

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF SALEM
February 28, 2019

A regular meeting of the Salem Housing Authority (SHA) Board of commissioner was held on Thursday, February 28, 2019 at the Broadway Tower Community Room, 205 Seventh Street in Salem, NJ. The meeting convened at 5:04 pm.

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

Karen Chiarello proceeded to call the roll at this time. Present were: Chairwoman Rebecca Ferguson, Commissioner Cathy Lanard, Commissioner Robert Lanard, Commissioner James Smith, Executive Director/Secretary Paul Dice. Also, in attendance was Solicitor Adam Telsey and SHA employees.

Chairwoman Ferguson asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2019 meeting. Commissioner C. Lanard made a motion and Commissioner R. Lanard seconded. All others present were in favor.

Paul Dice opened the meeting with a discussion on Opportunity Zones. He had just received a call from Whitney [White, economic development consultant for the City of Salem](#). Opportunity Zones could provide money from the City for demolition, relocations and the payment of debt. Commissioner Ferguson asked if Whitney really knew what the SHA was about and what they are trying to do. Paul said that the regulations are still in the development phase. Salem is the only place he feels Opportunity Zones will work. Paul just wanted the Board to [know](#) what is [going](#) on. He would not go forward with anything without their approval. The Board members indicated that they were fine with Paul taking phone calls and discussing the idea. Commissioner Smith indicated he would like to be involved if any meetings were set up. Paul is hoping this would produce a good outcome.

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Occupancy

Our vacancy rate is quite high at the moment, as we have struggled to turn and fill a high volume of units. At the time of the writing of the ED report, we were at 90% occupancy. As of the meeting it was up to 93%. By the end of March the occupancy rate should be up where it needs to be. A painting crew

was brought in to help expedite the turns. A restructuring of the maintenance crew has made them more effective.

The staff has been having trouble filling the smaller units. Chairwoman Ferguson asked if there was a list for these or if it was a matter of getting in touch with people. We confirmed that the Authority is accepting applications and the waiting list has been continuously open for the last two years.

Betsy Loyle stated that we do not have a list for 4-bedroom units so we will start using these units for applicants on the 3 bedroom list. The staff also indicated that part of the problem is that the State of New Jersey's, Department of Community Affairs, Division of Housing and Community Resources' Housing Choice Voucher Program has been flooding the market. Chairwoman Ferguson then offered to advertise at the Office on Aging. Yolanda Mendibles added that since we have to follow Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy guidelines, we get a lot of people that just don't qualify. She said they would like to develop a healthy queue, but it is very difficult. The majority of the applicants come to us after exhausting all other options. They generally have a long eviction history. Based on this they are not good candidates for the SHA. Commissioner Smith asked if Section 8 has the same requirements. They do. Betsy said that with Section 8 the decision is ultimately up to the landlords to decide and do their own background checks. The current Judiciary has changed the dynamic. The current judge is nonsense. The eviction rate is currently higher than in the past. Betsy also stated that some of the vacancies are duo to families lifting themselves up and no longer needing assistance.

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Resolutions

Chairwoman Ferguson advised that there were resolutions to approve:

Resolution #7-2019

Approving the Payment of Bills for February

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner C. Lanard

Second: Commissioner R. Lanard

Roll Call: Unanimous

Resolution #8-2019

Memorializing the Vote Approving the Huddle of South Jersey, LLC

Roll Call Vote:

Motion: Commissioner Smith

Second: Commissioner C. Lanard

Roll Call: Unanimous

Old/New Business

Commissioner C. Lanard had received a complaint from Mrs. Leila Coley. There is a lot of trash along the fence line. She has called about this two other times to no effect. She drove by herself and took picture. She said Mrs. Coley has a legitimate concern, it is a mess. Yolanda Mendibles and Tom Laperrier responded to this. There is a dumpster available. All hands would be on deck the next day to take care of the situation. Unfortunately at this time of year people are purchasing new home items with their tax returns. They throw out the old stuff. There is always an excess of trash this time of year.

At 5:40 pm Chairwoman Ferguson announced that the meeting was adjourned. Commissioner Smith made a motion and Commissioner R. Lanard seconded. All present were in favor.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 28, 2019 at 5 pm.

Paul Dice – Secretary

Date

