

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SALEM
205 Seventh Street
Salem, NJ 08079

MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING OF December 19, 2024

Minutes of Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Salem, New Jersey, held Thursday, December 19, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Broadway Towers Site Community Room located at 205 Seventh Street; Salem, NJ 08079. The meeting was called to order at 6:21PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Discussion of the Pledge of Allegiance at future SHA meetings.

ROLL CALL

Present: Akmad Nichols, Chair
 Joyce Lewis, Commissioner
 Destiny Wood, Commissioner
 Dawn Johnson, Commissioner

Also Present: Marc A. Starling, Executive Director

Absent: Kiersten Westly Henson, Commissioner

ED Starling gave insight on the SHA Legal (Attorney) status and the RFP for Legal Services. Mentioned Attorney Armstrong still being under contract for litigation/lawsuits upon the SHA and correspondence provided to the Board regarding legal matters.

OPENING STATEMENT

“ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS SCHEDULED MEETING, AS REQUIRED BY THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE FILING OF THE NOTICE OF THE MEETING WITH THE MUNICIPAL CLERK, THE POSTING OF SAID NOTICE ON THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT CENTER.”

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

No one spoke – one observer

ED Starling advised the Board of the Bills Report Document for their review and signature; also he stated that the Bills Report is available for the Public to see, if requested, to assure transparency from the SHA.

Chair Nichols closed the floor to the public at 6:22 PM

OLD BUSINESS (Approval of September 2024 and October 2024 Minutes)

Upon Motion made by Chair Nichols and seconded by Commissioner Lewis with all Commissioners present responding, the September 2024 and October 2024 Minutes were approved.

Upon roll call, the vote resulted:

Chair Nichols	Yes
Commissioner Lewis	Yes
Commissioner Wood,	Yes
Commissioner Johnson	Yes

4 Yes, Motion Passed

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

Chair Nichols there was nothing to report; Commission Johnson had a question regarding Tenants getting help with cleaning etc...wanted to know if the SHA was going to have someone come in to assist Tenants etc... and lastly was this to help Tenants?

ED Starling responded that what we do is to always help the Tenant. Advised that the Public Housing Program Rules dictate Housekeeping compliance of Tenants. The Housekeeping Training will be implemented to Tenants at their Recertification to educate them of their responsibility as a Public Housing Program Participant.

A discussion was engaged with a meeting observer regarding housekeeping inspections and interjections from ED Starling and the Board on this matter.

Commissioner Wood spoke of the inspection being done with different levels of expectations of clean; ED Starling advised that there is a standard checklist that applies to everyone for compliance. Additionally, Commissioner Wood asked do we share the results of said inspections with Tenants – to which, ED Starling responded, Yes, in the new year there will be meetings set up with the Tenants to discuss the results of the inspections of the housing units.

Commissioner Lewis gave input regarding the Lease and the word “Program” to emphasize that on a Program there are rules and requested a copy of the Lease; additionally, she spoke about the Zoom meetings for the Board meetings. ED Starling spoke of having in-person meetings for the SHA to better engage and communicate with the Tenants to educate/motivate for change at the SHA.

**SHA ED Report
Personnel**

Introduction to SHA Staff to start implementing strategic plans to improve the SHA. A new Maintenance Staffer was hired to better serve the Tenants.

Finance

The *Financial Statement* for November 2024 has been prepared and is included in Tab 5 of this report; *TAR Report* and *Bank Statements* were submitted separately within Monthly SHA Board Package.

Maintenance

Work Orders (“WO”) were completed at 86% for Normal WO with a target of lessening the time to complete said task; and 100% of Emergency WO were cured/reported in November 2024 (*The Work Order Report is Attached in Tab 9*).

The “No Heat” WO with the Winter Season Temperature drop sporadically continue; we are making sure that all Tenants had the mandated level for their units.

Preventative Maintenance has been started to ensure that small problems do not become major issues (i.e. electrical inspections...etc...)

Continuation to amass our curb appeal at all the sites to include new blinds, signage, re-stripping parking, etc...

Vacant Unit Turn Around stays under my review to see the Plan in place to increase our current Occupancy Rate of 90% to the HUD minimum of 98%.. **We will implement a 2025 Occupancy Plan where we hold PH Orientations off the WL the 5th of every month (began January 5th)2025 of a minimum of five (5) Applicants We will look at a Unit Remodel Plan in 2025 to ensure that the Units get an overhaul not just a Turnaround so we can offer a Market Rate Home at a PH Price; thus, unit Turnarounds will exceed our housing needs.** The Goal is to have an Average of turned around units within the HUD mandated twenty (21) days; or less.

Housing Choice Voucher (...formally Section 8)

The SHA’s Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) continues to operate at/above the 95% needed to continue to receive our HCV Funds as our voucher utilization is at its targeted HUD marker. THCV (Section 8) Report was submitted separately to the Board in Tab 8 of this Package.

Public Housing

SHA to establish **Rent Rewards Initiative** to increase our monthly rent receivable each month. We will continue this Initiative with the Tenants who pay their full rent on time for the lottery to have a Tenant name drawn at each Board Meeting to receive a gift from the SHA (not to exceed \$25.00) to show the SHA’s appreciation for Tenants who Help us meet our **GOAL#1 (Become and maintain a Fiscally Sound Agency)**.

Zero (0) Tenant(s) are in the process and/or were taken to Court for eviction for Non-payment of Rent, Lease Violations and/or Fraud via EIV.

Security

The engagement of the Salem Police Department has begun as well as planned Community Watch Initiatives with Tenants for better Neighborhood safety. Outcome TBD.

Modernization (CFP)

The SHA is taking a new approach to remodel units being turnaround with new kitchen cabinets and countertops and bathroom new comfort height toilets. Additionally, we will install new floor tiles to rival/that of a market-rate housing development. Outcome TBD.

Miscellaneous

City of Salem CNI (Choice Neighborhood Initiative) – Information was provided to the Board for input regarding the Redevelopment of the Westside Court Site. Provided information regarding redevelopment and “Affordable” Housing with self-sufficiency requirement. Recommended the RAD Program as an option. Additionally, economic benefit with redevelopment was discussed. Outcome TBD.

NEW BUSINESS

None

RESOLUTIONS

There were no Resolutions

ED Starling mentioned that there would be several Resolutions in January 2025; Additionally, ED Starling spoke about the financial status and advised the Board of Non-Federal Funds...

Additionally, Inspector Brad Clemonts was introduced to the Board upon entering the room. Commissioners wanted a copy of the Inspection Form, which Mr. Clemonts provided to them. Commissioner Lewis requested a list of SHA Staff. ED Starling responded that he would provide the SHA Organizational Chart to the Board shortly.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Commissioner Lewis seconded by Chair Nichols Lewis with all Commissioners present responding affirmatively, the meeting was adjourned at 7:11 PM.