

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
- OPEN SESSION -
OF THE SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD ON DECEMBER 17th, 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 December 17th, 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

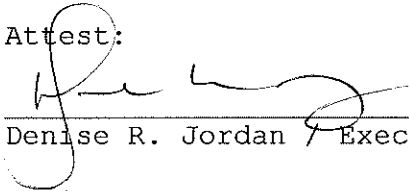
Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23B of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Laws, as amended, that a regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Springfield Housing Authority will be held at 4:00 PM on Tuesday, December 17th, 2024 at the Conference Room of the Springfield Housing Authority at 60 Congress St., Springfield, Massachusetts.

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
/s/Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director
December 12th, 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 December 12th, 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
Denise Jordan
Austin Harris

John Healy

The Board reviewed the Minutes of November 19th, 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 unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Minutes of November 19th, 2024.

There were no attendees for the Annual Plan hearing.

Deputy Executive Director John Healy presented the 1st item on the agenda - the FY26 State Annual Plan. He stated that roof replacement at Orchard Manor and floors replacement at one of the group homes are the 2 projects included to the plan. He added that the SHA will be also focusing on energy preservation measures, specifically, water conservation. Executive Director Denise Jordan provided a brief overview of the RAB meeting. Meeting attendees discussed the importance of good housekeeping and other needs.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9818 to approve the SHA's State Annual Plan for FY2026 and to certify compliance with the plan and related regulations.

HR Director and Executive Department Manager Fidan Gousseynoff presented the FY25 Annual Plan and FY25-29 5-year Plan. She reminded about the timeline and the steps for preparing the plan, including inviting residents to RAB meeting, meeting with residents, publishing announcement about the Plan availability for public review for 45 days, posting it on the website. The plan consists of the template and some mandatory forms including the form that has to be signed by the Mayor of Springfield who will receive a copy of the Plan. Mrs. Gousseynoff stated that the biggest change comparing to previous year is HOTMA and the SHA has been working all year long to review, revise and update its Administrative Plan and ACOP to meet new requirements. HOTMA implementation that was initially scheduled to start on 01/01/24 has been delayed until July thus giving the SHA more time to properly prepare. In response to Commissioner Warren's question, she explained what is expected to happen once the Plan is submitted to HUD and that if the HUD requires major changes to the Plan, the Board will be notified. Commissioner Warren questioned how not including information about audit findings could affect plan's approval and it was explained that it is unlikely that the plan will be rejected for that reason and that in 2023, the SHA was in a similar situation with no audit report available and the Plan was still approved. It is also possible that by the time the plan will be submitted to HUD, audit report will be available and the template will be updated.

In response to Chairman Labonte's question, Denise Jordan provided more feedback about the RAB meeting and reported that a lot of RAB participants expressed their satisfaction with the work of the SHA staff.

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

VOTED: to adopt Resolution #9819 to approve the SHA's FY25 Federal Annual Plan and FY2025-2029 5-year Plan and to certify compliance with the plan and related regulations.

Deputy Healy presented information about the roof replacement project at Moxon that will include replacing roof, fascia boards, gutters and downspouts at the Moxon property management office.

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

VOTED: to award a Contract to Larochelle Construction of South Hadley, MA, in the amount of Thirty-Six Thousand Dollars (\$36,000.00), for the Roof Replacement project at the Moxon Apartment's Property Management Office; appoint Executive Director, Denise R. Jordan as the Contracting Officer authorizing her to execute the contract.

The Board reviewed materials and recommendation to award a contract for purchasing security cameras equipment for Sullivan Apartments. Deputy Healy explained that the old cameras installed in 2008 are no longer properly working and need to be replaced with a new equipment (including cameras, recording and connectivity devices) and the existing infrastructure will be used. The equipment is similar to what has been installed recently at other developments and will be producing good quality imaging. The equipment will be installed by the SHA Electricians who will be checking wiring and replacing it if needed. Mr. Healy explained that the SHA reached out to 3 vendors but only one bid was submitted. In response to Commissioner Thomas's question, he said that the new cameras will be installed only on the exterior and will allow to monitor areas around, between and behind the buildings and near the storage area. He also explained that cameras can be watched from the office live or the staff can check recordings. In response to Chairman Labonte's comment regarding receiving only one bid, John Healy explained that surveillance cameras are on high demand with a lot of businesses installing security equipment using ARPA funds. In response to Commissioner Robles's question, Mr. Healy stated that licenses are included to the cost of the equipment.

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 Eastern Electronics of West Springfield, MA in the amount of Thirty-Three Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty-Eight Dollars and twenty-two Cents (\$33,838.22) for purchase of security camera equipment for Sullivan Apartments.

