

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF SALEM
September 25, 2014

A regular meeting of the Salem Housing Authority Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, September 25, 2014 at the Broadway Tower Community Room, 205 Seventh Street in Salem, New Jersey. The meeting convened at 5:04 p.m.

Chairwoman Call announced the Sunshine Law requirement had been met, properly posted and advertised. Paul Dice, Executive Director, proceeded to call the roll at this time. Present were: Chairwoman Rebecca Gower Call, Commissioner John Thomas, and Commissioner Cathy Lanard. Commissioner Santos was absent. Also present was Solicitor Adam Telsey and City Liaison Horace Johnson.

Chairwoman Call asked for a motion to approve the June 26, 2014 minutes. Commissioner Lanard made the motion and Commissioner Thomas seconded. All present were in favor.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Executive Director Dice introduced two people from One Village Alliance, Ms. Chandra Pitts, Director and Mr. Calvin Harmon, Board Chairman. He advised there is a lease and MOU in the packets to bring social services to the SHA community.

Ms. Pitts gave information to the Commissioners showing the types of programming her organization has done. She explained that education is their main approach to children. They utilize volunteers – teens and adults. They want to make radical changes in the community. Ms. Pitts discussed the various programs they will offer. She believes we can build a foundation with this partnership with SHA. Her goal is to build a “community that cares” with strong families who learn skills and get connections to jobs. She will collaborate with as many other agencies as possible.

Mr. Dice said he likes the holistic approach this organization utilizes. He believes One Village Alliance will serve as the lead agency to bring in the services and people that can make a difference to our tenants. He explained that the proposal includes a lease to have them take over the administrative space at West Side Court. They will be running programs in the community room at both West Side Court and Anderson Drive. At the Anderson Drive facility the memorandum of understanding states that One Village Alliance will only have program space. They will be trying to bring in programs for children. There is no charge for this lease. Ms. Pitts grew up in the neighborhood and is serious about transforming the community.

Ms. Pitts advised some of the areas they will focus on are: computer skills, culinary arts and nutrition training. The after school programming provides academic support – not just homework help. Making learning relevant is their goal. We must work together to build the resources.

Mr. Dice advised there have been a couple of changes to the lease that is in front of the Commissioners. He explained our lawyer has reviewed this lease and believes everything can be worked out.

Commissioner Lanard expressed concerns that administrative personnel will work 25 to 30 hours per week, but finds no guarantee in the agreement regarding actual hours for programming. She asked if the organization uses only volunteers, and if so, who is responsible for them. Ms. Pitts replied that her organization is responsible for the volunteers. They are required to do background checks on all volunteers. One Village Alliance is a certified education agency. They will bring \$53,000 in programming and services, and carry the required liability insurance. Ms. Pitts advised some of her staff will be moved from one location and another position will be created on site for the 25 to 30 hours – a position to be filled from within the Salem community. Commissioner Lanard said she called an agency One Alliance had done business with located in Carney's Point. This agency reported they were not happy with One Alliance's services. Ms. Pitts advised they were in Carney's Point for an SES tutoring program that NJ Dept. of Education required of the school district. There was a mandate for 27 tutoring organizations to come in and take over academic support. The school system did not like that they had to lend free space with access to all of their families. The whole program was a wreck. The Federal Government said it didn't work. Carney's Point sought out another agency after that ended.

Commissioner Lanard also expressed concern with bringing strangers into the public housing community. She does not believe they want strangers on the property. Chairwoman Call said she believes that what she is hearing from the tenants attending the board meetings is that they want change. She thinks One Village Alliance will be a good fit because they work with people in various organizations and will get residents involved. She advised they are already connected with the students in the school. Chairwoman Call also said that according to the lease, if it doesn't work, both sides are able to say "let's try something else".

Ms. Pitts advised that she is from Salem and she is not afraid by this push-back. A few of the tenants present at the meeting expressed concern that Salem Housing Authority should fix up the apartments and clean up the complex before moving someone into the community rooms. Paul Dice said that no one is shying away from the fact that there's a lot that needs to be done in the apartments. Maintenance Supervisor, Alan Gregory will continue to do this. We have a contractor in right now to help with new floors. Other residents responded that we are focusing on empty units and not responding to work requests in the apartments where tenants reside.

Ms. Pitts stated that One Village Alliance does not want to bring children into a dangerous situation. They want to help clean the area up and make it safer. She advised that Mr. Dice knew she was from this area and said it was the only way he would consider our organization. We are here because children are dying. She said she knows Mr. Dice can't pay them because he needs money to fix the apartments.

Commissioner Lanard said she also spoke to Miss Phillips at Harvest Point who said she was very happy with the program. They were not happy with the computer program because no one participated. However, she liked the summer program.

Mr. Dice told those present that all of their comments about the conditions at SHA are true. There are limited resources and it will take time to make things right. He knows we have got to continue to focus on maintenance. He recently hired 5 employees from Lacivita who are helping us right now.

Tenants present expressed how they don't like the maintenance men we have at SHA. Robert Maldonado was the best maintenance man and now he is gone. They raised complaints that hundreds of people come through the back gate at West Side Court because it is open. They asked that we gate the community. Mr. Dice said there is no way to gate it. Someone mentioned they did not know about the Section 8 waiting list opening. Mr. Dice advised the public is not aware that there is only one Housing Choice Voucher available. Salem has a total of 30 vouchers and twenty-nine have been given out. He further advised there will be a public opening to pull the 60 applications that will make up the final HCV waiting list.

Mr. Dice advised that we need to get back on the topic of One Village Alliance and that there has been an opposing view registered. Commissioner Thomas said he is excited about what Ms. Pitts had to say. Commissioner Lanard reiterated that she does not want to have something that brings strangers into the community. Ms. Pitts advised she is agreeable to Commissioner Lanard's request. Chairwoman Call said she hates to put too many restrictions on the agency, but believes this is a starting point. She advised we will have discussions as time goes on. Executive Director Dice told those present that if this doesn't work, we will go back to square one. Mr. Horace Johnson said he thinks it is a big plus having a Salem resident who wants to come and provide these services at no cost. Ms. Pitts stated the organization will be coming there with a one year lease, and that either party can decide to dissolve the agreement after 90 days. Mr. Johnson said we must all have patience.

Mr. Dice announced there is a new employee, Stephen DeSario. Stephen is our new Lease Enforcement Officer who will help us with investigations. He is currently getting his feet wet.

Chairwoman Call advised she would like to close this portion of the public session and take action on the resolution for One Village Alliance. Before doing so, Mr. Dice said he wanted to go through some of the changes in the lease. Some of the revisions include an option for renewal if everyone is in agreement; One Village Alliance would only be liable for damages if they occur as a result of negligence; SHA will provide snow removal and all general landscaping. The landlord (SHA) will pay the taxes. One Village Alliance Board Chairman Calvin Harmon stated he is concerned about the 90 day clause which states either party can terminate the lease. He believes he has heard so many things from the audience and board during this meeting that termination could occur before they can even get started. He advised One Village Alliance is committed and must pay salaries. Chairwoman Call tried to explain that the housing authority reasoning all came about because of a previous agreement with another organization. This organization brought people onto the property that caused our residents to feel unsafe.

Chairwoman Call said she would feel comfortable, after listening to the tenants at the meeting express their desire to work with One Village Alliance, having a 9 month guarantee with a 90-day clause - essentially a one year contract. Ms. Pitts is happy about the security cameras on the property and that they work and will be monitored. Chairwoman Call said she would be happy to arrange a meeting between Ms. Pitts and the Chief of Police.

Solicitor Telsey advised that based on what the board just went through, his suggestion would be to vote on a resolution noting the changes as amended based on the red-line. Commissioner Lanard moved to vote on the amended lease and Commissioner Thomas seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Dice advised the Resolution for a Memorandum of Understanding with One Village Alliance will have the wording changed to reflect a minimum pilot period of one year for a sustainable plan for continuous success. Heather Santoro of Millville comes with the shared service agreement. Section 1C is clarifying space at Anderson Drive. Commissioner Lanard made the motion and Commissioner Thomas seconded. All were in favor.

Executive Director Dice introduced Tony Polcari from Policari & Company to explain the Audit included in the Commissioner's board packets. Mr. Polcari advised the September 2013 Audit has been completed. From the CPA's perspective, the purpose of the Audit is to have an independent party look at the Authority's numbers. They also must look at whether the housing authority is complying with government control standards to say that money was spent correctly and to determine if the organization complied with federal government regulations. He said an example of this would be whether we had annual inspections and annual recertification's of tenants. Mr. Polcari advised the report for September 2013 is positive in all these areas. Financial statements were fairly presented and most internal controls complied with HUD requirements. The one exception dealt with the SHA waiting list procedure. In some of the transactions that went back to 2012, he found instances where he could not prove that tenants were properly taken off the waiting list. The new management team has corrected this and has responded to HUD. HUD has closed that finding. Back in Sept. 2012 the SHA had five deficiencies. The management met with HUD when MHA came on board and we have since have had those findings closed. At the current time there are no outstanding deficiencies with HUD. Mr. Polcari said that this is a substantial accomplishment. As far as the SHA financial position, he reported that as of September 2012, the SHA had lost about \$100,000 and had reserves of \$23,000. In January of 2013, Mitch Moore, Paul Dice and Tony Polcari started working on changes in personnel and utilizing capital fund money to help with operating expenses. As a result, the SHA finished in 2013 with an increase of \$20,000 to operating reserves. However, Mr. Polcari said that amount is still not enough. Ratio's that are key to our HUD scoring include unrestricted cash vs liabilities. In 2012 the quick ratio was 1.49%. By the end of 2013 it was 1.99%. At the end of 2014 the ratio looks like it will be 2.89%. Mr. Polcari said that means for every dollar we owe, we have 2,089 in cash. That means there is enough to cover the liability. Mr. Polcari said that the overall message is that SHA has improved in all of

its financial scores since 2012. This year our score should be twenty-one (21). The score in 2013 was 13.45. In 2012 we got a zero. We got a zero because there were audit deficiencies and HUD takes more points off when deficiencies are found. Our unrestricted cash increased about \$50,000 per year for the last two years and it is very important we keep on this track. In 4 or 5 years Mr. Polcari believes we should be a high performer. Right now the SHA is labeled a sub-standard agency. Executive Director Dice said our biggest challenges are the big ticket items needed like the electrical work that had to be completed at Anderson Drive.

At this time Chairwoman Call asked for approval of the following resolutions:

Resolution #33 -2014 Accepting the Resignation of Rev. Dr. Holland Fields

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard

Second: Commissioner Thomas

Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #34-2014

Approving the Payment of Bills for July, August and September 2014

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard

Second: Commissioner Thomas

Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #35-2014

Approving the 2014 Fiscal Year Write off Amounts

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard

Second: Commissioner Thomas

Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #36-2014

Approving the SHA's Capitalization Policy

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Thomas

Second: Commissioner Lanard

Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #37-2014

Resolution Approving Signatories of Banking Accounts

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard

Second: Commissioner Thomas

Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #38-2014

Resolution Supporting a Collaboration with One Village Alliance

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard
Second: Commissioner Thomas
Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #39-2014

Resolution Awarding a Contract for Electrical Work at Anderson Drive

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard
Second: Commissioner Thomas
Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #40-2014

Resolution Approving a Lease for the Community Room at West Side Court

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard
Second: Commissioner Thomas
Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #41-2014

Resolution Approving the SHA Annual Audit FYE 09/30/2013

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard
Second: Commissioner Thomas
Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #42-2014

Resolution Approving the SHA Audit FYE 09/30/2012

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard
Second: Commissioner Thomas
Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #43-2014

Resolution of Compliance for the SHA Board of Commissioners

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard
Second: Commissioner Thomas
Roll Call: Unanimous

Old Business:

Commissioner Lanard asked if anything had been done about the people she advised had been arrested on drug offenses. She knows that one of the individuals was not a tenant – but was staying with a tenant. Betsy Loyle advised our new lease enforcement officer will follow up on those cases, but we are limited in what we can do until we have police report in hand. This can take some time. Executive Director Dice advised it is not always easy to know how long a visitor might have been staying. We must be able to have proof that a tenant has allowed a person to stay over 14 days in their unit. Commissioner Lanard said there were at least three other people involved. Property Manager Yolanda Mendibles said she knows that one of the individual's is not a tenant. Another individual is no longer a tenant.

New Business: None

Public Comment:

A Mrs. Walker advised she was moved to a hotel when the electric went out. She relocated eventually to 113 West Side Court. She explained she fell on hard times and could not pay her rent. The apartment we put her in is filled with bed bugs and roaches. She had to get new furniture and was not reimbursed for it. She said she tried to speak to Yolanda and she was very nasty. She claims Yolanda said: "Ms. Walker if you had paid your rent on time we would not be having this discussion." Mrs. Walker then went to Betsy who she claims told her she would be willing to make an arrangement with her. When she went to court, the SHA would not take her money and the judge said he can't force the SHA to take it. Catholic charities, etc. had helped her with the rent and the office would not take it. She advised her husband has had a heart attack and has the doctors' paper to prove it. She advised she needs to know tonight what is going to be done about this! Executive Director Dice advised there are a few things that have not been said. For example, she hasn't paid her rent since March. He further advised she was aware that when rent is paid it must be paid in full, including all back rent. At that time, Mr. Dice advised Mrs. Walker that she had the option to continue to talk about this publicly, but out of respect to her he wanted her to know that he would not normally talk about this personal situation in public. Mr. Dice advised they talk after this meeting. Mrs. Walker agreed.

Robert Maldonado advised he resigned from the maintenance department. He said on page 20 of the personnel handbook it says he is supposed to get a one on one with the director and he never did. Mr. Dice advised there is a new personnel policy. Mr. Dice said he wrote to him and wished him all the best. He advised he would be happy to sit down and talk if he would like to. Mr. Maldonado advised the maintenance staff never see him or get a chance to talk to him. He believes there is a hostile environment in the office and that is why he resigned. Executive Director Dice advised he is entitled to his own opinion. When Mr. Maldonado complained that we have brought in private contractors, Mr. Dice advised the reason is because of the 10 current vacancies.

Mrs. Maldonado complained that there are not enough inspections. She claims we would know who was housing people illegally if we did more inspections. People who have been evicted are still coming on the property. People have pets. People are over housed. Not everyone has parking permits. She asked if the tenants at Broadway Towers pay for the utilities in the office. She was told by Mr. Dice that they do not. She complained that the lease says no one is allowed to have space heaters, but tenants have them and use them. She said Mr. Dice sent people out for space heaters last year – and had them break their lease. She wants 24 hour notice when the pest control people are coming to the apartments. She advised her rent is increasing because she is coming off the EID program. She believes she should have been notified at the beginning so she could have opted out of the program. Her rent will now be \$484.00 and it was \$284.00. Betsy Loyle, Director of Operations explained that the EID program is a rent credit – a stipend to help people become self-sufficient. There are specific guidelines. If the family with EID obtains employment, they disallow that new income for 12 months so they can get on their feet. After 12 months, the rent is phased in at 50% of what it should be. This is an opportunity for a family to get on their feet for a total of two years. After the 24 months, the tenant must pay the full amount of their rent based on their income. She explained that is the reason why the Maldonado's rent increased. If Mrs. Maldonado opted out of the EID she would have paid the full amount of rent for those 24 months.

Mrs. Maldonado further complained that there are no posted notifications for the meetings. She wanted to know if we do background checks on employees and drug screenings. Executive Director Dice advised we do these checks. She would like the maintenance men to have uniforms or t-shirts in order to identify themselves. She said tenants are sending children to the dumpsters with their garbage and it must stop. The children can't reach the inside of the dumpster so they set it alongside the dumpster. This brings rodents. She asked who decided to put a dumpster at the entrance to Anderson Drive. Tenants cannot park there now. She also asked where the cameras are located, do they work and who can access them? Mr. Dice advised the Police have access remotely – we do have cameras. He said the DVR's have been upgraded. Mrs. Maldonado complained that in the last two or three months there has been an increase in drug use. Mr. Dice advised Lease Enforcement will focus on investigations of allegations of wrong doing. She said the parking lots are not safe for the children to play on. Work orders need 24 hour notice. We don't sign anything when a work order is completed. She asked if it is possible for her to look at the SHA budget. She was told she can.

Shirley Williams and another tenant complained about roaches. They are not happy with the current exterminator. Complaints regarding mold in apartments were made. Also complaints that tenants are not allowed to use a fogger. Yolanda Mendibles explained foggers are dangerous because they can spark. Shirley Williams also advised there is no electric in her daughter's kitchen.

After receiving some complaints regarding pets, Chairwoman Call advised the SHA was wrong about the Pet Policy. She told them they will be allowed to have a pet, but there will be parameters. Betsy Loyle advised the new ACOP takes effect Oct. 1st – as of September 29th all of our plans will be approved. She advised that in the new ACOP there is a provision for pets. She will be sending a copy of the policy to all the tenants. There are very specific rules that have to be followed. Pet must be less than 25 pounds.


Mrs. Maldonado complained that two guys came out of the main office like “goons” after Yolanda got angry and slammed down her calculator while discussing the reason why Mrs. Maldonado’s rent was going up. Mrs. Maldonado is now afraid to come to the office. She felt scared for my life.

Motion for adjournment:

At 8:30 p.m. Commissioner Thomas made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Lanard seconded. All present were in favor.



Paul F. Dice
Secretary/Treasurer



Date