

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

January 23, 2020

This is a condensed transcription of the taped minutes as taken on Thursday, January 23, 2020, Kroll Heights, 700 County Road, Secaucus, New Jersey.

Vice-Chairman Michael Harper called the meeting to order.

**SWEARING IN OF RAJKUMAR PARDASANI**

Vice-Chairman Harper introduced Rajkumar Pardasani as newest Commissioner to Secaucus Housing Authority, appointed by Governor Murphy. Mr. Pardasani gave a brief background of his 21 year residency in Secaucus.

Mr. D'Amico swore Rajkumar Pardasani in at this point.

**ROLL CALL**

Present:

Vice-Chairman Michael Harper  
Commissioner Richard Fairman  
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori  
Commissioner Rajkumar Pardasani  
Commissioner Carmen Rivera  
Commissioner Antonio Suarez

Also Present:

Executive Director Christopher Marra  
Deputy Executive Director Jake Naszimento  
Charles D'Amico, Esq., Counsel to the Authority  
William Katchen, CPA

Absent: Chairman Michael Schlemm

Acting Chairman Harper 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 on December 18, 2019. 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 – proudly led by Zoe, Carrigan, London and Ava – Soccer Stars**

(Commissioner Harper announced it was Carrigan Harper's and Executive Director Christopher Marra's birthdays. Happy Birthday sung by all present and cake for everyone in the audience.)

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – December 12, 2019**

Motion to accept minutes made by Commissioner Rivera; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Fairman.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4) Abstain: Suarez/Pardasani  
Absent: Schlemm

**PAYMENT OF CLAIMS – DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020**

Commissioner Fairman asked about many different office supply purchases from different locations. ED Marra explained certain items are purchased mostly from Staples or Sam's Club – copy paper, envelopes, cartridges. High Touch supplies certain specific items necessary for office.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Mondadori; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Fairman.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6) Absent: Schlemm

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

VC Harper noted William Katchen, CPA, will introduce HUD Budget and NJDCA Budget this evening. ED Marra said Mr. Katchen will give overview of budget actual through 12/31/19 before going into other areas.

Mr. Katchen gave an extensive explanation of 9 months fiscal report, which was received by ED Marra on January 22, 2020 and copies given to Commissioners. SHA has 2 programs: Converted Public Housing Program to RAD – 275 units; Housing Choice Voucher Program – 250 tenant based and 275 RAD converted units. Housing Choice Voucher Program - \$2,543,790 expended in housing assistance repayment to landlords – SHA being largest landlord through Leased Housing Corp. SHA received funding of \$2,876,673, including a withdrawal of HUD held funds – resulting in after netting out rents to landlords against funding received is for 9 months – unrestricted surplus in HCVP in excess of revenue over expenses of \$147,503.

Other budget actual is Operations of 275 units. Revenue exceeds the budget by \$257,377; total expenditures exceed budget by \$61,115 – ED Marra spending money on projects that might come out of Reserve for Repair & Replacement, but is not. ED Marra is using operational dollars not money put aside in Reserve area. Even after that excess to revenue over expenses for 9 month period ended is \$390,599. Excess of revenue over expenses for 9 months is over half million dollars, expecting no change from January-March except in utilities.

Two budgets to be considered tonight: HUD form of budget even though SHA converted to RAD; HUD still requires SHA consider a budget comparable to public housing budget, which is specific to 275 units only, which anticipates a surplus of \$289,655 after consideration of \$100,000 for capital projects. Last year's surplus - \$259,000; anticipating \$289,000 this year; but in actuality its \$390,000 for 9 months. Only resolution goes to HUD, not budget.

Second budget is consideration of, if Board so approves, introduction – ED Marra signs, sends to State before February 1<sup>st</sup> (60 days before start of new fiscal year). This anticipates total revenue of \$6,148,514; total expenditures of \$5,857,803; resulting in a new surplus cost projected of \$290,711.

(Mr. Katchen directed Commissioners to Landscape Page F1 and went into more detail.) Some possible projects: when work completed at The Elms; resurface that building; more doors at 600 County Avenue and other projects at The Elms including bathrooms. If approved, ED Marra will send to State, they will "scrub" it within their purview. Page F8 – SHA anticipates surplus at end of next year about \$1.8 million for both programs, not including Restricted Reserve for Repair & Replacements. Conversion to RAD has been very successful. Commissioner Fairman asked for explanation of \$1.8 million on F8. Mr. Katchen complied. Under GASBY 78, SHA is required to present value the future value of what it will cost for retirees; that number is \$2,603,885. Commissioner Fairman noted differences between F1 – Operating Budget – other one is more Funds Balance Sheet type presentation. If someone asked what is surplus projected to be on RAD units - \$1,515,795 absent receivables and payables. Housing Voucher Program \$301,793. State also looks at SHA web site after receiving budget to see if what is supposed to be on web site is there. ED Marra told Commissioners HUD wants everyone to convert to RAD. Commissioner Fairman worries about showing a large surplus; spend the money on soft costs relative to depleting funded reserves – believing that's in SHA's best interest. Mr. Katchen answered SHA on same footing as private owners. During good & bad times, HUD never stepped up to hurt private owners; they all continued to flourish. Mr. Katchen explained about rents at SHA compared to private owners. SHA owes \$2,339,851; perhaps looking into the future and paying down some of the debt service. Commissioner Fairman would prefer to spend money on property as compared to sending it to lender. Mr. Katchen suggested moving surplus into R&R, making it available for capital projects.

SHA is only Authority using Bogota Bank. Mr. Marra added they only ask SHA for 3 things: audit; proof of insurance and rent roll at end of the year. VC Harper told the audience Mr. Katchen works with many authorities throughout the State and is well-known. Mr. Katchen answered SHA is probably #3 in being most healthy: #1 – Hackensack; #2 – Cliffside Park; #3 Secaucus; #4 – Summit. There are 83 housing authorities in New Jersey.

Motion to approve Resolution #2020-1 and Resolution #2020-2 made by Commissioner Suarez; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)                      Absent: Schlemm

(Mr. Katchen left the meeting at 7:38 P.M.)

ED Marra said Commissioners have monthly account balances in their packets. Next month 2 accounts: REHAB ACC and IDRR - \$18,996 – will be put into REHAB Account Money Market. IDRR @ \$51,000 is getting merged into IDRR money market @ \$800,000 for better interest rates.

Monthly Savings Report on Electric Consortium from NJSEM sent to Commissioners and notice about NJSEM's **opt out date**, which is around February 11<sup>th</sup>. SHA has to tell them before February 19<sup>th</sup> if SHA is leaving. Annual insurance bill for SHA property, liability, etc. and other bill is Public Employees Retirement System Bill – FYI Commissioners' information. Copy of check SHA received in January for 2<sup>nd</sup> time for having antennas on roof going from \$30,000 to \$30,900 – 3% increase. Between now and February's meeting, ED Marra hopes to have meeting for each committees: Finance & Professional Services together; Policy and Buildings and Grounds. Mr. Suarez will just be on B&G; Mr. Pardasani will be Finance; Policy will be with Commissioners Mondadori and Rivera; B&G will be Commissioners Harper, Schlemm and Suarez.

In packet is proposal from Lee Mestres to renovate bathrooms in Kroll Heights – not to replace tub or floor, but to replace toilet, vanity, sink and medicine chest; paint the unit and change light fixture. Lee as architect would design it, go out to bid and have started by end of 2020. No vote needed, just a Professional Service Agreement.

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

Policy Committee Meeting – there is authorization for Annual Authorization to Attend Conferences. VC Harper explained to Commissioner Pardasani about availability of attending these conferences, suggesting November 17-19 in Atlantic City, NJNAHRO Conference and March one in Washington, D.C.

**RESOLUTION #2020-3**  
**(Authorization to Attend Conferences)**

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus attempts to remain current on issues that affect the administration of its housing programs; and

WHEREAS, there are several industry recognized organizations that conduct seminars and conferences that are of importance and interest to the staff and Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority; NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that those interested Commissioners and staff are hereby authorized to attend the following conferences:

PHADA Annual Convention & Exhibition  
May 31 – June 3, 2020 Denver, CO

PHADA Legislative Forum  
September 11-13, 2020, Washington DC

PHADA Commissioner's Conference  
January 10-13, 2020 Lake Buena Vista, Orlando, FL

NJAHRA Annual Conference  
September 2020 - Atlantic City, NJ

NJNAHRO-Conference  
May 3-6 2020, Atlantic City, NJ

NJNAHRO Conference & Training  
November 17-19, 2020, Atlantic City

NAHRO Legislative Conference  
March 29-31, 2020 Washington, D.C.

NAHRO Summer Conference  
July 23 – July 25 2020 New York, NY

NAHRO National Conference  
October 1-3, 2020 Orlando, FL

Motion to approve Resolution #2020-3 – ANNUAL AUTHORIZATION TO ATTEND CONFERENCES made by Commissioner Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)                      Absent: Schlemm

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

BREAKER BOXES AT THE ELMS

Mr. Mestres recommends this company. Bids were from \$61,400 to \$168,000. They did same job in Englewood Housing Authority in 2016.

**RESOLUTION #2020-4 – AWARD OF CONTRACT TO ACL ELECTRIC TO  
CHANGE 100 BREAKER BOXES AT THE ELMS**

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus (hereinafter referred to as SHA) has determined that it needs to procure services for the above-captioned work item; and

WHEREAS, SHA has published in the newspaper an invitation to bid; and

WHEREAS, the SHA received bids from six (6) bidders on Tuesday, January 7, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on the public opening of the bids ACI Electrical Contractor, Inc., Wyckoff, NJ with a base bid of \$61,400 was found to be the lowest responsible bidder pursuant to both N.J.S.A. 40A:11-2 and N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4;and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted by Company has been reviewed by the architectural firm of Habitech Architecture who recommended the contract be awarded to Company; and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted by Company has been reviewed and deemed by the SHA to be both responsive and conforming with all requirements set forth by the New Jersey Public Contracts Law, the bid specifications and the invitation to bid,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of the SHA hereby finds that the contract for the above captioned work items as described in the bid specifications and drawings, be awarded to ACI Electrical Contractor, Inc., 548 Oldwoods Road, Wyckoff, NJ 07481 in the amount of \$61,400; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners hereby authorize and Direct the Executive Director of the SHA to execute said contract and take any and all necessary administrative actions to implement this Resolution.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Fairman; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)                      Absent: Schlemm

Fire pump, motor pump and jockey pump will start as soon as permit received from Town of Secaucus; contractor didn't submit all of needed paperwork. Should start in early February.

ED Marra sent Board members memo on December 18<sup>th</sup> with list of projects for three buildings – long and short term. Mr. Marra shared list with maintenance men and requested they add projects he'd forgotten. This will be for next 2-3 years in terms of what has to be done. One building built in 1975/one in 1986 and they contain original pieces of equipment – roof fans at The Elms from 1975. Motor changed, but fan has outlived its useful life.

The Elms Community Room updated: painted, new flooring installed; piano removed; bingo machine received from 600 County which is fully functional; broken chairs removed. ED Marra would like to do it here – take up rug and put down vinyl flooring; change lighting

## **HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM – DED Jake Naszimento**

DED Naszimento explained to new Commissioner Pardasani SHA in addition to managing Project Based Voucher Program, also runs a Housing Choice Voucher Program – Section 8 – to help low income families of Secaucus pay their rents to private landlords. For month of January 2020 – 204 individual landlord transactions – 5 families get help paying utilities; \$176,953 was sent to landlords for January, mostly send electronically – direct deposit; \$6,781 in paper checks including \$191 sent for utilities. 15 families outside of Secaucus, but originally from Secaucus – and \$19,968.08 was spent. 5 families are searching for housing in Secaucus; SHA currently not issuing any new vouchers at this time.

## **OTHER**

A validation report received contained 8-9 items needing to be corrected. People came to office for 3 days in September; many questions answered. It will be discussed more at Finance Committee – much involved Voucher Management System. SHA did not receive a “severe” but SHA has corrections that need to be made. You mail them back when corrections are done – 95% done by Mr. Katchen’s office. Our staff supplies information, they do report and send it back to them. January 15<sup>th</sup> was deadline, but ED Marra asked for 30 day extension to February 15<sup>th</sup>, which was granted.

SHA entered a law suit a few years ago against HUD to hopefully recapture some money taken from SHA in 2012. First law suit completed and people got their money. SHA jumped in on 2<sup>nd</sup> law suit and now asking for additional \$300, which is small compared to what will be received back. ED Marra is recommending SHA send them \$300 check, as process is about 90% complete. They’re in an appeal and need the \$300.