Deputy Healy presented the next item on the agenda and requested the Board to approve awarding a state contract for purchasing a new Ford pickup truck. He explained that this vehicle will be used for the state portfolio and will replace one of the old vehicles that the SHA has been using for many years. In response to Chairman Labonte's question, Mr. Healy explained how the purchasing process goes with state contracts. He said that the State does all the soliciting, advertising, then accepts vendors and then the SHA goes directly to them. Prices from different dealers are pretty much the same. Chairman Labonte questioned if it would have been cheaper to purchase using state contract or directly from a vendor and Mr. Healy responded that, in

his opinion, it will be cheaper and the vehicle that the SHA is purchasing includes a plow, a liftgate on the back, flashes, and lights on the top. In response to Chairman Labonte's question, Deputy Healy confirmed that the SHA has had a positive experience with Marcotte Ford.

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

VOTED: to award a contract to Marcotte Ford of 1025 Main Street Holyoke, MA to purchase a 2024 F-250 pickup with plow for Sixty-Two Thousand Three Hundred and Fifty Dollars. (\$62,350).

The Board reviewed materials and recommendation to award a contract for the 2025 automobile insurance. Deputy Healy explained that the contract will cover all fleet, including vehicles, trailers, sewer jets. 3 quotes were solicited and one vendor did not respond. Mr. Healy stated that he reached out to Housing Authority Insurance Group that provides general liability insurance to the SHA but their quote was \$63,000.

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

VOTED: to award a contract for 2025 Automobile Insurance to Arbella Insurance Group in care of HUB International 96 Shaker Road East Longmeadow, MA, in the amount of Forty-Seven Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty-Nine Dollars (\$47,829.00) based on a \$1,000.00 per occurrence deductible for the coverage period January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025; appoint Executive Director, Denise R. Jordan as the Contracting Officer authorizing her to execute the contract.

Executive Director Denise Jordan started her report by expressing her satisfaction with the fact that despite all the obstacles, the SHA has been able to continue serving its residents in 2024. She spoke about the changing role of local housing authorities and the challenges they meet that weren't a part of the public housing concept was developed. Ms. Jordan stated that rent delinquency continues to be a major issue for the SHA property management team and the RAFT program administered by Wayfinders is one of the reasons why some residents' back rent keeps growing while other tenants who might be eligible for assistance do not get approved. Director Jordan expressed her concern about how this issue is being addressed at the housing court.

Ms. Jordan continued her report by informing the Board about heating problems at the RAO that have been addressed. She also informed about attending an AIM meeting on Procurement Equity to address promoting minority, women and veterans owned business and stated that Deputy Healy continues his outreach to protected class vendors.

Denise Jordan reported that her annual meeting with the staff have been completed b meeting with the Finance Department and the Resident Services department. She recognized all the hard work of the Finance department in collecting and submitting all required financial data to EOHCD and HUD and also the work of the RS staff on organizing programs for SHA tenants. She stated that one of the biggest challenges for the RS is lack of participation and also lack of adequate space to organize events and programs for tenants.

Two residential units at Robinson Gardens are being used for some RS programs and the space is not enough and the SHA does not have funds to build a new Community room even though there is enough land within the development. Ms. Jordan added that the SHA is considering applying for funding to build a new community room and laundromat at Reed Village.

Executive Director Jordan praised the work of the SHA's Financial Advisor Jeimer [Parrilla] who has been working successfully with a lot of tenants, making connections with other agencies, including with Wayfinders to help those who need RAFT assistance.

Director Jordan informed the Board that the staff is comfortable with how transitioning to new software is going and it is her goal in 2025 to work on improving the SHA website.

Ms. Jordan continued her report by informing the Board about the phone call with IRS scheduled for December 18th to go over the information that SHA has provided to them. She also informed the Board that the SHA is still waiting for an update from the Delegation, regarding the historic housing bond bill allocations.

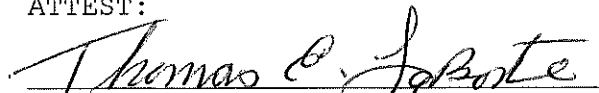
In response to Chairman Labonte and Commissioner Robles's questions, Ms. Jordan and Finance Director Austin Harris stated that most judges in housing courts do not proceed with eviction due to the housing crisis. HUD look into payment agreements through the Court and the State require LHAs to enter into agreement with tenants before bringing them to court for non-payment. Chairman Labonte expressed his concern that the court system creates a situation when residents are not held responsible for not paying rent and it can discourage those tenants who pay their rent. Ms. Jordan added that in addition to delinquency problems, the SHA has to deal with the growing number of requests for reasonable accommodation and some of those requests come from residents who want to get an extra bedroom to place medical equipment and the room is then used to house their family members.

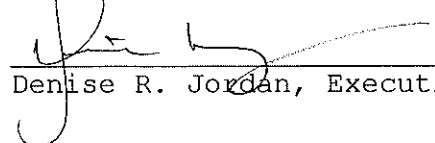
Commissioner Warren stated that he reviewed delinquency rates for the Alexandria Housing Authority and they also report low numbers for rent collection. Ms. Jordan confirmed that it is a nationwide issue among housing authorities.

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 Regular Meeting of the Springfield Housing Authority at 4:47 PM.

ATTEST:


Thomas Labonte, Chairman


Denise R. Jordan, Executive Director

