

SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY
600 COUNTY AVENUE
JUNE 26, 2025

(This is condensed version of the taped minutes of the
Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Secaucus Housing
Authority Commissioner's Meeting)

ROLL CALL:

Chairman Michael Harper
Commissioner Vincent Bennett
Commissioner John Bujnowski
Commissioner Richard Fairman
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori
Commissioner Raj Pardasani
Commissioner Michael Schlemm

ALSO PRESENT: Executive Director Christopher Marra
Stephen Natoli, Esq. (Counsel to the Authority)

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE

"Adequate notice of this meeting is 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 The Record on December 15, 2024. 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 led by Isabella Badillo

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 22, 2025 REGULAR & CLOSED SESSION

Motion to approve minutes from regular and closed session of May 22, 2025 made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2nd by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6) Abstain: Bujnowski

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS FOR JUNE 2025

Commissioner Pardasani asked about \$1,900 bill. ED Marra said it was for repairs. Commissioner Schlemm asked about door jockey, was it for The Elms - \$7,500. ED Marra spoke about 2 doors under the bridge between 600 and 700 County Avenue. One is for compactor room (on the left) and door to a room, which in 14 years he never noticed. It is for a /storage space under steps. Stephon is fixing things and door from 1986, when he went to

open it, came off the hinges – rusted out. It is a good place to store landscape equipment, etc. Now it has brand new door and lock, which was most of \$7,500. Compactor room – actual door knob to compactor room fell off. It has been replaced. We've toured Kroll Heights and Ronnie Gallo talks about compactor room, very neat. That is what we have done at 600 County: cleaned it, painted floor, relit it and cleaning people are in there every day washing down the floor. Door jockey is for one big door, one metal door with new knob and another lock.

Commissioner Schlemm asked about Optimum Flooring invoice Unit 204. ED Marra said it's for 4 or 5 units, but account comes up with one. Old bill list was on Excel sheet. Now we went to PHA Webb report, it adds it up, but we use what they use. It doesn't break it down by every single invoice. Discussion about other items and how purchase orders are listed sometimes. There is an anomaly on the list, which is a \$65,000 check that we sent to JIF. That doesn't show up monthly – if you pulled out that 60, there's like 140/150.

Commissioner Schlemm – Vanore Electric, is that a final payment for -- ED Marra: They will become our electrician for many reasons. That includes their final payment of about \$7,500, but they did 3 other jobs. #1 was relit compactor room here. #2 was in one of Joe's property inspections, Joe said we need to clean and change lightbulbs in Kroll Heights' stairwell. I called electrician after checking out lights; don't want them to go off as they do at The Elms. Change them – 22 fixtures and in day, changed. Much brighter light in hallway. At The Elms, there's heating issues with electricity; heating in apartments through electric. People have problems with electric heater – they fixed it or replaced it – 25. All of those things came up to that number - \$1900. They are closed out for their project.

Problem with current situation is: we ask for an RFP because winner of that RFP isn't really responsive anymore, maybe semi-retirement. We previously had a plumbing company in Philipsburg, more than 10 years ago. Their rate was the best, but eventually sent men who were 19 years old and not much experience with anything, even asking us for equipment. Good price, but couldn't do the job. We do it and get Magic Touch. We like Magic Touch, they come, fix it and done right 99% of the time. They are 3 times the price, even back then. We will face that with the electrician.

Commissioner Mondadori: Tree trimming was at The Elms/Kroll Heights. Are there trees at The Elms? ED Marra: Once trees touch building at The Elms, we trim them back – tree in front, one in back. Fast Sign that was \$282.75 – paper applications? ED Marra: \$282.75 was for 600 5-page Section 8 applications on yellow paper. \$95.25 was for two new stamps. We do yellow paper for the HCV applications to prevent someone from taking white piece of paper and making 1,000 copies of it, handing it out somewhere where we're not interested in getting applications from.

Motion to approve payment of claims made by Chairman Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (7)

INTERNSHIP – Chairman Harper

One of the side bonuses in helping our seniors out is our Internship Program through which, over the years, many past Executive Directors and ED Marra have found different ways, at minimum cost to SHA, to give local students an opportunity and perhaps first job with experience in an office. This year our recipient of that internship is Isabella Barillo, who played soccer with my daughter, and I'm overjoyed to see her here tonight.

Isabella Barillo: I graduated from Secaucus High School and going to college majoring in Psychology to get my Masters to be a Clinical Psychologist. Here at SHA, I've been filing paperwork, done paperwork for recerts and recertifications, answer phone calls, attend to front window, speak Spanish, and done work for Section 8 also. ED Marra: Isabella is a very big help, doing a very good job and picks things right up; very happy to have her here.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Commissioners have monthly account balances, seeing that there are 3 CDs maturing in July – Havens Savings Bank, Bogota Savings Bank and Valley. I think we're renewing those all based upon what they're offering and take out whatever we've earned, so we continue to be below \$250,000.

Audit has been scheduled with Mr. Policari for Monday, July 21/Tuesday, July 22nd. Commissioner Fairman spoke regarding rate markets; extend CDs longer, if possible, to 18 months. ED Marra has already been looking at what Valley and Haven are offering. There will be updated information about that at July SHA meeting.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

No business this month

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Chart in front of Commissioners (indicating) with some attachments. #1 Staff doesn't know about any of this, except for Nan McKay training, which we have to do because everybody has to come up to speed for NSPIRE – new inspection protocol that has to be implemented by October 1st for all of Section 8 inspections that we do as well as any inspections that we do internally for 275 RAD units. Staff needs to know that: maintenance staff, Linda Fanning, Kayla Quintero, Angie Oliveros as they're all involved in that. I might participate in that training so that I can be aware of what NSPIRE is and all the different aspects, so when they talk to me about it, I fully understand. They need to be trained on PHA Webb module for NSPIRE; they've been using the HQS module all these years. A little cost for that, but not like the NAN McKay.

The other three proposed trainings are related to the amount of new staff we have. Tanya Oquendo was hired in September 2021, 10 people are now working for SHA, meaning 7

people are working here for 3.5 years or less. We have 3 young maintenance men, who have varying degrees of talent, but not all at same level, and they need to become more efficient. I've been looking around; finally got in touch with Hudson County School of Technology, Dr. Justyna Flynn, Supervisor of Instruction. They have a Handyman Specialist Program, but it's at Bayonne High School on Saturdays. I haven't spoken with maintenance staff yet. What I am proposing is that I offer – 2 staff in Fall/1 maintenance technician in the Spring. They will be offered the Friday off before the Saturday that they have to go to class. They won't go and not be paid, so you swap out a day of work to go to Bayonne. No money for lunch – you get the day off, go to class. What you get at the end is a certificate on Hudson County School of Technology that you completed the course and opportunity to take an OSHA 10 Test. Commissioner Schlemm thought it was a good price. SHA would buy text books for them, they take the test. I wanted to bring to you first.

The other thing I see with all staff again in varying degrees of severity is time management. Our job has many distractions and we are all forced to refocus in our office. Classes are offered by Skill Path. I spoke to them; much less expensive than I thought it would be. They are a not for profit; have a contract with NYCHA and offer 1,572 on demand classes and 172 live courses. I'd direct staff which courses to take. The classes are an hour. Pryor Learning is very similar to Skill Path, but more expensive and actually offer the opportunity of a whole day course, where they'd come on-site – costing \$7,990, willing to do over 2 days – back to back. We could offer to other housing authorities and figure out prorated figure that we'd want from them to help offset our cost -- \$225 – 10 people, now you're offsetting your \$7,990 course. 35 people is the maximum. I haven't talked about this with staff, and Skill Path has introductory. They need help at some point to help them. Chairman Harper: I'm always for continuing education. Learning more about plumbing or electrical could save us real dollars. It also makes for happier, better employees; and the money is there.

ED Marra: We don't attend conferences, but this year I sent Tanya and Angie to Atlantic City and now want to go every April. Maybe Kayla and Linda can go in the future. Both Angie and Tanya thought it was fantastic. Commissioner Schlemm: I like idea of 4 mandatory classes and then open it up – pick another 3 that you men want to attend. ED Marra: SKILL PATH – Leadership & Management, People Skills, Workplace Compliance – about maintenance, etc. and Business & Technology. Commissioner Pardasani: Secaucus Public Library has many courses and they could log on and watch them. Perhaps that information should be shared with the staff.

A little more probing of residents at The Elms has to be done asking if smoking there is less frequent as phone calls are less frequent or perhaps they are not calling because they just gave up calling. Notorious smokers in The Elms are no longer there, which helps. We did not replace them with smokers. Commissioner Fairman: A lot of time has been spent on this, but safety first for staff is important. ED Marra: Adam and I pay attention to this every month.

BUILDING & GROUNDS

An email and memo was sent to you all from me earlier in the week and now an email from Steve Natoli, Esq. which basically says we need to throw out bids that came in on 18th. We

will rebid the project. Lee Mestres has already written something for this, we will republish it. Bids accepted on Friday, July 18th so that hopefully July's meeting, we will have something that we can present to the Board to award a contract.

