

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

MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING OF March 20, 2025

Minutes of Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Salem, New Jersey, held Thursday, March 20, 2025, 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 6:13PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Discussion of the Pledge of Allegiance at future SHA meetings. (skipped)

ROLL CALL

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

Also Present: Marc A. Starling, Executive Director
 Attorney Michael Armstrong Associate
 Teneva Hammond, SHA Office Manager

Late:
Absent: Kiersten Westly Henson, Commissioner

ED Starling again 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 ALSO IN TWO NEWS PAPERS.”

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Opened for Tenants who came in after this Agenda Item was closed

Tenant Concern (Unit 704 - Ms. Williams):

1. Flooring Issue: The floors in the front room are coming up.
2. Mold Issue: There is mold on the living room wall.
3. Community Sharing Idea: Ms. Williams suggested adding a bench or table in the hallway for tenants to place food to share.

Response from ED Starling:

- 1. The floors have been ordered and should arrive shortly to address the issue.
- 2. Servpro will come out to resolve the mold issue.
- 3. Tenants are encouraged to use the community room for sharing food or other activities.

Tenant Concern (Unit 303 - Ms. Brown):

- 1. Front Door: The front door needs to be replaced.
- 2. Heating Issue: One out of the three heating units is not working
- 3. Concern about packages getting stolen.

Response from ED Starling:

- 1. The front door has been ordered and will be replaced.
- 2. The AC/heating units will be replaced to resolve the issue.
- 3. Trying to get a amazon station for packages

Response Dawn Johnson

- 1. Get a P.O Box

Tenant Concern (Unit 502 – Ms. Smith-Brown):

- 1. Request for additional washers and dryers.
- 2. AC unit not functioning.
- 3. Light fixture issue—smoking and melting.
- 4. Hallway light needs replacement.

Response from ED Startling:

- 1. We are in the process of upgrading the washers and dryers to newer, more efficient models.
- 2. We are evaluating ways to enhance the laundry facilities while ensuring sustainability.
- 3. The hallway light will be replaced promptly.
- 4. The damaged light fixture will be removed for safety

**Closed Session too revise agenda
opening Executive session**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon Motion too close the agenda and go into Executive Session was approved.

Upon roll call, the vote resulted:

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

4 Yes, Motion Passed

Went into Executive Session at 6:27PM

Upon Motion made Destiny wood and seconded by Commissioner Johnson with all Commissioners present responding, to come out of Executive Session and back into Public was approved at 7:56pm

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

4 Yes, Motion Passed

Executive Discussion

It was discussed before litigation. The board did decide to have a resolution to pay the open government lawsuit, and that the attorney will draft the resolution to ensure that the payment is received to the individual by June the first 2025 also discuss in the executive session. It was to get a more defined scope of work for the ED search after the proposal that was provided, which is less than the threshold.

OLD BUSINESS (Approval of December 19, 2024, Minutes)

ED Starling reported that there need to approval the December 19, 2024, Meeting minutes and January 16, 2025, meeting minutes.

Upon Motion made Chair Nichols and seconded by Commissioner Johnson with all Commissioners present responding,

Roll Call Accepting of the meeting Minutes

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

4 Yes, Motion Passed

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

NJ Nahro is April 30th Summer session conference. Semap gave a zero.

SHA ED Report

Personnel

Adjustments were made to Staff and a new SHA Organizational Chart was provided to the Board.

Finance

As we approach the fourth quarter—the final three months of the fiscal year—our spending is currently at 60–70% of the budget. Ideally, we should be at 75% or below. Moving forward, we need to carefully evaluate Budget 1 and Budget 2 to ensure proper allocation for the next fiscal year.

It's essential to plan ahead and incorporate necessary stopgaps to prevent any budget line from reaching zero. This will help maintain financial stability and operational efficiency.

Regarding Tenant Accounts Receivable (TAR), we have seen an improvement, collecting 40% of rent compared to 30% last month. Strengthening accountability measures will encourage more tenants to pay rent on time by reinforcing the consequences of late or missed payments.

By staying proactive in financial planning and accountability, we can ensure a more stable and efficient fiscal year ahead.

Maintenance Update

- **Work Orders (WO):**
 - 84% of Normal Work Orders were completed, with a focus on reducing completion time.
 - 100% of Emergency Work Orders were completed. (Refer to the Work Order Report in Tab 9.)
- **Ongoing Preventative Maintenance:**
 - Deep cleaning conducted.
 - Floors cleaned and polished.
 - Tree removal was completed.
- **Future Plans:**
 - Repair the gate.
 - Continue occupancy planning.

Public Housing Update

- **Rent Rewards Initiative:**
 - SHA is implementing this program to encourage timely rent payments and increase monthly rent receivables.
 - Tenants who pay their full rent on time will be entered into a lottery at each Board Meeting for a chance to receive a gift (not exceeding \$25) as a token of appreciation.
 - This initiative supports GOAL #1: Becoming and maintaining a fiscally sound agency.
- **Evictions & Legal Proceedings:**
 - Zero (0) tenants are currently in court for eviction due to non-payment, lease violations, or fraud (via EIV).
 - 40 tenants are currently in the eviction process.
- **Additional Initiatives:**
 - Plan to organize a Job Fair as part of the Restart Program.
 - Exploring options to pull funding from ELOCCS for necessary improvements.
 - Community watch
 - Would like to have more cameras.
 - Extra lighting
 - Playground
 - Replacing mailbox

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program (formerly Section 8)

- The SHA's HCV Program continues to operate at or above the 95% utilization rate required to maintain HUD funding.
- Voucher utilization remains on target with HUD benchmarks.
- The HCV (Section 8) Report has been submitted separately in Tab 8 of this package.
- Exploring Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) conversion options.

Security Initiatives

- **Salem Police Department Engagement:**
 - Ongoing collaboration with the police department.
 - Community Watch Initiatives launched to enhance neighborhood safety.
 - Police reports have been collected, and engagement continues.
- **Community Watch Pilot Program:**
 - Currently in progress, with outcomes to be determined.
 -

Modernization & Capital Fund Program (CFP)

- **Multifamily Site Lighting:**
 - Procuring quotes to improve lighting across SHA multifamily properties. Costs TBD.
- **Tot Lot/Playground Replacement:**

- Obtaining quotes to remove and replace outdated playground equipment. Costs TBD.
- Technology Expansion:
 - Evaluating potential costs for infrastructure upgrades.

Miscellaneous Updates

- City of Salem [CHOICE] Initiative:
 - Information provided to the Board for feedback on Westside Court Site Redevelopment.
 - Discussion on incorporating affordable housing with self-sufficiency requirements.
 - CNI invoices reviewed for SHA staff.
 - Continued support for a New Broadway Corridor initiative.
- **Community Outreach Efforts:**
 - Initial engagement with multiple agencies serving SHA residents.

NEW BUSINESS

tenant Utility Responsibility – 2026 Plan

- Proposal for tenants to begin paying their own utilities starting in 2026.
- Commissioner Johnson suggested implementing financial literacy training to help tenants manage bill payments effectively.

Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Exploration

- Investigating RAD conversion as an option to modernize and update properties.
- Assessing potential benefits and financial implications for SHA.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Commissioner Lewis seconded by Commissioner Johnson with all Commissioners present responding affirmatively, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM.