

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

September 29, 2022

Condensed transcription of taped minutes from Thursday,
September 29, 2022, Kroll Heights, 700 County Road, Secaucus, New Jersey.

Chairman Michael Harper called meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Chairman Michael Schlemm
Vice-Chairman Michael Schlemm
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori
Commissioner Raj Pardasani
Commissioner Carmen Rivera*
Commissioner Antonio Suarez

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

Absent: 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 12, 2021. This body wishes to advise you in accordance with N.J.S.A. 26:3D (Smoking in Public Buildings), smoking is prohibited while this body is in open or closed session.”

FLAG SALUTE

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – July 28, 2022 – Closed & Regular Session and June 23, 2022

Motion to accept minutes made by Commissioner Mondadori; 2nd by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) – June 23, 2022

Absent: Rivera/Fairman

29 September 2022 – Kroll Heights

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) – July 28, 2022

ABSTAIN: Schlemm Absent: Fairman

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS – August & September

Commissioner Mondadori: Building Technical Inspector for survey re: waterproofing for The Towers - \$975 – Survey Waterproof RIT.

(*At this point in the meeting, Commissioner Rivera was in attendance.)

Commissioner Pardasani: What about spraying of a tree at The Elms. ED Marra: There is a particular tree sprayed almost each year in spring/summer to prevent bugs from trying to kill the tree – not the lantern bug. It is a special tree.

Commissioner Schlemm: What about clean-out of Unit 416, is someone being charged for that? ED Marra: Yes, security deposit was taken from the people. Commissioner Schlemm: Camera inspection and (inaudible) for floor at Rocco Towers – (ProServe). ED Marra: Ground floor of Rocco Towers at south end of building, there's been a "phorid fly" – a sewer fly; ENG here many times and it's at south end of G – in front of Apartments G3/G4. After having ENG here numerous times, having identified phorid fly, 3 years ago Professional Services came in (water behind wall at that time; who determined there was a cracked pipe in #107 above it; floor opened up). Camera detected another cracked pipe in same apartment - #107, could see bugs in the pipe. Bugs are in the thousands. Bill is for their service to get rid of them and possibly to chop open floor in #107; fix pipes. Commissioner Schlemm: 1 inspection for \$289; another inspection of \$14,000. ED Marra: It was actual opening up of pipe, replacing pipe, etc. As of today, problem is not completely eradicated, affecting 3 apartments – G3, G4 and 107. There is a lower level on other side of wall, where there are some pits and sump pumps located there.

Commissioner Pardasani: Main Access Systems of \$31,388? ED Marra: that was bill for company when we did the bid – change everybody's card and all access controls. They did the job and sent 1 invoice instead of billing 2 times.

Motion to accept payment of claims made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2nd by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

Lee Mestres wrote a proposal for replacing 3 roofs at Rocco Towers, which is related to elevator project: above the elevator equipment room; around the elevator equipment room and roof above the Laundromat on 3rd floor. This company did a study to see how damaged or wet roofs were, on there since 1986. If not as damaged as we thought, SHA would put out a bid to cover with a compound right over roof, which becomes a new roof, but study determined these roofs, dated 1986, are too damaged with water infiltration. We then went

out to ask for bids – actually paying \$975 twice – once at beginning and once when we received report – Building Tech Inspection.

Commissioners have quarterly financial statements of April through June 2022 prepared by Bill Katchen's office. Also monthly bank accounts balances; SHA has moved some money to take advantage of better interest rates now available through Bogota Savings Bank – took laundry money out of TD Bank, moved it to Bogota for 18-month CD; moved some money sitting in long term accounts, i.e., Section 8 and long-term funds – used to pay for EFIs project and elevator repair project – only earning .85 and now earning 2.25 for 9 months. We will try to move laundry money out of TD Bank.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

1. RESOLUTION #2022-28 – HIRING OF MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS

Greg Kohl retired on July 31, 2022; Authority working with 3 maintenance men since that time. Put an ad in Town Hall, gave us display on their web site, posted on Facebook. 7-8 resumes received. Many didn't have correct skills; Personnel Committee interviewing 3 people – Mike Harper, Mike Schlemm, Tony Suarez. Stephen Torres and Oscar Oliveros – should take advantage and hire both of them. There are certain skills that they have, particularly Oscar, in which he can be utilized instead of hiring outside contractors: painting – excellent by all accounts painter including replace wallboards, spackle and paint if wall damaged. Oscar also lays floors – if needing to replace a carpet and use planking or luxury vinyl tile; whatever else you like to call it, he can do that by himself. Sometimes there is an issue at The Elms regarding their old kitchens – from 1997, some falling apart. Kitchen replaced in #406 where fire was; cost to replace is \$4,000; tiniest kitchen in 3 buildings. \$2,500/labor -- \$1,500/cabinets. New man can do that. Oscar works for Town of Secaucus/Building & Grounds. Oscar brought back for 2nd interview; taken into empty apartments in Towers & Heights; showed them to Oscar; can you paint these in one day – answered yes; could you refloor these on a turnover; he said yes. We are only talking about 600' square apartment – empty/we have 30 days to turnover. Right now SHA pays \$490 to paint 1-bedroom apartment; quote given to us in December 2019. This year that number will be close to \$600 – painting 20-25 apartments every year. 85-90% of turnovers probably get a new rug; trying to go away from rugs. We'd use same flooring in all 3 buildings.

