare parts supply that the SHA used to run into and inquired about the plan for preventing delays in repairs. Mr. Healy stated that there is warranty and also a plan to keep spare parts in the storage area in the renovated elevator rooms.

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

VOTED: to accept the Certificate of Substantial Completion from Inglewood Development Inc. for the Phase I Elevator Modernization Project at Riverview Apartments, here by accepting the project as substantially complete as of November 14, 2024 and release final payment once punch list items are complete.

Executive Director Jordan started her report by informing about her meeting with SPS Superintendent Sonia Dinnall to discuss housing opportunities and partnerships. The report was followed by providing information about unveiling the mural project at Gentile Apartments. The event was attended by the residents, Chairman Labonte, Commissioner Thomas, Congressman Neal and other elected officials. Ms. Jordan reported about reactivating partnership with Dorman School and BHN to work with students and families residing at specific properties to receive mental health services; about partnering with Liberty Bank hosting a financial literacy training at Riverview; about meeting with the property managers and extermination vendor.

Director Jordan informed the Board about the email from IRS regarding EIN numbers for 9 landlords who had received 1099 form from the SHA that did not match IRS records. The SHA team consisting of the ED, Deputy Kane, Finance Director Harris, Applications Manager Banks and RAO Director Berrios met with the IRS agent assigned to the case. A closeout letter was subsequently sent by IRS outlining the steps and informing about a fine of \$26,791.44 that the SHA is planning to appeal. Commissioner Robles and Chairman Labonte inquired if the landlords would be held responsible for this situation. Deputy Kane said that IRS will be dealing with them and added that a meeting with the affected landlords was setup by the SHA and they were requested to provide information and if they don't respond, 24% of their rent portion will be withheld. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question, Ms. Kane said that the Section 8 staff are working with those landlords.

Denise Jordan continued her report by informing about the communication with Edward Epps from HUD. Even though the HUD investigator shared a

lot of positive feedback about the SHA staff and acknowledged that the problems were caused by the software, the letter that was issued later stated that there was some lack of communication between the Board and the Executive team. Mr. Epps suggested the SHA looks into another housing authority's web-site as a guide. Ms. Jordan expressed her concern about receiving such an unfair assessment as she believes that the Board is kept informed about everything and Board members always have an opportunity to ask for a clarification or information or to add an item to the agenda or change the agenda format if necessary. Mr. Epps referred to one particular incident that was discussed with the Board but it was not reflected in the Minutes and some Board member(s) in their interview with HUD stated they had not been aware about it. Director Jordan stated that the agenda that is being currently utilized is the same agenda that was used for many years before her tenure started and she would welcome any ideas about how to improve it. She shared a printout listing all submissions done by different departments in the last month.

Commissioner Warren commented that he found the letter from HUD to be constructive. He expressed his concern about some items still to be outstanding, such as, the financial statements submission for FY23. Ms. Jordan and Finance Director Harris responded that it has been reported to the Board that the auditors completed the audit and are currently are working on preparing an actual report. Ms. Jordan reminded that when the Board asked for accounting reports in September, the Financial Director provided it. She emphasized that the SHA's financial stability is not in question and if the Board has any requests or suggestions, they just have to reach out. As for the transitioning to the software, it's still work in progress and the staff is going through a training.

The Board accepted Accounts Payable reports. In response to Commissioner Robles's question, Austin Harris provided explanation on payments for eviction services.

Commissioner Thomas suggested having the fee accountant presenting an update to the Board. Executive Director Jordan reminded that in early October Mr. Guyder attended the meeting and presented his report and there are no new issues, but if needed, he may attend on Zoom.

There being no further business to come before the members of the Springfield Housing Authority Board, upon a motion made by Commissioner Robles, seconded by Commissioner Warren, 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 5:11 PM.

ATTEST:

  
Thomas Labonte, Chairman

  
Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director