

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF SALEM
October 23, 2014

A regular meeting of the Salem Housing Authority Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, October 23, 2014 at the Broadway Tower Community Room, 205 Seventh Street in Salem, New Jersey. The meeting convened at 5:00 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 arrived at 5:01 p.m., Commissioner Cathy Lanard, and Commissioner Veronica Santos. Also present was Solicitor Adam Telsey.

Chairwoman Call asked for a motion to approve the September 25, 2014 minutes. Commissioner Lanard made the motion and Commissioner Santos seconded. All present were in favor.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Executive Director Dice introduced Adam Telsey, Esq., who directed the Commissioners to a memo he advised was included in their board packets. This memo outlines the Board's rights and obligations during the public portion of each Salem Housing Authority board meeting. Solicitor Telsey advised it is not uncommon to limit speakers in the public portion of the meetings to a certain time limit. Solicitor Telsey recommended the board limit public comments to 5 minutes per person so that everyone present has an opportunity to speak. Chairwoman Call asked if the board can use their discretion regarding whether or not to extend a public speaker's time. Solicitor Telsey said that obviously if someone is in the middle of a sentence, we should let them complete this thought. However, we should not allow them to go on to another topic. The board agreed to implement this procedure.

Executive Director Dice introduced Mr. Stephen DeSario, Lease Enforcement Officer for Salem Housing Authority. Mr. DeSario advised we now have cameras in place and some are turned on in troubled areas of our properties. One example of how monitoring these cameras has made a difference came about when he reported to police on two occasions that he was watching a dice game being played on our property. During a re-evaluation, he heard a tenant tell the property manager that the police had arrived at her complex and said they were going to lock people up for playing dice. The tenant was obviously affected by the officer's statement.

Mr. DeSario said there are fencing issues at West Side Court. Hundreds of people use this area to access the liquor store and the Deli. A new fence will give more security to the complex and make it safe for the kids. Mr. DeSario also advised he is currently investigating what may turn out to be a sub-leasing situation. He has also done some lock-outs.

Executive Director Dice advised we're not here as a "gotcha". It is expensive to evict people. We hope to correct their behavior. He advised it takes a team to gel in order for Lease Enforcement to work. Property Manager Mendibles advised Steve DeSario has been an excellent addition to the team. She advised they are finding effective ways to solve problems. Laurie Frisby thanked tenant Ms. Ruth for reporting a squatter in Broadway Towers.

Maintenance Issues and Vacancies

Allan Gregory, Maintenance Supervisor, advised he has been working on West Side Court lighting. Many lights have been repaired. He is currently working on lights at Anderson Drive. The next move will be to replace bulbs at all the doors. Commissioner Santos advised there is a middle light at West Side Court where one side is torn out and one side is covered. Mr. Gregory advised some of the tenants do this purposely because the lights stay on all night.

Mr. Dice advised the maintenance issues at the Salem Housing Authority are huge and the conditions are staggering. We will not put tenants into a sub-standard unit. We recently brought three people over from Millville to help. Out of the five units that have been off line at Anderson due to the electric problem, there are almost three units completed. The electric problem has now been solved. He further advised that most turns should only take three days – but the conditions we have found have made this impossible. Mr. Dice wants to show the board graphically what is happening with the apartments. He will pull information from HUD – because HUD is what matters. Mr. Dice invited the board members to see the units. There are currently 6 vacancies at WSC and 7 at Anderson Drive.

Financial Summary

For the month of September 2014, the Salem Housing Authority posted a negative consolidated net income of \$-2,258.00. For fiscal year-to-date (10/1/13 to 9/30/14), it posted a positive \$71,333.00. The loss for September was due to higher than normal expenses in legal, Section 8 waiting list advertising and a computer purchase for the Lease Enforcement Officer.

Section 8

Mr. Dice advised we recently opened our Section 8 waiting list because we needed to have more people in the queue. We received almost 1,000 applications! He then explained the process we followed at SHA to decide how 60 people out of those 1000 would get on the waiting list. Each application was numbered and then an accounting firm put all the application numbers into a computerized random number sequence generator program. The program then places all the numbers into a randomly sequenced order. Property Manager Mendibles advised the 60 people who made the list have already received welcome letters. They are currently sending letters to the people who did not make the list.

One Village Alliance

Heather Santoro advised she met with Shondra Pitts. One Village Alliance is getting settled in the community room at WSC. Ms. Pitts wants to do a ribbon cutting/community event in November. After much discussion amongst the board members, it was decided to try and arrange this event for Tuesday, December 2, 2014 from 5:30 pm until 7:30 p.m.

Inter-Agency Council

Heather Santoro advised the Inter-Agency Council would like to run a Parents Anonymous meeting at Anderson Drive one night a week for two hours. This meeting would be open to all SHA tenants as well as the community at large. Chairwoman Call advised she believes this is a good program.

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

Resolution #44 -2014 Approving the Payment of Bills for October 2014

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard

Second: Commissioner Thomas

Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #45-2014 Approving a Memorandum of Understanding with the Inter-Agency Council

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard

Second: Commissioner Thomas

Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #46-2014 Approving a Closed Executive Session

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard

Second: Commissioner Thomas

Roll Call: Unanimous

Old Business: None

New Business: Commissioner Lanard sent Executive Director Dice a note regarding an article dealing with banning smoking on public housing authority property. She asked if it was worth pursuing. Mr. Dice advised that it is worth pursuing. It has to be done through attrition. We could start as we recertify tenants. We must change the policy. Commissioner Santos said the housing authority is going to have a real problem if they do this. Paul will share the article and will bring more information to the next meeting.

Public Comment:

Ruth Wilson of Broadway Towers complained that since the lock was changed on the side door to the building, the elderly must walk from their car with groceries, etc., to the front door of the building. She advised this is very difficult for many of the residents. Additionally, the parking lot is very dark and there is a safety issue. Commissioner Thomas advised it was a good idea to change the lock on the door because keys have been distributed over the years and many non-tenants were coming into the building. Lease Enforcement Officer DeSario suggested we put a key fob on the side door. Executive Director Dice said it is an expensive proposition but we can look into it for the future. We will discuss ways to make the parking lot safer and easier for our tenants to access the front door.

Motion for adjournment:

At 6:05 p.m. Commissioner Thomas made a motion to adjourn the meeting to into Closed Session. Commissioner Lanard seconded. All present were in favor.



Paul F. Dice
Secretary/Treasurer

12-01-14

Date