

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY
700 COUNTY ROAD
SECAUCUS, NEW JERSEY

May 26, 2016

This is a condensed transcription of the taped minutes as taken on Thursday, May 26, 2016 at The Elms, 777 Fifth Street, Secaucus, New Jersey commencing at 7:00 P.M.

SWEARING IN OF NEW COMMISSIONER

CARMEN RIVERA was duly sworn in at this time by Chairman Michael Harper as the Tenant Representative. **MICHAEL SCHLEMM** was duly reappointed for a five-year term of office

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Michael Harper
Commissioner Richard Fairman
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori
Commissioner Carmen Rivera
Commissioner Michael Schlemm

Also Present: Executive Director Christopher Marra
Deputy Executive Jake Naszimento
James Burke, Esq., Counsel to the Authority

Absent: Commissioner Michael Grecco
Commissioner Roger Adriaenssens

Executive Director Marra read the Open Public Meetings Act.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

“Adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, has been provided by the filing of a Regular Meeting Notice with the Municipal Clerk, the posting of said notice on the official bulletin board in the Municipal Government Center, and delivery of same to the Jersey Journal and Secaucus Homes News on December 12, 2015. This body wishes to advise you that, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 26:3D(1), et seq. (Smoking in Public Buildings), smoking is prohibited while this body is in open or closed session.”

FLAG SALUTE

(At this point in the proceeding, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Rivera and recited by all present.)

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 28, 2016 & APRIL 7, 2016 SPECIAL MEETING

Motion to accept minutes of both meetings made by Vice-Chairman Schlemm; seconded by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Grecco/Adriaenssens

Abstain: Rivera

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

In preparation for what ED Marra thought might be some questions on the bill list, he handed a detailed breakdown of Able Mechanical's total billing. Able Mechanical's total was a result of five different maintenance issues which were a result of the company's annual preventive maintenance contract with the SHA .

In addition, ED Marra noted the payment to the JIF which was the second of two payments for 2016.

Commissioner Fairman asked about SMUA - \$27,276, which is a once yearly charge, and covers the three properties of SHA. Commissioner Schlemm inquired about Unicorn. ED Marra answered that is for the twice yearly carpet cleaning and waxing.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Fairman; seconded by Vice-Chairman Schlemm.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)
Absent: Grecco/Adriaenssens

RENTAL ASSISTANCE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM (RAD)

ED Marra explained all the documents for the Financing Plan were uploaded and provided to HUD. SHA has now begun its conversation with "transaction manager". This was held on April 25 with Bill Snyder, Lisa Petrosky and ED Marra on the telephone. HUD sent back a few pieces of information and has questions about SHA's PCA and want things added back into PCA. SHA doesn't know what those might be, but are probably regarding appliances and kitchen things. SHA will probably have to provide how many refrigerators and stoves

have been replaced over the past two years. Bathrooms in two buildings have been replaced in the past six years, which are not things HUD can talk about. It was a good conversation with the HUD woman. Bill and Lisa are dealing with her regarding another housing authority as well. The woman mentioned SHA only had four projects in their PCA. Her bosses are looking for more. She did send Mr. Marra an email with a list of things that need to be included and what needs to be done. Once SHA has it settled, all that has to be done is for her to go to her Supervisor and get it approved, which happens in one day. It does not go to a committee, because SHA is not relocating residents; not changing bedroom configurations of SHA units; not doing anything that is super-disruptive. She believes that the entire process can be accomplished in 120 days, meaning September here.

Bogota Savings Bank Finance Commitment Letter – ED Marra knows that each of the Commissioners has a copy. He has not signed the letter from them. Commissioner Schlemm and Commissioner Fairman sent back immediate replies after ED Marra sent out the email about the fact that in the Commitment Letter, there was no discussion about how they were going to hold this rate until December 31st. Bill Ketchan and Lisa Petrosky have been in conversations with Bogota SB. SHA is waiting to get a revised letter from them. One question in an email that ED Marra speaks about, is the fact that this has not turned into a commitment letter yet, because SHA doesn't have the final, final number of what SHA may need to borrow. For example, if HUD says you have to do these things and SHA needs to borrow \$2.4 million, the closer you get to the actual number, that's when it will be converted into a true commitment.