The other item in your packet was a 15-year history of what we've done here so far at SHA. You can get a sense of which buildings get the most and why, what projects were. About \$7 million has been spent in 15 years, all self-explanatory. If you have any questions, please ask. Commissioner Fairman thought it was great to see and liked the 2-5 year forecast. Where does the money come from for that forecast – does it really come from accumulated or HUD payments? ED Marra: It comes from, if you all remember, there's an account we put money into every month – Annual Replacement for Reserve Account – that's in there, which is one place. We have the money and I'm comfortable with what has to happen in next 2-1/2 years and perhaps what happens over next 5 years, but it's the 10-year one – at 600 County Avenue. How are we going to do to this building what we did at The Elms and where are we going to get that money? I have no idea. This building (600 County Avenue) in the apartments alone there are 600-700 windows. You'd cut out 1/3 of all the windows. It wouldn't be the push out window any more or the one on the floor. Thinking even longer terms, we have a 30-year loan – 20 year loan and 30 year amortization. It has a balloon in year 20, which we'll refinance. We couldn't get enough money in a refinance to do this building. I have no answer.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

Section 8 list was opened up in early June. The Authority got between 375-400 applications, by far the most ever received in one week for that program. I attribute it to coordinating better with the Town of Secaucus, particularly Social Services and the Mayor. In addition, I will write a letter to Superintendent of schools as they really helped us, putting out 2 emails in their normal notifications to parents about things happening in the schools. That made an impact for certain. There were 3 families originally living in Secaucus, now living in hotels, meanwhile their children are still going to school in Secaucus. They are priority along with another individual for when we start to give out vouchers – first 4 people on our list. We hope to do that in August or beginning of September. I've told them that exact same story. The need is great; the rents much higher than last time we opened up in 2022.

Commissioner Pardasani: I gave out some Section 8 information to seniors, who could not come here and they had a lot of questions about how to fill out the forms. In the future, can we do something whereby we'd have an hour for them to get information? ED Marra: If you put pen on paper with name, date of birth, Social Security numbers, you're going on the list – no matter what else you put. Everything changes by the time we get to you. You're on the list, we start to call you. When we call you is when we ask you for everything. All your identification, tax returns, all your pay stubs, all your birth certificates. Permanent resident card, naturalization paperwork. Some people come with work visa. You're not eligible for Section 8 or any kind of public housing. If your children born in USA, you will get a prorated voucher, not full subsidy. They just need to get their name on the paper with DOB, they'll get on the list.

You all have the HCVP report April through June.

NEW BUSINESS

There are 2 legal notices and we are in Public Sector business and just to make sure you are aware of this. There is a bill right now being sponsored by Senate President Nicholas Scutari that would allow government to bypass news outlets, posting all public notices on our websites by March 2026. The State would also set up a central website with links to all the sites. It effectively further kills newspapers as they don't get legal notices fees any more and you don't have to send it to them, just put on your website, on central location and that's it.

This next one has no chance of passing, which is sponsored by Andrew Zwicker of Middlesex in association with New Jersey Press Association allowing news outlets – Star Ledger left, we're publishing legal notices in The Record and so is Secaucus and the County. Chairman Harper: You could look at it as further kills neighbors. Public advertising kept a lot of newspapers alive for many years. Secaucus Home News is a perfect example. Law was if you had a local paper, you had to use that. Internet changed it. I think it's an excellent plan for all autonomous bodies, public bodies and it will be a much easier way for people.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Schlemm: SHA is at the same 250 vouchers this year, is that what we're looking to maintain. ED Marra: We are allowed to have 254 vouchers and we're going to lose a voucher in June, who lived in this building, so we're back down to 249. I am waiting to do things with vouchers is: about 60 days ago I got a phone call from the HUD. Mr. Katchen gets an email from HUD saying we're looking at your projection for 2 years out and SHA is going to be in shortfall at end of year. Don't issue any more vouchers. We have not issued a voucher since November 2024 as we were at maximum all the time. We got fully funded at 100% of voucher money, but somehow without an increase, meaning we got same money as last year. No increase. Mr. Katchen said that's a contributing factor to why that happened – why HUD is projecting a shortfall. We're cutting back on the vouchers. The history of this is – it's one of those things that if you make the correction and go a few months not issuing vouchers and getting number down, it could snap back very quickly where you can go 6 months, not spending any new money – people have taken their voucher and ported it out of Secaucus, but we're still funding their voucher. We still send that Authority money. Kayla has gotten 1-2 to be absorbed by another HA. Everybody is in the same boat, they don't want to absorb anybody. We have 15 people who came to Secaucus and haven't absorbed anyone in 7 years. Once you absorb, you've lost your voucher for a Secaucus person. State of N.J., if they have a DCA voucher, they transferred it to DCA, the State almost always absorbs 60-90 days after they take them because they're controlling so many vouchers and their program is unyielding. To answer question about why I'm not giving 3 people in hotel our voucher money right away – that's why I'm waiting.

