

STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY  
700 COUNTY ROAD  
SECAUCUS, NEW JERSEY

This is a condensed transcription of the taped minutes as taken on Thursday, May 23, 2019 at The Elms, Fifth Street, Secaucus, New Jersey.

Executive Director Christopher Marra welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Chairman Michael Schlemm  
Commissioner Richard Fairman  
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori  
Commissioner Antonio Suarez  
Commissioner Michael Harper\* (arrived late)

Also Present: Executive Director Christopher Marra  
Deputy Executive Director Jake Naszimento  
Charles D'Amico, Esq., Counsel to the Authority

Absent: Commissioner Carmen Rivera

Executive Director Marra read the Open Public Meetings Act.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

**“Adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, has been provided by the filing of an Annual Meeting Notice with the Municipal Clerk, the posting of said notice on the official bulletin board in the Municipal Government Center, and delivery of same to the Jersey Journal on December 18, 2018. This body wishes to advise you that, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 26:3D(1), et seq. (Smoking in Public Buildings), smoking is prohibited while this body is in open or closed session.”**

**FLAG SALUTE**

Pledge of Allegiance recited by all present.

## **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – April 25, 2019**

Motion to accept minutes made by Commissioner Fairman; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (3)                      Abstain: Suarez  
Absent: Harper\*/Rivera

(At this point in the meeting, Commissioner Harper arrived.)

## **PAYMENT OF CLAIMS FOR MAY**

Motion to approve payment of claims made by Commissioner Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Suarez.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)                      Absent: Rivera

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

ED Marra noted tonight's packet contained Other Post-Employment Benefits Report (OPEB) Report, done every few years tying into document re: audit, which takes place 7/29 & 7/30. Finance Committee is requested to be available on July 30<sup>th</sup> as Mr. Policari gives debrief of audit that day.

Monthly bank account balances for SHA bank accounts. ED Marra didn't include NJSEM savings for this month.

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE, PERSONNEL COMMITTEE, POLICY COMMITTEE**

Nothing to be discussed this month, except ED Marra noted committee assignments are the same; hoping to have each committee meeting during month of June one time. Commissioner Greco's term expired on April 1<sup>st</sup> and is not seeking to be reappointed as a Commissioner. Mr. Marra has spoken to Mayor Gonnelli and Mr. Grecco must contact Mayor regarding that. The new appointee will go onto a committee, lightening load for those serving on 3 committees.

## **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

ED Marra said almost everything under this committee this evening has to do with The Elms.

Unicorn Clean Services had award for cleaning. Best Cleaning Building Services cost the least; had come through walk-through and will come next week. 2 of

their employees assigned to the 3 buildings will be here effective June 3<sup>rd</sup>. They are cleaning service for next 2 years for all 3 buildings. 7 proposals received. Above pertains to Resolution #2019-17.

**RESOLUTION 2019-17**  
*Award of Two Year Janitorial Services Contract*

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus has need of janitorial services contract in order to keep its buildings in clean and sanitary condition; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority published request for proposals for such services in accordance with the requirement of the New Jersey local Public Contract Law and the Authority’s procurement policy; and

WHEREAS, proposals were received on April 24 and seven (7) proposals were received in response to its duly published Request for Proposals that were reviewed by the Executive Director; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that the proposal submitted by Best Cleaning Building Services, Inc. of Ridgefield, NJ is the lowest responsible proposal and should be awarded the contract;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that a contract for janitorial services be hereby awarded to:

Best Cleaning Building Services, Inc.:  
Year 1: \$25,500  
Year 2: \$25,500

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funds for this contract have been made available through the Housing Authority’ operating fund.

<b>Commissioners</b>	<b>Ayes</b>	<b>Nays</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Chairman Schlemm			
Vice Chairman Harper			
Commissioner Fairman			
Commissioner Mondadori			
Commissioner Rivera			
Commissioner Suarez			

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Suarez.

Commissioner Fairman asked where this firm is located and were other references housing authorities? ED Marra said Ridgefield Park, N.J. and only dealt with one other housing authority. References were not from housing authorities, but the one was in Berge County. Mr. Kwan owns the company.

Commissioner Fairman asked if they'd ever proposed to SHA before; no, Mr. Marra answered.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Rivera

Update on fire pump in Emergency Generator Room/Utility Room from 1975 which needs to be replaced. Today 3 contractors walked through. Bids are due June 13<sup>th</sup>, discussed at June meeting, to award a contract for someone to replace fire pump at The Elms.

MaGrann Associates was here during May twice; went through building and people's apartments as part of Energy Efficiency Program that SHA is doing at The Elms.

Last month an architect was hired to help SHA put in new flooring in the community room here (The Elms); pick up rug, put down new flooring. He is developing plan, proposals will be sought, and job probably won't need to be bid. New floor should be in by the Fall. 3 benches have been ordered for smoking shelters, 4 feet long; shelter is 6 feet wide; should be here in June.

In January when in basement of 600 County, at the end, wall was wet, as there is a storm water drain on inside of wall. MUA came at no cost to put camera into the pipe. There is a possibility pipe settled or became disjointed from connection. Wall is worse than in January. Lee came today with a contractor. One solution is to take a sleeve, and stick it into the pipe. Hopefully, that will work. Cost will not exceed \$2,500. SHA paying Lee to do this, but it is a separate contract with him. He is proposing now to do at an hourly rate. It would be more costly to get contractor to do it.

Here at The Elms: water is still coming through at least 1-2 peoples' brand new windows, meaning problem isn't windows, occurring here in May. It is that section of the building (indicating). Nothing happens on west side, but definitely east side. Mr. Marra does not care to re-waterproof that section of the building. Entire building was waterproofed in 2009-10. No more warranty on it, which is usually only one year. One issue is it might be coming in through seals in air-conditioning sleeves. Work has to be done before November 1<sup>st</sup>; can't wait to develop a plan as then it would be next spring. Two people in front row tonight will tell you how bad leak is when it is public portion. One more apartment also has a problem. Not everyone has new windows. In history of The Elms, building has always had some issues with water.

### **HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM – DED Naszimento**

For the month of May total amount available for \$185,167; \$158,460 spent on 187 tenant families residing in Secaucus; remaining \$25,395 spent on 30 port out

families residing outside Secaucus. SHA continues to issue new vouchers as money is freed up.

Commissioner Suarez mentioned Section 8 and that Secaucus has new Ordinance, and wonders how it affects SHA. When there are new tenants, the City has implemented an Ordinance which states that upon new residents into any single or up units, they need COOs. Owner needs to provide Continued Certificate of Occupancy. Does SHA have anything like that? A: it is from a safety standard, but also, since its Federal money, it is important that the landlords are within compliance with the town. What does SHA do with that?

DED Naszimento answered (but it was inaudible to tape recorder.) ED Marra said after June 1<sup>st</sup>, since a new administrative plan has been adopted, there are a few things in that that impact landlords. #1 is the old admin plan said they needed a smoke alarm. Now they need a smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm. They won't pass HQS without carbon monoxide alarm, which Secaucus also requires. #2 is if it takes SHA 3 times to go back because they keep failing, the landlord will pay for 3<sup>rd</sup> visit - \$25. SHA may have to make sure they got the COO. The Housing Quality Standard has to be done at a certain time within the process. Commissioner Suarez said it could be programmed in new software. Is there anywhere to add in a check box? Mr. Marra answered yes, he believed so. Commissioner Suarez is worried about residences that have illegal tenants. ED Marra said when inspector goes out, he checks meters on the house; have to check with Building Department, not Tax Assessor. Secaucus now has 187 vouchers and a vast majority of them are Patriot Commons, Colonial Court, Exchange, and Harper. These are all complied with. So many are knocked off right there. Perhaps half a dozen are in the gray area.

Chairman Schlemm asked Mr. D'Amico if SHA is bound because the town is doing this. What is SHA's obligation when they pass an Ordinance like that? Mr. D'Amico answered it is the landlord's responsibility. When SHA issues money via Federal Funds (inaudible) but SHA is not civilly libel. There's no criminal or civil responsibility. Chairman Schlemm noted when he was on the BOE, it was started to determine about student, who lived in Secaucus and who did not, etc.

Commissioner Fairman asked DED Naszimento, the 185 and 187, how much of that is Hartz, approximately. DED Naszimento said he would find out that information. It was guessed perhaps 20, but not half. ED Marra said they must be in an affordable unit, not just in a market unit.

ED Marra added he was listening to a POD cast re: housing choice vouchers, which talked about State of New Jersey is one of the only states where you cannot discriminate on source of funds – just 10 out of 50 states do this – which is without a voucher. One thing happening in Secaucus is every garden apartment here, except for one, no longer takes a voucher, which if you read the article, is illegal. Recently, Mr. Marra had a bad case in an apartment

complex, where a man is making \$1,400 in Social Security and paying rent of \$1,100. He was going to get a voucher and has lived there 15 years; and on the list for Senior Building, but is one year away. People refused to take the voucher. When he doesn't have money left over, which never happens, he puts it on a credit card. Mr. Marra spoke to woman there and her attitude was appalling, didn't care and afraid others would find out they accepted a voucher. If he can't afford it, he can move out. On Page 2, it talks about Enforcement and Housing Discrimination Claims in New Jersey can be handled administratively by N.J. Division of Civil Rights or via civil action. Mr. Marra is pondering idea that if there are enough of these cases, specifically with apartment complexes, which do have rents that meet our FMR, perhaps SHA might look into that. He doesn't know if SHA would make the report to Division of Civil Rights or force tenant to make that. Mr. D'Amico said SHA could do it for the tenant. Commissioner Fairman asked if SHA wasn't duty-bound to report this? ED Marra didn't know if SHA was duty bound, but it is State law. Later on it could be discussed at Policy Committee meeting. Commissioner Fairman noted if it's a violation of the law and SHA is aware of it, around the matter, he feels SHA is duty-bound to report it. Mr. D'Amico will come to ED Marra's office next week and get the information and do it.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Summer intern is young man who received scholarship from SHA last year. ED Marra spoke with him during the winter, asking if he was interested in coming back to do another internship this summer. ED Marra got all the necessary information, submitted it all to New Jersey NAHRO. Under normal circumstances NAHRO meets in May, but none this month. This will be brought up for discussion and approval at their June meeting. He is positive SHA will get this internship, meaning they will pay half his salary for eight weeks; minimally pay him \$15, asking SHA can you pay anything. More you are willing to put some money in, more willing they are to give you money. His application was complete; ED Marra spoke to woman handling this for N.J. NAHRO, Director in Passaic, and he knows for a fact only 1-2 housing authorities submit for this; and funds are available. Young man will start next Tuesday, and is helpful. Two more applications have been submitted for scholarships, but not approved until June. ED Marra doesn't believe resolution necessary, as technically someone is being hired for 7 weeks.

Motion to approve hiring Khoa Nguyen as Summer Intern made by Commissioner Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Fairman.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Rivera

ED Marra added for 2-1/2 days 5 members of office staff have been in Newark taking a class offered by a company re: Rent Calculations covering Housing Choice Voucher Program, Project Based Voucher Program. About 50 people in

the class. Test taken today; results available by next meeting. It brought to SHA's attention some things SHA office not 100% familiar with.

Commissioner Fairman gave a short blurb on summer, happiness and HUD Secretary Ben Carson's testimony in Washington, D.C. this past week. He spoke about REO in HUD and there was confusion on the matter by Sec'y Carson as to what are REO and OREO. It didn't turn out well, and Sec'y Carson's resignation was suggested. Commissioner Fairman then shared several samples of OREO with the Commissioners and audience. (Laughter followed.) He reiterated that SHA Commissioners are very knowledgeable about OREOs and REO.