Commissioner Fairman was concerned with regards to the preamble letter as it is not a commitment letter. They do not commit to the rate or the date of 12/31/16. ED Marra said they did mention a 3.375% rate, but not how long it would be offered. Lisa said if three months from now you decided to get financing from someone else, HUD would not care what SHA did. ED Marra told the Commissioners they would see the new commitment letter before he signs it.

SOFTWARE

ED Marra informed the Commissioners that SHA uses software called "Visual Homes". Everyone uses it in the Housing Authority, which is basically for the waiting lists; managing the 275 apartments; 250 vouchers; managing work orders. SHA probably has this software 15 years. About five years ago, a company called ardebought Visual Homes. While they maintained it, they are not upgrading Visual Homes to address the Project Based Voucher System of the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program. However, Yardi has another program called "Voyager", which is a web-based program. If SHA chooses this, we will not be required to be purchase Cloud storage or a new server. It saves SHA \$2,000. Yardee has given SHA a quote of \$13,000 for the annual licenses for six licenses. It's about \$11,800 right now for what is spent on Visual Homes. SHA on

Thursday, June 9th, all Staff, Office Staff and Aaron Green are going to go into the Conference Room and have a go-to meeting session with Yardee showing SHA the new program, how it works, answer all the questions and SHA will see if this is something that SHA should convert to, as it will be needed on January 1, 2017.

Commissioner Schlemm asked regarding infrastructure-wise, how is SHA set up: computers, speed of network? Mr. Marra answered Aaron Green said SHA has enough. It will be confirmed on June 9th.

ED Marra spoke about Frank Borin, Esq. from DeCotiis. Each of Commissioner at their Commissioner classes was told that Housing Authorities having Cooperation Agreements in a file, easy to find. ED Marra said there are none and he hasn't found any for the three buildings. He requested the town go through their Resolution list, they found one Cooperation Agreement from 1985, which appeared to be for Lincoln Towers, but noted in the Resolution it was only for 50 units, but Lincoln has 100 units. Mr. Marra tomorrow is going through every box to find it. Mr. Snyder insists there is one for Kroll Heights; you just have to find the original application to HUD.

Mr. Marra asked if anyone had questions concerning RAD. Commissioner Schlemm said something was sent to local Finance Board. ED Marra said the Supplemental Application was sent in and SHA will be heard in June.

FINANCE

ED Marra noted the monthly bank account balances are listed; results of New Jersey SEM are there. All the accounts will now be handled by South Jersey Energy Corporation. After 11 months, \$7,300 has been saved. In the transition months you save money, but in cold months you don't save any nor the warm months, but April-June you do. Commissioner Schlemm commented that he didn't believe Direct Energy was saving any money for SHA.

BUILDING & GROUNDS

At the last meeting, two architect engineering companies were hired: Aparri is one. There will be a new air-conditioner and air-handler at The Elms. The equipment is from 1975 and needs to be replaced. It is interesting to note that the condenser, which is in the back of the building, may have to be relocated as there is concern that the line, which connects it here, is actually under the building and has a crack in it. Able Mechanical has been servicing it, put in Freon, and had to put it in again because it didn't take. Commissioner Fairman asked what the line does. Mr. Marra said it provides the air-conditioning from outside, under the building and into the Community Room. Thought is being given to moving the condenser to right outside the Community Room. Discussion followed about where it might be placed in the corner outside.

The Housing Authority also hired DLB Associates to work on the heating systems for Kroll Heights. ED Marra handed out a report this evening from DLB Associates he received via email. Buildings & Grounds will meet June 6th or 7th with two engineering companies to discuss what they sent. DLB wrote a nice 5-page report plus 10 pages of photos telling of how much new controller might cost (\$25,000).

New Medical Alarm System installed at The Elm

DED Naszimento spoke about the new Medical Alarm System installed at The Elms by Union Alarmtronics. It took one day to install with just a few complaints. It seems that when a button is pressed on any one particular floor, there is a loud noise that goes off. Residents have requested noise be turned off, which Company is willing to do. ED Marra explained when someone pressed button on 4th floor, which was the first night of installation, on that line on that floor, the alarm went off. Box is next to the elevator now. People came out of their units and then everyone knows who is in need of medical assistance. Prior to this, if you pressed the alarm and you lived in #418, the ambulance just went to #418. Union Alarmtronics is going to lower that alarm, as it is not necessary. Protocol is changed also. First, call emergency services, then phone call to tenant. Commissioner Fairman asked what the cost was; DED Naszimento answered \$10,000 for installation. Other types were \$40,000. It is being paid for with the Capital Fund.

600 County Avenue, Unit GO1

ED Marra reported Unit GO1 is ready for occupancy, and has been leased as of July 1st. There has been significant rain in May with no water infiltration into the apartment. It was probably, most likely the broken storm water pipes behind the shower.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM

DED Naszimento reported in May there were 219 active vouchers. A little under budget was spent - \$182,000. Five new vouchers have been issued to families, who are searching for a place to live. SEMAP was submitted this month. Last year SHA did not get a perfect score. The inspection protocol is being changed to UPCS. HUD is going to begin demonstrating this new method and hopefully SHA can be a part of the demonstration and get a certification along with that. SHA has to spend money for the three maintenance men, DED Naszimento and ED Marra to be HQS certified – Housing Quality Standard Certified. If and when the standards are changed, everyone will have to be retrained again to get new certification.

Mr. Naszimento informed the Commissioners that the Admin. Fee is being changed/increased to 84% proration, which was 79%, and that will affect some of the families that don't live in town and different agencies as to how much they receive for each family. Commissioner Fairman asked what that equated to. Mr. Naszimento said \$53.63. ED Marra added that is what SHA gets as an Admin. Fee on the 219 vouchers.

Memo added to Commissioners' Packets

ED Marra talked about an email and the fact that Lisa Snedeker has spoken with him for a while about seniors living in the three buildings have gone to 101 Center Avenue over time and said that SHA no longer offers residents any kind of recreational "arts and crafts" activities – no program. The program did stop at 12/31/2013 when staff had to be reassigned after Denise retired. Lisa is thinking of providing SHA with two people twice a week – one day here/one day there, three hours. They would provide all the materials, coffee and cake. SHA would reimburse Secaucus on a quarterly basis at \$12/hour that these two people doing arts/crafts with seniors would cost. ED Marra thinks it should be started and an attendance sheet kept for every one of the classes. If only five people come, it will not be continued; 15-20 people come once a week would be acceptable. It will be in the daytime, finding the correct three hour window. ED Marra is looking for feedback from the Commissioners – pros and cons. Perhaps in six months, it will be reviewed again and check the attendance numbers. If attendance isn't good, then he would go back to the town and say attendance isn't good – 175 apartments and only 5-6 showing up. Everyone will get a note on their door – the date in their building, times, turn the air on. Chairman Harper believes it is a worthwhile project to consider. Mr. Marra added there were no classes in 2014-2016. Linda Fanning did do it one day a week here and also at Kroll and The Towers. The Elms is painting; Kroll was like a knitting class. Commissioner Fairman asked about the high school student that ran a concise, defined program a few years ago for a month.

MISCELLANEOUS

Chairman Harper applauded Michael Schlemm for his continuing support and happy to have him on the Board for another five years. He also greeted Carmen Rivera as the new Tenant Representative, a crossing guard, and thanked Mayor Gonnelli for his fine choices. Chairman Harper also reminded those present to get out and vote on Primary Day, June 7th.

REMARKS OF CITIZENS

MRS. MASTROPIETRO asked about the new alarm and if someone would know if you were in the Laundry Room when you pressed the button. Jake said a button is being installed in the Laundry Room and the Community Room. ED

Marra will get her a firm answer on Monday. At this time, he thinks the alarm is just signed to your unit.

VINCENT added they do not work outside the building. His did, however, go off when he was on the bus. The emergency medical team did not show up at The Elms, but Vincent was called first. It happened on the day they were installed.

VINCENT said the stoves and ovens in The Elms are terrible. He just got a "new" used stove last week. Chairman Harper admits they were not a good purchase.

One woman complained about the cable company, COMCAST, and could they get someone else. Mr. Marra said no, there is only cable provider in Secaucus and it is Comcast. Commissioner Fairman told them to email New Jersey BPU where they can fill out a complaint. It is a very simple, one-page procedure.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Rivera; seconded by Commissioner Schlemm.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)
Absent: Grecco /Adriaenssens

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber