

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

September 28, 2023

This is condensed transcription of taped minutes taken on Thursday,  
September 28, 2023, Kroll Heights, 700 County Road, Secaucus, New Jersey.

Chairman Michael Harper called the meeting to order.

### **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 12, 2022. 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**

ED Marra introduced Kayla Quintero, Resident Services Coordinator, taking place of Tanya Oquendo, promoted to Bookkeeper. Commissioner Mondadori was involved in interviews conducted back in July. KAYLA: Graduated from Secaucus High; attended Bergen Community College receiving an Associate's Degree in Science; has a daughter. Very happy to take first step in career milestone: everyone very helpful – Terry, Tanya, Linda, enjoying meeting residents. Excited to work here.

### **ROLL CALL**

Chairman Michael Harper  
Vice-Chairman Antonio Suarez  
Commissioner John Bujnowski  
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori  
Commissioner Raj Pardasani  
Commissioner Michael Schlemm

Also Present: Executive Director Christopher Marra  
Stephen Natoli, Esq.

Absent: Commissioner Richard Fairman

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 27, 2023 – REGULAR & CLOSED SESSIONS**

Motion to approve Regular & Closed Session made by Commissioner Pardasani; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Bujnowski.

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

Abstain: Mondadori/Schlemm

### **PAYMENT OF CLAIMS FOR AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2023**

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

1. Quarterly financial statement for first quarter of operations – April-June 2023.
2. Monthly bank account balances through August 31, 2023
3. Memorandum establishing Certificate of Deposit Accounts
4. Memorandum re: Bogota Savings Bank Collateralization from SHA accounts

During the bank crises, it came up how is SHA money collateralized, etc. During audit ED Marra brought it up to Mr. Policari, and he finally got back to me, meeting together with everyone.

(At this point in the meeting, Commissioner Schlemm arrived. Commissioner Schlemm was not here for July meeting – abstaining on minutes of July 27, 2023.)

5. When ED Marra gave copies of 1 insurance claim and one that was from insurance claim earlier in the year. In August at The Elms – back of building – office there has water infiltration that came through at base of building; also through door (door since 1975). There is a lot stored back there on dirt – this amount of water had nowhere to go, puddle so high it got into the office, under the door. While it has happened in the past, never like this. Medical escort had to move out of SHA to OEM for 3 weeks, Rapid Recovery called; came in and job is \$18,962. SHA has \$10,000 deductible – we pay \$10,000.

Back in February, The Elms, a person in #403 on a weekend had water coming out of her kitchen sink traveling from #403 to #303 to #203 to #103. We've gone through claim, paid \$10,000 to Rapid Recovery. While that working going on – about Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> another water incident happened on 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Not clear whether Rapid Recovery did something – not hook up a pipe all the way in #103 or **did they do it**, but whatever happened, we had additional problem. I told them if its \$10,000, I'm not going to submit it; it's a different issue, not the same. They could not give me the number, which is **\$13,000**. Claim not submitted to insurance company. We will pay Rapid Recovery \$10,000 for August event; \$13,000 invoice for this 2<sup>nd</sup> event. Three out of 4 people in those apartments had to move out of building; one woman was bedridden – moved into extended stay hotel – while water contained to kitchen, everybody's kitchen got gutted in that renovation -- \$45,000 range - \$50,000 total of which SHA paid 10. It was carpet in hallway that got wet – oh, it's in the wallboard – cut half of wallboard out, new wallboard in – all done under prevailing wage.

COMMISSIONER SUAREZ: It was possibly tenant left faucet running? ED MARRA: Very first event happened when lady in #403 got up at 6 A.M., went into kitchen, felt water on her feet, instead of calling emergency number, runs out in hallway; finally, Stephan answers call, was shown where to shut riser off for water, but only about an hour after water is coming out from under sink – not that she left water on. Where it was contained to first floor, it may have

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been that water was left running, got into hallway. Second was after we already put claim in for first big 4 apartment event. How it happened wasn't clear. \$18,000 was carpeting, wallboard, and painting – no electric damages; no equipment damages. All about labor.

ED MARRA: Door Jockey comes in and services SHA doors: swipe card door, if we need metal door replaced – they replaced the door in back of The Elms – egress/ingress doors for SHA, not necessarily people's apartment doors.

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Resolution to hire Habitat Architect to do A&E for services to remove and replace flooring in Community Room at 600 County Avenue – between elevator people and painting people it needs new floor. Room now newly painted. It is the Lou Canavari Room

### **RESOLUTION #2023-21 AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR A/E SERVICES FOR REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF COMMUNITY ROOM FLOOR AT 600 COUNTY AVENUE**

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority (hereinafter referred to as SHA) has need for A/E services for the removal and replacement of flooring at 600 County Avenue; and

WHEREAS, SHA is permitted to contract for such services, pursuant to both the New Jersey Redevelopment and Housing Law and the New Jersey Public Contracts Law; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to SHA's Procurement Policy Guidelines, the SHA solicited a professional service companies for proposals; and

WHEREAS, SHA received a proposal from one A/E firm, and  
Habitech Architecture  
12 Pinecrest Drive  
Medford, NJ 08055-9774

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that a contract for A/E services for Security/Surveillance System Upgrade be awarded to:

Habitech Architecture  
12 Pinecrest Drive  
Medford, NJ 08055-9774

in the amount of \$2,500.00 and

BE IT, FURTHER, RESOLVED that a copy of the proposals are on file in the office of the Housing Authority.

Motion to approve Resolution #2023-21 made by Commissioner Suarez; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

## **RESOLUTION #2023-22 – HIRING OF KAYLA QUINTERO – 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 9 resumes; and

WHEREAS, the Personnel Committee interviewed four candidates; NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that Kayla Quintero 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 made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

### **NON-SMOKING POLICY**

ED Marra reported on a new man living at The Elms (June 1<sup>st</sup>). Lady smells marijuana smoke coming near her apartment; I call him; visit him as he doesn't have a car. Going into his apartment no marijuana smell. We talk – no smoking in building whatsoever. Do you smoke cigarettes – No, I've been smoking marijuana 30 years. Well, you cannot smoke at all in the building nor smoke marijuana on SHA property; walk across the street; go to Front Street, but smoking area is for cigarettes. Federal Government does not yet recognize marijuana as a legal drug. Man says: No problem, I just want to know what I can do. I also smoke marijuana pipe, (which worries many people thinking it's a crack pipe). Man was pleasant, not belligerent; you just need to cross the street. It has been 5-6 weeks since I received a phone call.

### **BUILDING & GROUNDS**

Removal & Replacement of EIFs and Windows at 777 Fifth Avenue. Phase I has been completed – removal of insulation, (inaudible) tape it up. (No one has had any water infiltration since they did that.) Next they will begin Monday on west side in #603 & #604 going into apartments, taking out windows, putting in new windows, doing work inside, fix the wall. At same time they're doing windows, men will be outside putting this (inaudible) on so all in sync and no crevices for water to get through. They began August 11<sup>th</sup>; really finished with first phase by end of September – we have now 8 weeks until Thanksgiving. Company sends enough men everyday – 15 on-site working not standing around. Windows are there, driveit there; A/C sleeves there. People in #603-#604 were reminded tonight they need to leave for about 2 days; they can come back at night, but must leave during days as too much work going on. I'll make sure area sealed off, contain dust, etc. If we get a good stretch of no rain, that will help. One payment was made on August bill list - \$369,000; there is a Change Order in for \$85,000 for 2 things, which will go to B&G Committee to look at. There is \$10,000 allowance already built in; has to do with insulation and joints. Very few complaints from residents, but we're not in their apartments yet.