Commissioner Schlemm asked about PSE&G bill at The Elms. ED Marra: I don't see a savings. I see stability, but no savings. Commissioner Bennett: I looked at that using degree days based on Teterboro Airport. Usually, the way that works is to take a specific day, take high temperature/low temperature and average it together and whether it's above 65 or below 65,

they take that difference which determines the number of heating or cooling degree days. Problem becomes the ideal situation is you should have your heating and a/c separate. We don't have that. We don't have the lighting, etc. There is so much noise in the system, I could not come up with any correlation. I tried to do it from an engineering standpoint. Commissioner Schlemm: I looked at the numbers and they're almost the same – electrical bill hasn't changed and in fact it is worse in some cases. ED Marra: This past January was much colder than last January. We should go back to the idea of investigating we change everyone's thermostat and have it locked out at 75 degrees. We know that people turn the dial. We just lock it out at 75 degrees. A Spanish woman today told me, using my translator and Kayla, said her a/c, which was on 60 degrees and it's not cold enough in her place. I'm there, looking at it, check filter and I'll knock on someone else's door who has their a/c on to see if it sounds the same, cooler in that room. I was on the 4th floor, knocked on several doors and no one was using their a/c today. I told woman I'd be back today or tomorrow with Adam and we will check it out. A/C was working fine, she just wanted it to blow colder.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

DEBRA - #1202 – Thanked ED Marra for new filters in laundry room. Follow-ups: Window cleaning – where do we stand on that? ED Marra has only investigated 1 company about window cleaning, but need to investigate a few more and will try to get a price, so that if we decide to do it, it gets done in the summer or the fall. Re: the exercise bikes: We just have to purchase the exercise bike. Debra said she knows roof contract has not been awarded yet. We talked about common area floors, it would be ripped up. ED Marra: If we can get the roof to be \$250,000 somewhere in that ballpark or 250-275, we already bid to change the bedroom and bathroom doors – already out at same time. Once price comes in for the roof and within our number, then we'll bid for flooring, probably done in January/February. Debra said residents are using the tread mill and 2 bikes up there are from many years ago.

LINDA CROWLEY - #304 – Thank you for new filters in laundry room at 600 County Avenue and the new lights. The new Ron is very nice and Stefan is very nice too. Are the doors on order? ED Marra: We are going out to bid, receiving bids July 18th, and probably not until the fall will doors get replaced. Linda asked about parking lot. When I go out of the parking lot I go to the right to get out. When coming in, I go to the right, but other people do it differently. There are 2 big SUVs on the corner when I try to get out and I can't see if someone is coming at me, as my cousin was hit. Could we please put arrows, so we have to go one way and not the other way. ED Marra: We should investigate the arrows, yes.

ADJOURNMENT FOR CLOSED SESSION

Motion to adjourn to Closed Session made by Commissioner Pardasani; 2nd by Commissioner Bennett.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (7)

**SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY
RESOLUTION NO. 2025-20
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 2 issues are 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 June 26, 2025 at 7:50P.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.

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"(3) Any material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material of any educational, training, social service, medical, health, custodial, child protection, rehabilitation, legal defense, welfare, housing, relocation, insurance and similar program or institution operated by a public body pertaining to any specific individual admitted to or served by such institution or program, including but not limited to information relative to the individual's personal and family circumstances, and any material pertaining to admission, discharge, treatment, progress or condition of any individual, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or incompetent, his guardian) shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is Christopher Marra, Executive Director addressed a Reasonable Accommodation Request by a resident which had come to the attention of the Board.

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"(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 Christopher Marra, Executive Director addressed a personnel matter. The second item was an update on the status of outside counsel's work on a personnel matter that could result in litigation This matter falls within the scope of the attorney client privilege and are necessary for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as counsel to the Board.

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
Personnel Matter	TBD	
Reasonable Accommodation Request	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 June 26, 2025.

Christopher Marra, Secretary

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Commissioner Pardasani; 2nd by Commissioner Bennett.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (7)

MEETING ADJOURNED 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah L. Alvarez