## **REMARKS OF CITIZENS**

DIANE, #208, said when she signed her lease she was informed they could attend movies when Mayor invites them, out to eat, but now has been told she isn't allowed on the bus or to go on any of the trips to Atlantic City, etc. What is the reason?

ED Marra answered some trips are only for senior citizens; sometimes not just for senior citizens and there are other trips. But just for seniors, if you are not officially by age a senior, you cannot go on the trip. County used to take senior citizens on a boat ride in summertime. Some people in Kroll Heights are not 62 and not eligible to go on the trip. Please remember town is running that program, not housing authority. If you are on disability, but not 62, you are not eligible either. Chairman Schlemm added Golden Agers do trips, but you must be part of the club in order to participate. He agreed it should not be said you can participate; that adjustment will be taken care of.

LISA added if you want to go to a play, you need to purchase the tickets, go to the school and bus takes you over.

A woman asked ED Marra if he ever figured out who the kids were that stole the wheelchair. He has seen the video, but did not figure out who they were.

ANGELA DELEO, #405, Mother's Day it rained, but she had Niagara Falls in her apartment. She called 2 times emergency, no one got back to her. She used towels, blankets and anything else to stop rain coming in. Her Italian family had plans for the day. She couldn't wash or dry as there were no coins available. The windows were installed after she moved in; rain not coming from windows; coming from outside. (Showed photos of her 3 soaked blinds.) Commissioner Suarez explained water can start in one spot and travels the path of least resistance. It is challenging and he understands Angela's frustration. Angela went outside with binoculars to see if she saw a hole. Chairman Schlemm asked if SHA was able to move to another room, would she do that; SHA moving her and taking care of that part, while getting it corrected. Would that help alleviate this? ED Marra said it would most likely be permanent, a move to a 1-

bedroom apartment. An answer is not necessary now. Chairman Schlemm apologized for her stress, especially on Mother's Day. Fortunately, her sofa wasn't near the window. He said moving her somewhere else; they would better be able to find the problem. Experts have been previously hired and they find it difficult to correct. Chairman Schlemm said they would check with maintenance and have an answer for her regarding that as well. Harry did return her money for washing machines. Chairman Schlemm told the audience if they can get her out of the apartment into another, then they can hopefully correct the problems.

MARY ANN, #318, spoke about condition of her kitchen. She shared photos with Commissioners indicating dots on new cabinets. One cabinet it is growing on inside where her plates are, which she has disposed of. ED Marra brought a painter in immediately. Mary Ann has tried wiping it down to no avail. Commissioner Suarez asked if it is growing. (Many side discussions going on.) ED Marra said when another apartment becomes available he will let Mary Ann know. Mary Ann stated her issues with moving. ED Marra noted policy which has been in place for 25 years states you can transfer one time, getting the apartment in the condition that it's in. No one says you have to take a bad apartment; wait until a good one is available. You are offered the next available apartment that is empty, sometimes in good shape/sometimes not. ED Marra said they'd come look at the cabinets and replace if necessary.

CARMELLA, #409, she had same problem as Joanie, rain coming in. She's lived here 13 years. In the beginning she was getting rain. Back then men came and got on scaffolding and worked on the brick. 13 years later, since December, she's having same problem. She has 3 windows, her ceiling is coming down, rain coming from ceiling, verticals in front, 90-inch couch and her rug are wet. Mold beginning. How soon can something be done? Mr. Marra said people are not just hired to fix a building in a week. SHA will try very hard to correct problem and not take 6 months to get it done. Someone from outside has to be hired to do it. Her apartment will be fixed inside, Mr. Marra said.

MALE TENANT, #505, spoke about stove he was promised. He is still waiting. Mr. Marra said he's trying to get price to purchase 50 stoves from two different people. He hopes to get a number and then purchase them. He cannot just purchase one at a time. When they are purchased, installation will start at 6<sup>th</sup> floor and work way down, as with hot water heaters. He noted it should be an American stove.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Suarez; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Harper.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Rivera