Mr. Torres, if we hire him, will start Monday, October 3rd; plan for him is changing remaining 11 hot water heaters next door in The Elms; other jobs he can do as well and assist in regular maintenance.

We had 4 maintenance men for a short period of time, 18 to 24 months. Harry Koleski (ph.) left; then we had 4 again for 11 months; that person left. Took us 2 months to get back to 4. If this works out for SHA in long term, we would have 3 maintenance men all starting in same year at same salary – having other advantages to this as well in looking at their resume. It would help us as other maintenance men are going to retire somewhere in next 2-5 years/reaching

their 25th year of employment and retire. We don't get many men like Oscar who have all those skills. I spoke to Bill Katchen re: do we have enough money; he said yes.

There was a point where outsourcing outweighed paying salary; now it has turned a tad. Outsource may not always be as beneficial as paying staff. SHA up until 2001 only dealt with 3 buildings with 6 maintenance men. Now as SHA got more buildings to take care of: Patriot and Colonial, we had 3 men and 5 buildings. Better for us to have these men now.

1. RESOLUTION #2022-28- HIRING OF MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority is in need of a Maintenance Technician(s) to fulfill the maintenance duties and responsibilities to keep the Authority's buildings orderly and in good repair; and

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

WHEREAS, the Personnel Committee interviewed three candidates; NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that Stephon Torres and Oscar Oliveros will be offered the position of Maintenance Technician; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the starting salary for each person in this position be \$40,000 based upon a probationary period of six months.

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

Motion to approve hiring of Maintenance Technicians in Resolution #2022-28 made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6) Absent: Fairman

POLICY COMMITTEE

ED Marra working on Non-Smoking Policy and gathering information from other Housing Authorities and also JIF.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

People from 600 County Road, close to end of removing and replacing front doors; working on 1st floor tomorrow; G-floor Monday – Joe and I will create punch list for anything needing to be done, but by end of next week, that project should be complete. New doors are fire rated; 84 old doors removed from premises. Goal next year is to paint inside of Rocco Towers: common areas and those people's apartments who haven't been painted in past 5 years, who want it painted – 50-60 apartments left/10-20 don't want to go through hassle, we'll paint them. Painting from "G" to community room next year.

Working on elevator and escalator modernization; might start at end of October. I thought it might be over by Easter, now because of delays – Memorial Day. It has to be done.

October meeting, I will have some news about County awarding SHA some type of grant for project at The Elms; then we can bid that project.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

2. RESOLUTION #2022-29 – ESTABLISHMENT OF PAYMENT STANDARD FOR HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

It is self-explanatory and one used each year; upping what SHA can accept as total rent inclusive of utilities for a person to rent. SHA got approval from HUD that we can temporarily increase Payment Standard because the way rents were going, we weren't able to give a voucher that they could actually find a place and rent. What they will be allowed to look at will be higher. Each apartment has to go through a Rent Reasonableness Test – typical person, 2-family house where owner lives downstairs, renting 2-bedroom upstairs. If not upgraded since Ronald Reagan was President, not same value as someone who upgraded it when Obama was President. Both cannot ask for \$3,000 for 2-bedroom apartment when 1 has dishwasher; bathroom renovated in last 6 years; other old bathroom; unmodern kitchen.

RESOLUTION #2022-29 - ESTABLISHING THE PAYMENT STANDARDS FOR THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

WHEREAS, on November 16, 2016 HUD published its final rule in the Federal Register establishing Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMR) parameters and naming 24 metropolitan areas that met the selection criteria, for which the Town of Secaucus, specifically zip code 07094 was included and were designated for mandatory use of SAFMRs commencing on October 1, 2017; and

WHEREAS, on August 10, 2017 HUD exercised its authority under 24 CFR 888.113(c)(4)(iii) to suspend SAFMR designation for 23 of the 24 designated areas that would have gone into effect on October 1, 2017 until October 1, 2019; and

WHEREAS, On December 23, 2017 the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia entered a preliminary injunction, voiding that

suspension, thereby giving Public Housing Authorities until April 1, 2018 to implement these new rates; and

WHEREAS, a Public Housing Authority (PHA) uses the published SAFMR as a guide to establish Payment Standards per bedroom size for the Housing Choice Voucher Program; and

WHEREAS, a PHA may establish Payment Standards anywhere between 90 to 110 percent of the published FMR without obtaining HUD approval; and

WHEREAS, the Payment Standards are used to calculate the housing assistance payment (HAP) that the PHA pays to the owner on behalf of the family leasing the unit; and

WHEREAS, the Payment Standard set by the PHA directly effects the amount of subsidy a family will receive and the amount of rent that will be paid by the tenant; and

WHEREAS, a PHA must also determine that its annual budget authority for the Housing Choice Voucher Program will support the established Payment Standards; and

WHEREAS, a PHA must also ensure that the program participants will be able to find safe, decent and affordable units within the PHA's jurisdiction within the standards established; and

WHEREAS, applicants/participants have experienced cost related obstacles to leasing safe, decent and affordable units within the SHA jurisdiction, and;
WHEREAS, HUD has released its 2023 SAFMR for all bedroom sizes in zip code 07094; and

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority has determined the Payment Standard shall be set at 100% of the 2023 SAFMR for the 0 bedroom, 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom units, the payment standard per bedroom size will be:

2023 Secaucus Housing Authority Payment Standard

Bedroom Size SAFMR

0 \$2,290

1 \$2,360

2 \$2,710

3 \$3,350

4 \$3,640

WHEREAS, the Payment Standards have been reviewed and approved by William Katchen, our accountant; and

WHEREAS, his review has confirmed that sustaining the payment standard for all bedroom sizes is within the best interest of the SHA and the clients they serve

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that the payments standards as set forth above are to continue for the period commencing October 1, 2022 through September

Motion to approve Resolution #2022-29 made by Chairman Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Schlemm.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

Commissioners have memo regarding HCVP from July to September 2022. August 29 email received by ED Marra: through Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022, Congress and President approved additional funding for HCVP in which Housing Authorities – and SHA has never gotten more since given HCVP 35 years ago – given 250 vouchers/not able to get more. Somehow SHA awarded 4 more/giving us 254 vouchers that we can actually fill; great for us. It helps SHA move list faster. We opened list in April of this year; by end of year there were 50-60 people who submitted applications on first day. By time we get to end of year, everybody will be given a letter that says their name came to top of list; please provide us with your information so we can verify that you're eligible for a voucher; then award you a voucher.

Linda and Angie Oliveros, who are running program, doing a good job, utilizing as many as vouchers as SHA can use. More vouchers you use, more administrative fees you get. Administrative fee is used for salary, administrating the program. It is one of our few sources of income.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS – nothing at this time

REMARKS OF CITIZENS

PEDRO RIVERA – 600 County Road, #503 – Showed Commissioners pictures on his mobile phone of closet doors. ED Marra only knew of dirt on inside of closet door; were doors replaced yet? Pedro put clean clothes in closet week before he moved; started cleaning upon moving in. Clothes smelled bad. Pedro is former Superintendent in NYC apartment from 1976 to 1995; building management diploma from Bronx Community College; Superintendent in General Maintenance. Knows what Superintendent has to do – doors are terrible; please remove doors. ED Marra thought they had been changed; gotten complaint in Office; issued memo to have doors changed. Air-conditioner also stinks; asked for new filter. Pedro moved in September 1st. Chairman Harper apologized; ED Marra will look tomorrow and make it right.

KATHY - #202 – New tenant/middle of August. Serious problem with windows. Ronnie tried to fix – cannot open. She hurt her back. Ronnie sprayed with WD40; friend tried to help also with WD40. Ronnie fixed; she opened and then it slammed down. ED Marra will have company come to look at it. Commissioner Suarez asked if it was reported to Maintenance, which it was.

MATTY - #212 – She has same problem with her windows.

MRS. MINIVENI - #509 – Compact Room smells so bad; she's here 12-13 years and it's very bad. People not careful when it's cleaned, wall is dirty the next day.

ANNA SCARDINO - #515 – Vent in kitchen needs to be cleaned. She's here 2 years and needs to be cleaned. People bang doors between 9 PM – 10 PM – sometimes she jumps from her bed. Please send a letter about not slamming doors after 10 o'clock. ED Marra will look at her vent tomorrow, but not sure about problem of banging doors.

SYLVIA CELESTE – 600 County Road - #206 – When will they get new floors and rugs taken out, as it smells. ED Marra said no one is getting new floor until at least 2024. Next year building will be painted; 2024 floors will be replaced.

WOMAN didn't give her name – 2 washing machines need to be balanced.

ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

Respectfully submitted, Deborah L. Alvarez