

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

September 23, 2021

This is a condensed transcription of the taped minutes as taken on Thursday, September 23, 2021, Kroll Heights, 700 County Road, Secaucus, New Jersey.

ROLL CALL – Executive Director Christopher Marra

Present:

Chairman Michael Harper
Vice-Chairman Michael Schlemm
Commissioner Raj Pardasani – via Zoom
Commissioner Antonio Suarez

Also Present:

Executive Director Christopher Marra
Charles D'Amico, Esq., Counsel to the Authority

Absent:

Commissioner Patricia Mondadori
Commissioner Carmen Rivera
Commissioner Richard Fairman

.OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

“Adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, has been provided by the filing of a 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 7, 2020. This body wishes to advise you that there is no smoking in the building.”

FLAG SALUTE

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES – August 12, 2021

Motion to accept minutes including CLOSED SESSION made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2nd by Chairman Harper.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (3)
Absent: Mondadori/Rivera/Fairman

Abstain: Suarez

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS – AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2021

Motion to approve Payment of Claims for August/September made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2nd by Commissioner Suarez.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Mondadori/Rivera/Fairman

FINANCE COMMITTEE

1. RESOLUTION #2021-27 – INDEMNITY & TRUST AGREEMENT FOR THE NJPHAJIF (COMMITTING TO THE JIF FOR A 3-YEAR PERIOD OF 1/1/2022 THROUGH 12/31/24)

RESOLUTION #2021-27 (Resolution to Renew Membership in the New Jersey Public Housing Authority Joint Insurance Fund)

WHEREAS, Public Housing Authorities in the State of New Jersey are permitted to join together to form a Joint Insurance Fund as permitted by N.J.S.A. 40A:10-36 et.seq.; and

WHEREAS, the statues regulating the creation and establishment of a Joint Insurance Fund contain elaborate restrictions and safeguards concerning the safe and efficient administration of the public interest entrusted to such fund; and

WHEREAS, the governing body of the Secaucus Housing Authority has determined that membership in the Joint Insurance Fund is in the best interest of the Authority.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the governing body of the Authority does hereby resolve and agree to renew its membership in the NJPHA Joint Insurance Fund, effective January 1, 2022 to expire December 31, 2024 for the purpose of establishing the following types of coverage:

1. Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability
2. Liability, other than motor vehicle
3. Property Damage, other than motor vehicle
4. Motor Vehicle
5. Public Officials Liability/Employment Practices Liability

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Christopher Marra, Executive Director is authorized to execute the application for membership and the accompanying certification on behalf of the Authority and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governing body is authorized and directed to execute the Indemnity and Trust Agreement and such other documents signifying their membership in the FUND as are required by the FUND's Bylaws and to deliver the same to the Administrator of the FUND with the express reservation that said document shall become effective only upon the applicant's admission to the FUND following approval by the FUND, passage by the Authority

of a Resolution Accepting Assessment and approval by the New Jersey Department of Insurance and the Department of Community Affairs

ED Marra has to sign accompanying documents – Indemnity & Trust Agreement – SHA will be part of JIF for 3 years – 2022-2024. Same resolution signed 3 years ago.

Motion to approve made by Chairman Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Schlemm.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Mondadori/Rivera/Fairman

April-June 2021 Quarterly Financial Statement provided by Mr. Ketchen, CPA, and came out of recent audit statement. This is for fiscal year that began April 1st. There are 2: first document starts with Revenue & Rental Income for RAD Program of SHA – basic operations of SHA. 2nd document which starts off with Revenue & Voucher Payments is for entire voucher program – Housing Choice Voucher and for PBD vouchers in 3 buildings. Columns 5, 6 and 7 – really Budget Year to Date – April 1-June 30th – Actual Year to Date was, Variance and Budget to Actual. One will be received each quarter – hoping to give you one in October that is through June 30th.

CARES Expenditures that we have gotten to date. \$75,651 of CARES Expenditures and \$126,961 we have to spend. Unless following statement is true, SHA will have difficult time expending last \$126,961. There are very specific requirements of what money can be spent on, but supposedly they said you could spend money on regular administration of your voucher program. If that is case, that means that portions of salaries – Marra, Naszimento, Fran, Terry and Linda – should be able to put towards that \$126,961. IF NOT THE CASE, it will be difficult to find another \$126,000. We don't need a truck, as you have to justify the truck as truck was being used to deliver food to residents of your property, not just so we can get rid of 20-year old truck and purchase new one. We are trying our best to come up with something – existing salaries of staff.

Commissioner Suarez asked about getting new laptop. ED Marra: In 2018 everyone got new computer; 2019 SHA bought new server. Laptop used tonight is CARES Act laptop. We are trying to upgrade Access Card System as we have issues right now – if SHA does it, would it be in time and billed before 12/21/2021. There is a going cost of \$38,000. Problem is contract can't be signed as its not State contract. A competing proposal would be needed so ED Marra could select \$38,000. Proposal just received Monday and still working on that issue.

MONTHLY ACCOUNT BALANCES – for bank accounts. If Commissioners go to 8/31/2021- Account #4 – there is \$1,157,753. Month before there was almost \$1.6 million – SHA took out administrative fees for 1 year/12 months which was in

that HAP account and moved it up to Account #2, which went from 348 to 958 – it is admin money SHA gets for managing vouchers.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

2. RESOLUTION #2021-28 – EXTENSION OF INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH BRICK HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2021-28 (Approval of Agreement with Brick Housing Authority for a 45 day period Commencing October 1, 2021 through November 15 2021)

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus has entered into an agreement with the Housing Authority of the Township of Brick in order to provide the services of a qualified Executive Director; and

WHEREAS, the services of the Executive Director are enumerated in the agreement for services as previously executed by the Authorities; and

WHEREAS, the compensation to the Secaucus Housing Authority for the Deputy Executive Director's services shall be \$8,437.50 for a 45 day period beginning October 1, 2021 until November 15, 2021, plus a \$70 per diem travel expense.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that the attached agreement for services with the Brick Housing Authority be hereby approved for a 45 day period.

This is for a 45-day period commencing October 1, 2021 through November 15, 2021; outlined with compensation SHA would receive, including \$70 per day/per diem. This was agreed to at August SHA meeting and what Brick is also agreeing to at their meeting next week.

Motion to approve Resolution #2021-28 made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Commissioner Schlemm.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Mondadori/Rivera/Fairman

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

3. RESOLUTION #2021-29 – HIRING OF TANYA OQUENDO, RESIDENT SERVICES COORDINATOR

32 resumes were reviewed; ED Marra telephone interviewed 7; 4 people interviewed last week – Interview Committee: Patricia Mondadori, Michael Schlemm, Michael Harper. Chairman Harper: 4 very nice interviews; impressive young women. Ms. Oquendo has lived in Secaucus all her life, energetic,

excited, bi-lingual – important to SHA, asked very good questions. Positive about entire situation; knew good bit about SHA; re-entering work force after raising her children – really impressed entire committee. Commissioner Schlemm: She did a good job and skill set will fit nicely into office; help SHA out into the future. Very impressed also.

ED Marra: She was here Tuesday; met office staff and some maintenance; will begin work next Monday, September 27th.

RESOLUTION 2021-29
Hiring of Resident Services Coordinator

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority is in need of a Resident Services Coordinator to fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the attached job description; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority advertised for this position and received 32 resumes; and

WHEREAS, the Personnel Committee interviewed four candidates; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that Tanya Oquendo will be offered the position of Resident Services Coordinator ; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the starting salary for this position be \$35,000 based upon a probationary period of sixty days.

Motion to approve hiring of Tanya Oquendo made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2nd by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Mondadori/Rivera/Fairman

4. RESOLUTION #2021-30 – PROMOTION OF LINDA FANNING TO HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER COORDINATOR

Resolution and job description promoting Linda Fanning from Resident Services Coordinator to Housing Choice Voucher Coordinator, reminding Commissioners that back on August 12th, ED Marra sent memo regarding what SHA would be doing with Ms. Fanning, looking for Residents Services Coordinator; outlined some savings that SHA might get in this transaction with Mr. Naszimento moving on to Brick HA and Linda Fanning taking over Housing Choice Voucher Program; hiring someone – Ms. Oquendo. This resolution follows what was talked about at August 15th meeting in terms of promotion for Linda.

RESOLUTION 2021-30

(Promotion of Linda Fanning from Resident Services Coordinator to Housing Choice Voucher Coordinator)

WHEREAS, Jacob Naszimento, Deputy Executive Director (DED), has agreed to take the position of Executive Director of the Brick Housing Authority effective November 15, 2021; and

WHEREAS, part of Jacob Naszimento's duties as DED, was to manage the Secaucus Housing Authority's (SHA) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program; and

WHEREAS, upon his departure the SHA will need to have a person take over the responsibilities of the HCV Program; and

WHEREAS, Linda Fanning began working for the SHA on January 25, 1999, first as the Recreational Coordinator and then in 2014 as the Resident Services Coordinator; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Fanning has worked on the Recertification of the senior and disabled residents who reside at the SHA's three properties; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Fanning has also taken training classes and received certification in 1) Housing Choice Vouchers – Project Based Vouchers + Rental Assistance Demonstration and 2)HCV, PH & Rent Calculation Certification; and

WHEREAS Ms. Fanning also obtained certification for Counselor in State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) from the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services; and

WHEREAS, the creation of this position and promotion of Ms. Fanning was discussed at the August 12, 2021 meeting.

NOW THEREORE BE IT RESOLVED, by Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus will promote Linda Fanning from the position of Resident Services Coordinator to Housing Choice Voucher Coordinator effective August 30, 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the starting salary for this position be \$64,089.

Motion to approve Resolution #2021-30 made by Chairman Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Schlemm.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Mondadori/Rivera/Fairman

POLICY COMMITTEE

23 SEPTEMBER 2021 – REGULAR MEETING

RESOLUTION #2021-25 adopted at August 12th meeting. In Commissioners' meeting package is interlocal agreement between Secaucus Housing Authority and Cliffside Park Housing Authority for them to become SHA's independent entity; matching up with what was talked about in Resolution – conducting inspections of SHA buildings at \$45/unit; sign off on OCAF – yearly adjustments and also on Rent Reasonable Report for contract rents that SHA has in each of 3 buildings. Also explained at August meeting as to need. In past Leased Housing Corporation would conduct inspections, but discovered now that is a conflict and moving on to CPHA. Nothing to adopt as it's already been adopted.

ED Marra: By-Laws were going to be adopted tonight. They have to be revised because in original By-Laws it's stated that we shall have a Deputy Executive Director; since Jake is leaving wording must be changed in By-Laws, which Mr. D'Amico has done, but not distributed to Commissioners. Here is plan: going to distribute it so that it's introduced at October 28th meeting, then if we have to have special meeting in December, somewhere in week of 13-16 for 10 minutes with 4 Commissioners, we will adopt By-Laws at that meeting, giving us 45 days to do it. Thus, By-Laws not being introduced.

Mr. D'Amico: By-Laws submitted and reviewed by all Commissioners 4-5 months ago indicated that there **shall be a Deputy Executive Director**. Once Jake leaves and new positions are filled, there will be no Deputy Executive Director, so organization cannot be run contrary to By-Laws. I changed new By-Laws to say that **there may be a Deputy Executive Director in absence of an Executive Director**. Those duties will be distributed to all the other parties by the Executive Director. Reason Commissioners are not voting on what was seen a few months ago is what's going on in next year will be contrary to what we wrote, so they have to be changed to conform to what we're doing.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Kroll Heights bathroom renovation project is about half-way completed; they look good and taking longer than anticipated; spending too much time in each unit, going back and forth. There has been no negative feedback from residents. Men going in are nice, seen everyday, same group every week and day, very clean, clean up after work is done – being nice and cleaning up afterwards are very important; and are doing job correctly. There are many parts: glazing, exhaust fan that needed. Thus men are in there 4-5 times. No negative feedback from residents.

Surveillance cameras are done. Getting trained next week. Work station in each building; staff and maintenance staff. Project now done.

Elevator equipment upgrade at 600 County Avenue. Tonight first bill paid to Coppa Montalbano. They were here, did field investigation and by end of October bid package should go out and be ready to bid.

Exterior finish and window upgrade at The Elms, Mr. Mestres expects to have ready for SHA by the end of October to go out to bid for that.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM

Report about how many vouchers SHA is utilizing. In month of September SHA actually now at 229 vouchers; only have 250 vouchers that SHA is allowed to actually fund. We're trying to get to 240 before HUD realizes it; that will set us up to stay at that number a long time, and hopefully provide us with stabilized administrative fee; more than we were getting in the past.

VOUCHERS IN SECAUCUS

Month	Vouchers	Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)
July	230	\$228,589
August	229	\$225,486
September	230	\$227,496

SHA VOUCHERS THAT PORTED OUT

Month	Vouchers	HAP & Admin Fee
July	7	\$6,913 \$452.70
August	7	\$6,176 882.29
September	9	\$9,978 1,108.67

OUTSIDE HOUSING AUTHORITY VOUCHERS THAT PORTED INTO SECAUCUS

Month	Vouchers	HAP & Admin Fee
July	9	\$15,189.81 \$533.81
August	10	\$16,187.87 \$620.87
September	10	\$16,488.87 \$620.87

The first chart shows the total number of voucher households living in Secaucus. Within those figures for each month is the corresponding number of port-ins from other authorities. For example, in September of the 230 vouchers administered in Secaucus, ten are from out of town. Thereby the Authority is financing only 220 vouchers from its fund.

However, you see that the Secaucus Housing Authority has nine (9) voucher holders who have left the community, but SHA is still funding those families.

