

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF SALEM
March 24, 2016

A regular meeting of the Salem Housing Authority Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, March 24, 2016 at the Broadway Tower Community Room, 205 Seventh Street in Salem, New Jersey. The meeting convened at 5:02 p.m.

Chairwoman Ferguson announced the Sunshine Law requirement had been met, properly posted and advertised.

Allison Corson, Director of Administration, proceeded to call the roll at this time. Present were: Chairwoman Rebecca Gower Ferguson, Commissioner Cathy Lanard, Commissioner Matthew Hassler and Commissioner Julian LeFlore. Commissioner Veronica Santos was absent. Solicitor Adam Telsey was also present, as well as Horace Johnson, Salem City Council Liaison.

Chairwoman Ferguson asked for a motion to approve the February 25, 2015 minutes. Commissioner Lanard made a motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Hassler seconded. All present were in favor.

CITY OF SALEM

Executive Director Dice advised he attended the City Council meeting on Monday, March 21, 2016 and gave a presentation regarding the SHA and why we do what we do. Executive Director Dice felt the meeting was very productive. He advised that the reality in SHA is that our finances are very tight and that does not always make for a great relationship with tenants. He explained to the Council how HUD and the State of NJ are not focused on preservation of existing housing. He then told them we need to figure out what to do for the next twenty years. City Council liaison Horace Johnson said he finds that most of the complaints he receives from tenants has to do with the fact that they can't get directly to Executive Director Dice. Mr. Johnson said the Mayor told those present that there is a chain of command. Mr. Dice further explained to the council when we enforce our lease to collect rent it makes tenants uneasy.

At the Mayor's request, Executive Director Dice recently met with the City's Economic Development Advisor. They discussed how traditional funding sources for public housing rehabilitation was out of reach for authorities with high capital needs like Salem's. They also discussed other, less traditional ways, to possibly generate funding for the SHA.

Financial Summary

Executive Director Dice advised the SHA posted a negative monthly net income of \$21,567 in February 2016. Year-to-date it has a positive \$36,198. He stated that landlord tenant legal, utility, and maintenance costs were particularly high last month.

Occupancy

There are currently 4 vacancies at West Side Court and 4 at Anderson Drive. Overall we have an occupancy rate of 96%.

One of the major issues we're experiencing is floor replacement. This is delaying turns and leading to higher than normal vacancy rates. We have finally determined that an initial unit construction issue has led to spongy and bowed living room floors. Specifically, the stair way walls have been placed between the floor joists rather than on top of them. The walls have progressively sunk into the flooring. We can't determine whether this is a design or workmanship issue. It is expensive and time consuming to fix.

Another problem we are encountering is rotted kitchen flooring and subflooring due to washing machines which had been kept in many kitchens. These units often overflowed or leaked from cracked piping or machine defects. We no longer allow machines in the units, but we're still dealing with the effects of past practice.

Secretary Dice explained that we recently had two incidents at WSC involving the backup of sewer lines. Our plumbing contractor found toys, towels and other items in the lines when they cleared the lines. The day after they performed that work, the line backed up again due to "scaling" in the lines. The scaling had to be ground down in order to smooth out the pipe and have the debris flow smoothly. There were tenants that had to be put up in hotel rooms while some of this plumbing work was being done.

HUD SCORING

Executive Director Dice pointed out that we scored 5 out of 5 in the Tenant Accounts Receivable financial indicator. He is extremely happy with this!

At 5:28 p.m. Chairwoman Ferguson asked for a motion to go into Closed Session.

Resolution #11-2016

Approving a Closed Executive Session

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner LeFlore

Second: Commissioner Lanard

Roll Call: Unanimous

At 5:39 p.m. Chairwoman Ferguson advised the SHA Board of Commissioners meeting was back in open session and that there were resolutions to be approved.

Resolution #12-2016 Approving the Payment of Bills for February 2016

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard

Second: Commissioner LeFlore

Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #13-2016 Approving a Contract for Lawn Maintenance and Snow Removal Services at all SHA Sites

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Lanard

Second: Commissioner LeFlore

Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #14-2015 Approving the Settlement Agreement in the Matter entitled Francine Dickerson v. Housing Authority of the City of Salem

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Hassler

Second: Commissioner LeFlore

Roll Call: Unanimous

Old Business: Commissioner Lanard stated she understood that a tenant's door had to be broken down by the fire department during a fire. She wondered why the Fire Department can't have a key. Lease Enforcement Steve DeSario said he will speak with the Fire Chief. He believes they do have a key. Commissioner Lanard also remarked about the woman who is sweeping the grounds at West Side Court.

New Business: There was no new business.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

At 5:51 p.m. Chairwoman Ferguson asked for a motion to adjourn the SHA public meeting. Commissioner Hassler made the motion and Commissioner Lanard seconded. All present were in favor.

Paul Dice
Secretary/Treasurer

Date