ED Marra spoke about Exchange is proposing a 25-story development at train station. They still owe Town of Secaucus some affordable housing units, which are not going to be included in 25-story development. People in an affordable unit can also have a voucher. Commissioner Fairman asked: are checks from that program going to that property for affordable housing that SHA administers. Yes is answer. He also asked how many it is. DED Naszimento answered they are SHA’s biggest Section 8 landlord, having less than 40 Section 8 tenants there averaging perhaps \$1,000/month. Commissioner Fairman also asked if all of the units are located in one building over there; will there be any Section 8 or HCV apartments in 25-story building. DED Naszimento said no, and explained more fully. ED Marra added Exchange built “luxury buildings” and didn’t put

affordable units in those buildings; VC Harper said they have to give a percentage of affordable units, not at same physical site. Further discussion about this subject followed.

## **REMARKS OF CITIZENS**

CAROL STEWART, Apt. #216 – where does the \$30,900 go? ED Marra answered into General Fund for operation of Authority. It is non-Federal funds paid every year for 15 years with 2 five-year options.

MRS. MINIVINNI, Apt. #509 – people are still smoking on 5<sup>th</sup> floor. ED Marra spoke about No Smoking Policy; back page of notice says: there is an escalated enforcement of the policy. If person continues to smoke, ED Marra pays personal visit, which he did. If another time, they are sent warning letter, which he has done. If another time, they are sent Notice to Cease, a letter you receive right before Eviction Notice. SHA hasn't gotten to Eviction yet. Mrs. Minervini said there are 2 on 5<sup>th</sup> floor, not just one. Mr. Marra has to follow the rules and just keep on top of problem.

Mrs. Minervini said she had water again in corner of her living room, not near air-conditioner.

Commissioner Fairman asked what step is SHA at with regard to eviction. ED Marra said next step is Notice to Cease in this particular building. ED Marra is working on Notice to Cease letters for The Elms; then this building, which is occurring every week. Copies of emails and letters are sent also to Responsible Party for the tenant. No action has been taken under Zero Tolerance as of this date, but closer in The Elms.

The Authority then passed a resolution to go into closed executive session

## **SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY RESOLUTION NO. 2020-5 AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**WHEREAS**, while the Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) requires all meetings of the Secaucus Housing Authority to be held in public, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) sets forth nine (9) types of matters that may lawfully be discussed in “Executive Session,” i.e. without the public being permitted to attend, and

**WHEREAS**, the Secaucus Housing Authority has determined that   3   (insert number) issues are permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) to be discussed without the public in attendance shall be discussed during an Executive Session to be held on   January 23  , 2020 at 7:50 P.M, and

**WHEREAS**, the nine (9) exceptions to public meetings set forth in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) are listed below, and next to each exception is a box within which **the number** of issues to be privately discussed that fall within that exception shall be written, and after each exception is a



space where additional information that will disclose as much information about the discussion as possible without undermining the purpose of the exception shall be written.

2

**“(3) Any material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material of any educational, training, social service, medical, health, custodial, child protection, rehabilitation, legal defense, welfare, housing, relocation, insurance and similar program or institution operated by a public body pertaining to any specific individual admitted to or served by such institution or program, including but not limited to information relative to the individual's personal and family circumstances, and any material pertaining to admission, discharge, treatment, progress or condition of any individual, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or incompetent, his guardian) shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly.”** The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_;

1

**“(7) Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer.”** The parties to and docket numbers of each item of litigation and/or the parties to each contract discussed are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_;

**WHEREAS**, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be 35 minutes after which the public meeting of the Secaucus Housing Authority shall (circle one) reconvene and immediately adjourn or reconvene and proceed with business.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Commissioners of the Secaucus Housing Authority will go into Executive Session for **only** the above stated reasons;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Commissioners hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) will be made public at a time when the public's interest in disclosure is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure. For each of the above items, the estimated date by which such disclosure can be made and/or the occurrence that needs to take place before disclosure can be made are listed below (attach separate sheet if necessary)

Subject of Discussion	Estimated Date	Necessary Occurrence
Tenant Violation	TBD	
Tenants Violation	TBD	
HA Activity	TBD	

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Secretary, at the present public meeting, shall read aloud enough of this resolution so that members of the public in attendance can understand, as precisely as possible, the nature of the matters that will privately discussed.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Secretary, on the next business day following this meeting, shall furnish a copy of this resolution to any member of the public who requests one at the fees allowed by N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Harper, Chairperson

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF THE RESOLUTION APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY AT ITS PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON January 23 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher Marra, Secretary

The Authority then came back from closed session and adjourned the meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Suarez; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)                      Absent: Schlemm

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez  
Transcriber/Secretary