CHAIRMAN HARPER: Esthetics – orange on drawings. Months ago we said we'd talk about it, which never happened. I'm on SHA Board 25 years. I am disappointed in not having the respect to talk about this. I don't think people appreciate the size of this building for the area and what this is going to look like. Now, a lot would love to say "I told you so". I'm not one of those people. I love to say "I told you so" and I've spoken to the Mayor about it. ED MARRA: He called me about it. CHAIRMAN HARPER: When he starts receiving calls from that neighborhood, he's going to call us more and more. This is a 20 year plus decision and if I stand alone, I'm fine with it, but is everybody okay with this? COMMISSIONER SCHLEMM: I'll abstain. It changed from when we first started, because wasn't it all green at one time? CHAIRMAN HARPER: No, I wasn't crazy about the sage, better than this. COMMISSIONER SCHLEMM: I do remember that conversation. I don't remember finalizing the discussion. CHAIRMAN HARPER: The architect made this call and, you know what, if it was a gray and black, something innocuous like a cream, it slips through, but when this creamsicle factory goes up, we're all going to hear about it and --- ED MARRA: I actually have the three sample pieces that are used for this. I do not think it will be as orange as the original (inaudible) as well. COMMISSIONER SCHLEMM: That's a little more orange than I anticipated. CHAIRMAN HARPER: That's the majority of the color too, the top one. COMMISSIONER MONDADORI: That's the current color of apartments. ED MARRA: I don't think it will be as bright – it is orange, I'm not going to say. CHAIRMAN HARPER: I just want to know who is okay with this. I got a half-hearted response from Commissioner Schlemm and everybody else. COMMISSIONER SCHLEMM: I'll be honest with you; I don't remember that part of it. I was more concerned with the cash. CHAIRMAN HARPER: We will be hearing about the orange long after the cash is spent.

ED MARRA: Interior painting of 600 County is complete. They went through punch list; it's been done. Those people who wanted their apartments painted – it's a little under 1-07 with an allowance in there. I will reconcile the contract this weekend as it had a number for 50 apartments to be painted - \$1,000/apartment, which would be \$50,000. If they only painted 40, we pay them \$10k less. Some apartments were empty/turnover, so we painted. Joe has **work completed** slip for each of those. I have list of people's apartments we went into to paint, that number 24 or 26 – some people said no, another lady said yes, I want it painted. Total we painted 35-40 apartments in the end. Contractor only gets paid for what they painted, even though contract bid was 50. If we did 40, number won't be \$107,000, \$2,000 allowance and had them do some extra work – paint in penthouse and also "G" got scuffed up when elevators were done – new panel put in.

Elevators now are fully working, but screens have not worked. Short answer: I had one last check for \$55,000/final payment. I called Dave, I'll pay you last check tomorrow, but screens don't work – called Mosaic. FYI: The screen does not cost any money; we have internet connection, it's not internet. Send a technician. Man came on Monday, got on phone with Mosaic – terminology is its hardware, but comes with software built inside. It was determined over the phone, connecting their computer to it, software is damaged/not working, corrupted. Both screens have to come out; they send a new screen with software in it. They are sending it to EXCEL, man will come and install it. We did get 1 screen to work. Elevator going up and down announces floors, but supposed to show on screen. Man working on it all summer could get it to work for 2 weeks, then it would stop, get reset and work for a week. They think software wasn't set up correctly or got corrupted. No charge to us. I did pay the \$55,000. EXCEL is service provider for that elevator for next 2 years – no service contract as it was built into original bid price. Thyssen is service provider for Kroll and The Elms.

There was about \$10k savings in there between allowance and other thing that Copamontebono found. I will give you all a final tally on that and finally tally on paint jobs and what we paid.

## **HCVP PROGRAM**

We are establishing a new payment standard, which is Resolution #2023-23. Information in there is how the program is working. SHA issued 251 vouchers in September; 254 is our maximum number.

### **RESOLUTION #2023-23 - RESOLUTION #2023-23 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 2024 SAFMR for all bedroom sizes in zip code 07094;  
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And

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority has determined the Payment Standard shall be set at 100% of the 2024 SAFMR for the 0 bedroom, 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom units, the payment standard per bedroom size will be:

2024 Secaucus Housing Authority Payment Standard	
Bedroom Size	SAFMR
0	\$2,600
1	\$2,640
2	\$3,000
3	\$3,730
4	\$4,150

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, 2023 through September 30, 2024.

Motion to approve Resolution #2023-23 made by Commissioner Mondadori; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

ED Marra noted that the new bingo machine is working. Commissioner Pardasani in celebration of new machine got Pizza Bites last night to those people who played bingo. In speaking with Maddie this morning and seeing items on Facebook everyone had a good time. Thank you, Commissioner Pardasani.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez  
Secretary/Transcriber