The result is that for September SHA is funding 229 vouchers and spending approximately \$238,582.

HUD sent out email in which SHA was required and Jake did this – SHA must respond to survey by Office of Inspector General. They submitted survey out to everyone regarding SEMAP process – Section 8 Management Assessment Program. Jake filled it out. Commissioners given copy of blank survey so you could see some questions that they ask. Not expecting any feedback on it, but perhaps finalized report about it and SHA would be part of report.

Email came in to SHA and Brick HA – ED Marra gave Commissioners copy of article from 2017 – SHA was part of law suit to try to get back money that U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development took during Obama Administration. Constantly receiving emails that government was appealing many times. As of Tuesday, September 14th, government has decided not to request further review of Court of Appeals Decision that affirm the Claims Court denial, meaning case is over. All that remains is payment of damages to which you are entitled. It might be \$85,000. We paid into it \$3,000 and sent another \$2,000 – expending \$5,000 and hopefully get back \$85,000.

At last meeting, Mr. Ketchen – having to do with Independent Entity Issue – when SHA converted to RAD, SHA told HUD 4 projects were planned initially right away -- \$1.4 million. SHA did 3 of them right away – new roof at The Elms; roofs at Rocco Towers; air handler on roof of Rocco Towers. Other project would have been one worked on with PSE&G, which we didn't do; still holding onto that money. There are several letters: A – letter originally wrote to Field Office in Newark explaining SHA had used all the money; here's what we want to do with the money. B – an email categorized as Letter B – HUD sent ED Marra email asking 6 questions about my letter. C- were my answers to those 6 questions. Finally, D – engineer said he would be back in touch with me after contacting people in Washington, D.C.

This is not HUD money, but money borrowed from the bank and can't be taken away from us. SHA has a legitimate reason why project wasn't completed; have subsequent project to fund, which hopefully will be completed next year.

As long as we seem to be following directions, they probably want to monitor more closely what SHA does.

REMARKS OF CITIZENS – Two women in attendance had nothing to ask or comment on.

**SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY
RESOLUTION NO. 2021-31
AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

WHEREAS, while the Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) requires all meetings of the Secaucus Housing Authority to be held in public, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) sets forth nine (9) types of matters that may lawfully be discussed in “Executive Session,” i.e. without the public being permitted to attend, and

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority has determined that 1 issue is permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) to be discussed without the public in attendance shall be discussed during an Executive Session to be held on September 23, 2021 at 7:30 P.M, and

WHEREAS, the nine (9) exceptions to public meetings set forth in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) are listed below, and next to each exception is a box within which **the number** of issues to be privately discussed that fall within that exception shall be written, and after each exception is a space where additional information that will disclose as much information about the discussion as possible without undermining the purpose of the exception shall be written.

1	<p>“(7) Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer.” The parties to and docket numbers of each item of litigation and/or the parties to each contract discussed are - Secaucus Housing Authority vs. <u>Mario Robiolio and Mario Robiolio vs Secaucus Housing Authority</u> and nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____ _____;</p>
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WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be 15 minutes after which the public meeting of the Secaucus Housing Authority shall (circle one) reconvene and immediately adjourn or reconvene and proceed with business.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of the Secaucus Housing Authority will go into Executive Session for **only** the above stated reasons;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) will be made public at a time when the public’s interest in disclosure is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure. For each of the above items, the estimated date by which such disclosure can be made and/or the occurrence that needs to take place before disclosure can be made are listed below (attach separate sheet if necessary)

Subject of Discussion	Estimated Date	Necessary Occurrence
Robiolio vs. SHA	TBD	

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary, at the present public meeting, shall read aloud enough of this resolution so that members of the public in attendance can understand, as precisely as possible, the nature of the matters that will privately discussed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary, on the next business day following this meeting, shall furnish a copy of this resolution to any member of the public who requests one at the fees allowed by N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.

Michael Harper, Chairperson

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF THE RESOLUTION APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY AT ITS PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON September 23, 2021.

Christopher Marra, Secretary

Motion to go into CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss a legal matter made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2nd by Commissioner Suarez.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Mondadori/Rivera/Fairman

(At this point in the meeting, Public Session was adjourned. Closed Session was begun.)

(At this point in the meeting, Closed Session was adjourned. Public Session was opened once again.)

Motion to come out of Closed Session made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2nd by Commissioner Suarez.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Mondadori/Rivera/Fairman

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Commissioner Schlemm.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Mondadori/Rivera/Fairman

Respectfully submitted, Deborah L. Alvarez

MEETING ADJOURNED: 7.40 P.M.