

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

**This is a condensed version of Zoom Meeting with Commissioners taken on
Thursday, May 28, 2020, Secaucus, New Jersey.**

Executive Director Christopher Marra called meeting to order.

ROLL CALL:

**Chairman Michael Harper
Vice-Chairman Michael Schlemm
Commissioner Antonio Suarez
Commissioner Rajkumar Pardasani
Commissioner Carmen Rivera**

Also Present:

**Executive Director Christopher Marra
Charles D'Amico, Esq., Counsel to the Board
Deputy Executive Director Jake Naszimento
Lee Mestres, Architect**

**Absent: Commissioner Richard Fairman
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori**

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Notice of this meeting as required by Open Public Meetings was provided by through the Annual Meeting Notice. It was posted on Secaucus Housing web site as a Zoom meeting.

MINUTES

Debbie Alvarez will transcribe this evening's meeting and going forward. March 2020 meeting and April 2020 meeting have not been completed as of this date.

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS – MAY 2020

VC Schlemm asked about Bath Pros for Safe Step. ED Marra answered step was cut for Apartment #413 at Kroll Heights. VC Schlemm also asked about Kinsley.

Mr. Marra explained he's been arguing with them for almost 2 years over a bill. This company did the generator projects – emergency generator servicing contract. November 2018 there was a strong, surprise snow storm. Kinsley had done some work on the generator 5 days before storm. They fixed it, except after man completes fixing it, he realized the part was malfunctioning; thus no generator. Then snow storm arrives – lights go out in Kroll Heights. Mr. Marra needs Kinsley to send a generator truck, but by time truck arrives, lights back on and it had to be paid for, but Mr. Marra thought Kinsley misrepresented themselves. Bill was more and he refused to pay it for a long period of time. Kinsley took \$500 off the bill and this is final amount.

VC Schlemm inquired about Perth Amboy Computers. Mr. Marra explained this dovetails into CARES. He wanted to purchase 1-2 laptops during this period of time to give to staff for working from home, including himself. In March, there were no laptops available – all gone. Aaron Green, SHA IT person and full-time employee at Perth Amboy where they had purchased 15 laptops. Perth Amboy sold several to Bayonne HA, where he also works as IT person. Mr. Marra bought extra one Bayonne had for use of SHA staff, who perhaps would be doing PHA web. Linda was only one with laptop. Others have iPad with keyboard so doing work is possible. Cost of laptop – \$780 will be put up against CARES money. HP Pro Book.

Commissioner Pardasani asked about Rent Reasonableness Subscription. ED Marra said it might have been explained in one of his classes. When doing Housing Choice Voucher Program and new 2 or 3-bedroom comes up and price is \$2,100 – in the past you are supposed to come up with Rent Reasonableness Study about specific 3-bedroom type is a good price for Secaucus. So a 3-bedroom on 6th Street is not same amount of money as one located at The Harper. SHA would have a hard time doing that, and SHA files delinquent in having Rent Reasonableness Studies. ED Marra discovered you could pay a subscription fee one time a year to NELROD and they have massive data base of rents throughout country. When SHA gets a new tenant, our office checks Rent Reasonableness Study based upon what tenant has in their unit, how old building is and insert Rent Reasonableness Study into folder so that SHA is in compliance.

Motion to approve Payment of Claims made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2nd by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: All Present Commissioners via Zoom (5) Absent: Fairman/Mondadori

BUILDING & GROUNDS

ED Marra spoke about extensive memo w/many pages – and indicated Commissioners should go to Page 8, Change Order on The Elms Project re: Removal & Replacement of Breaker Panels.

At this point, Lee Mestres explained the following: Project was to replace 100 amp panels in each apartment – one company just made backboard. It was hoped panels are 3 series – physically 3 are connected from main breaker in ground floor Electrical Room. First 2 panels are stacked from electrical cables to circuit panel portion of the electric panel; 3rd panel, which is at the top, is actually connected directly to cable that feed the other 2 panels. Those cables are sized to power three 100-amp panels – called “double watt” in terms of size. The taps that came off the cables are 2-pronged – 1- they’re aluminum; 2 – the size, which is a 2, is no longer adequate to feed a 100-amp panel in a multi-apartment building. It can be done in private residential building, but not multi-family. These are recent code changes.

The other issue run into is: manufacturer requires copper leads to be used to tap to the main (inaudible). We went back and forth trying to change panel size as load in apartment is going to be far less now, once you get new heating systems in, than it is now as you won’t have baseboard heat – 100-amp panels we oversized; hoping to drop down in terms of the main breaker, to be able to use #2 aluminum, but met with problems: 90-amp breakers are difficult to find and again, aluminum was the issue. Sticking with copper was more cost-effective and timely to stick with 100-amp panel, use new copper taps. Other issue is a specific lug that you need that attaches the tap cable to the main cable. Codes have changed as far as what it could be made out of, how many wires can connect into it, so that taps there now cannot be reused, which is part of change. When you look at number itself, \$22,000, but when you look at it per apartment basis, it’s only about \$225/apartment, which is reasonable. Breaker itself, if you Google 100-amp breaker, you will find it being sold for \$125-\$130. Supplier is selling it for \$80, relatively less; not charging much on top of that for labor. It might take extra 30-45 minutes in each apartment minimum to make these changes.

Only unknown here was design we had -- #1 it would be grandfathered and SHA not have to go through all this, but in order to meet Code and comply and get UL rating, which is what Code Official is looking for, SHA has to make these changes. Another issue may be that the main breakers that are down in Electrical Room, which power 3 apartments, if they are going to have to be turned off in order for work to be done because it’s a tad tricky. Those are also Federal specifics. They can fail because there is a chance when they go to turn back on, a few of them may be problematic. There is a chance SHA may have to replace a few of those switches in addition, just to make you aware of that.

Mr. Mestres went back and forth with engineer and contractor trying all different kinds of solutions to figure out a way to keep costs down and not have to turn off switches on ground floor, keep installation simple. They could not come up with a solution other than what is being presented.

VC Schlemm spoke: most homes are 100-amp service. If SHA went to 50 or 25-amps, was that investigated? Did you look at more reasonable? Mr. Mestres said yes, but wouldn't make a difference in terms of change because you still have to put tap on with it. The panel cost isn't changing. Mr. Mestres thinks the Code probably requires a 60-amp minimum. He doesn't know if there would be a huge savings in terms of material cost from 100-amp panel down to 60-amp panel. Difference might be \$5.00. You have to have same number of circuits in there. 60-amp breaker might limit you in the future if you had something that added an additional load in those units. He will ask, but doesn't think there will be very little difference in cost. 100-amp breaker is very generic, readily available breaker. Something smaller may cost more and you need lead time. 90-amp breaker manufacturer isn't making any of them right now. There is an order for 1,500 ahead of us if we went down that path.

VC Schlemm asked re: lugs – big problem is aluminum to copper. Mr. Mestres answered it is with panel. They won't accept aluminum feed, so copper has to be used. Lug in there is not Code compliant – whether you use copper or aluminum. So new lug needed. On intermediate panels, it's a 3-port lug because the number of taps required. At the end of the line it's just a single lug/single tap. Mr. Mestres will ask if they went to smaller amp panel, would there be significant savings and any consideration in going to that.

RESOLUTION #2020-14 – CHANGE ORDER ON REMOVAL & REPLACEMENT OF ELECTRICAL PANELS AT THE ELMS

RESOLUTION #2020-14

A RESOLUTION OF SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY COUNTY AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY SERVICES FOR PUBLIC USE ON AN ONLINE AUCTION WEBSITE

April 23, 2020

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority of Hudson County has determined to move forward with the EMEX Reverse Auction in order procure electricity for Secaucus Housing Authority County

WHEREAS, the Local Unit Technology Pilot Program and Study Act (P.L. 2001, c. 30) (the “Act”) authorizes the purchase of electricity supply service for public use through the use of an online auction service; and

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority County will utilize the online auction services of EMEX, LLC, an approved vendor pursuant to the Act, waiver number EMEX LLC-1, located at www.energymarketexchange.com; and

WHEREAS, EMEX, LLC is compensated for all services rendered through the participating supplier that a contract is awarded to; and

WHEREAS, the auction will be conducted pursuant to the Act; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Director of the Secaucus Housing Authority is hereby authorized to execute on behalf of the Secaucus Housing Authority County any electricity contract proffered by the participating supplier that submits the winning bid in the EMEX Reverse Auction.

Commissioners	Ayes	Nays	Absent
Chairman Harper			
Vice Chairman Schlemm			
Commissioner Suarez			
Commissioner Fairman			
Commissioner Pardasani			
Commissioner Rivera			
Commissioner Mondadori			

ED Marra noted after receiving the Change Order, he sent it to Mr. D'Amico, Esq. to make sure everything was proper under Public Procurement Practices, was there any issue about this. Mr. D'Amico said no, and gave Mr. Marra 3 scenarios under which it would be okay. Mr. D'Amico added mostly importantly, he had read all the documents and that the changes could not have been easily anticipated before the project started. So no issue regarding this amount of money.

Motion to approve made by VC Schlemm; 2nd by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Fairman/Mondadori

At this point in the proceeding, Mr. Mestres left.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

ED Marra noted: under CARES Act, which covered a variety of things, it gave housing authorities funds under Operating or like SHA, it came under Administrative funds. SHA received \$90,728 – deposited into bank in early May. Commissioners received from ED Marra a PIH Notice – Pages 2/3 outline uses for this money, including securing cleaning supplies to additional technology, providing child care for PHA staff and costs associated with delivery of goods. Mr. Marra told Mr. Snyder he hadn't spent any extra money; no extra hiring of a cleaning service. ED Marra wants to meet with Finance Committee to propose things. Deadline is December 31, 2020 to expend these funds – needing separate accounting, which Mr. Ketchen will have to take care of, as will our office.

Early on we talked about hiring a cleaning company. There is electrostatic cleaning done on subways and buses. Men come in PPE suits and spray everything. A company solicited SHA, gave a proposal for \$4,400, but in reading CDC guidelines for cleaning in buildings, you're not supposed to use electrostatic spray – just squirt and wipe. Time intensive and man hours. Another

company said they'd come in on a Saturday, having done renovation work at The Elms on first floor. They wanted to send 2 men to each building on a Saturday, charging Saturday rates of prevailing wage – one time cost including stairwells -- \$7,000. I'll discuss it with Unicorn, whether or not we hire them to come in on a Saturday and clean. Commissioner Suarez added CDC put out a report last week saying transmission is very difficult, contrary to what everyone knew the last 60 days.

ED Marra: List is limited on what you can spend it on. Other thing is SHA phone system is 20 years old, and unlike Town Hall where people were sent home and you could forward a line to their cell phone, SHA cannot do that. Companies want to sell you voice over internet, but not charging you \$15,000 up front. Upfront cost is \$900, but then bills you every month for 3 years @\$225/month. If phone breaks, they come and replace it. At the end of 3 years you purchase phones for \$1.00. He asked one company and has a few proposals, but if this is going to be an ongoing recurring thing – he'll pay entire money up front and ask for a 10% break. Company didn't know how to respond to that.

Basically, there were 160 residents with today's testing – tested by the hospital. ED Marra has gotten intermittent reports from Gary Jeffas; the first 130 tested, no one came back tested positive – this is not with today's tests. There were 2 confirmed and did pass away. We need a Finance meeting and Buildings & Grounds meeting done through Zoom, as B&G has to do with MaGrann. Commissioner Pardasani asked how much SHA has spent from the \$90,000. ED Marra answered \$780; only ordering regular cleaning supplies – when they are available. Town has been supplying SHA with N-95 masks only for maintenance. Jake at Brick Housing had to purchase 300 masks to distribute to tenants. In Secaucus, Mayor Gonnelli gave each one a pack with 5 masks and Dick arranged for a woman at Harmon Cove Towers to give SHA 275 masks. ED Marra purchased N-95 masks and has 3 separate orders out for Purell dispensers and stuff that goes in them. When that arrives it will be \$500-\$700, but SHA has not spent an exorbitant amount of money for cleaning supplies. DED Naszimento at Brick Housing has not to purchase a lot more either in terms of cleaning products or masks. Mayor of Brick was able to donate about 300 cloth masks as well. Jake put in order for N95 masks for his staff.

Commissioners have bank statements and something will be done with Santander account because it's not earning any money. Contract from Constellation begins June 1st for 12 months. No information from NJSTEM.

Lee Mestres rejoined the conversation at this point.

Mr. Mestres: While sending an email to engineer and contractor, he thought about why the smaller panel won't work, still asking about it, but reason is: because this project is putting the cart before the horse. Panels are going in before new heating system goes in. Existing apartment load is going to have to

rely on new panel; not getting the benefit of not having the electric baseboard, and we don't know when new heating system project is going to take place – could go through another entire heating system with electric baseboard. If SHA downsizes panels to 60 amps or something too small, it might not be enough to heat an apartment.

Mr. Mestres left the Zoom meeting.

There is nothing under Professional Services or Personnel. At last meeting, resolution for five-year plan was passed. Letter received that Petima Holder (phonetic) accepted and approved SHA five-year plan. Mr. Marra had a Zoom meeting with MaGrann; sent bullet points as a result of that meeting. Mr. Marra feels they have an aggressive agenda here. June 3rd they will have a final walk-through, take photos of things, and sometime between June 3rd and 25th, a 6:00 p.m. Buildings & Grounds meeting – Zoom style – for them to give you exactly what will be in bid document and what they're doing. One delay was no construction allowed and PSE&G did not allow them to go to sites to look at anything. 175 items are coming from either China or Japan, who knows if they'll get here by September.

FYI re: \$147,00 to get fire pump; it's tested. What happens? Not enough pressure because Suez item in the street. They day after it was concluded, Suez person was at The Elms opening up fire hydrant and marking out street, so perhaps Suez will take some action to see if they can fix pressure there. Problem is building not getting enough pressure from the street. The Elms is not a sprinkler building, it's for standpipes, but \$147,000 was just spent and it should pass inspection.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM – DED Jake Naszimento

DED Naszimento reported SHA had 211 payable member transactions in May. Eight family transactions. \$195,833 spent overall – sent to landlords. Of that \$188,297 was in direct deposit form. SHA also sent \$8,250 in paper checks, including \$359 sent to 8 families for utilities. Last month we were only sending checks for utilities for 4 families. \$19,764 was sent to port-out families who live outside Secaucus at 8 other housing authorities. We are not issuing any new vouchers.

Normally this time of year SHA is required to submit SEMAP to HUD, Section Eight Management Assessment Performance. It is how HUD grades SHA on our performance on how Section 8 Program is run. Due to Covid Virus, HUD is not requiring housing authorities to submit this year; simply carrying over score from last year.

CORRESPONDENCE

There is an update from PHADA/NAHRO re: lawsuit. Mr. D'Amico sent Mr. Marra something dealing with CARES ACT about tenant protection provisions under the Act. It is further extended under Governor Murphy's law. For one tenant, SHA is collection 100% rent; no issues with other 275 people who live in that building. They all paid their rent. In May, the 28 units that SHA manages there were no issues re: rent.

Emily Padamino (ph.) will come to next meeting via Zoom. She will be SHA intern and started May 18th, working through July 9th. Emily lives in Patriot Commons, submitted application for scholarship last year, but didn't get it and speaks Spanish. Emily is first year student at Felician in nursing program; being paid \$15/hour. At the end of 8 weeks, NJ NAHRO reimburses SHA \$7.50/hour.

Other correspondence was items sent to residents in May. Mr. Marra wrote thank you letters to President of HRH for coming to Authority; testing residents; thank you to Mayor Gonnelli for arranging that and thank you to Paula Leeds for masks.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Mondadori/Fairman

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber