

## SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

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### MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

April 14, 2020

The SHA met by remote participation open session at 4:30 p.m. Those present were: Chair: K. Kang; Vice Chair: A. Lepak; Treasurer: S. Cline; Member: S. Swanger; Member: T. Layden; Executive Director: S. Cusolito

Also present: Prospective Tenant Member: T. Vitvitsky

**Minutes:** A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by T. Layden, and unanimously voted, to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2019 Regular Session.

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by S. Cline, and unanimously voted, to approve, without release, the minutes of the December 10, 2019 Executive Session.

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2020 Regular Session.

**Financials:** A motion was made by T. Layden, seconded by S. Cline, and unanimously voted, to approve the checks written from the 400-1 account in March 2020.

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve the checks written from the New Duplex account in March 2020.

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by T. Layden, and unanimously voted, to approve the checks written from the SHALIP account in March 2020.

The February 2020 financial report was presented.

S. Cusolito confirmed that the bank register available through PHA Network does not record the balance in sequence.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Rent Write-Off:** A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to approve a write-off in the amount of \$403 for April 2020 rent, due to the death of a 667 resident in March 2020.

**CFA 5001, Amendment 13:** A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to approve Amendment #13 of the Contract for Financial Assistance between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Sudbury Housing Authority in the amount of \$50,000 in additional Sustainability Funding, and to authorize K. Kang, Chairperson, to sign on behalf of the Sudbury Housing Authority.

**COVID-19 Emergency Relief Funding:** MHP circulated an outline on utilizing CPA funds for rent relief. Because SHA was awarded CPA funding for housing support, it may choose to apply that funding to its own or other income-qualified residents. However, all SHA tenants except for the resident in the SHALIP program qualify for rent adjustments based on income; the SHA does not expect a significant number of its residents to require rent relief. Residents may require other forms of financial assistance, but CPA funding can only be used for housing costs. The small number of income-qualified renters in non-subsidized units

will limit the application of any such funding. Furthermore, it is more appropriate for the Town to support such a funding effort if it chooses.

In her capacity as CPC Chair, S. Cline discussed a Town-wide rent relief effort with Planning Director Adam Duchesneau in response to an inquiry from the Town Social Worker and Selectman/CPC Member Pat Brown. She is awaiting a response on the demand for relief based on inquiries to the Social Work office.

**Resident Service Coordinator Grant Award:** The SHA was awarded \$40,000 for a Resident Service Coordinator based on its application submitted last Fall. The Board voted an additional \$5,000 in operating reserves to support the position. It is anticipated that the grant will be renewable for a minimum of three years. An announcement by the Governor in March was postponed due to the pandemic. LHA grant recipients were encouraged to begin recruiting efforts.

**Board Member Transition/Board of Selectmen Agenda Request:** The SHA is slated for the Selectmen's April 28 meeting, at which it will request that prospective tenant board member T. Vitvitsky be appointed on a one-year interim basis, effective no later than June 1, 2020, to coincide with the resignation of K. Kang, whose term expires May 31, 2021.

**Real Property: 8 Eddy Street:** Based on its submission addressing 760 CMR 4.13, the SHA received approval from the DHCD Undersecretary to purchase the property.

On the basis of some inconsistent email communications, S. Cusolito and S. Cline participated in a conference call with representatives from DHCD, RHSO and the Town so that all parties have the same information. The SHA's interest is in protecting its status as the qualified purchaser and requested that the owner be informed that a condition of sale requiring the SHA house the owner cannot be made. The SHA also asked about options to extend the time-frame to close, given the owner's interest in exploring refinancing. The DHCD is not in favor of an indefinite extension of the closing time-frame, preferring that the owner withdraw her notice of intent to sell and reissue it at a later date. RHSO was asked to reach out to the owner to clarify her options.

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to retain Daniel Hill, Esq. to represent the SHA in the acquisition of the 8 Eddy Street property.

In order to preserve its assigned rights and notwithstanding DHCD's position on an extension of the closing period, Attorney Hill strongly recommends the SHA either present a Purchase & Sale Agreement to the owner to begin negotiations; or, if the owner has changed her mind about selling, request that she formally withdraw the notice of intent to sell; or, if the owner is undecided, request that she agree to an extension of the 90-day closing period.

The owner's response to the outreach by RHSO will determine which of these approaches is most appropriate.

**Public Housing Administration Notices:** S. Cusolito provided a link to those Notices published since the March 10, 2020 Regular Session. Ten Notices, largely relating to COVID-19 guidance, have been published in this interim.

**Liaison Reports:** CPC: S. Cline attended separate meetings of the Selectmen and Finance Committee to present the CPC-approved funding proposals. Some on the Finance Committee opined that funds should not be expended at this time, given the current economic climate.

MPSC: The March meeting was canceled. The Committee will meet on April 17 to discuss housing, including increasing housing diversity through changes to zoning.

Broadacres: At its March 17 meeting, the Board of Selectmen unanimously endorsed the SHA's Sudbury Foundation proposal for funding feasibility studies on several Town-owned and SHA-owned properties, with the exclusion of Broadacres and with an emphasis on low-density development.

SHT: The SHT last met on March 5.

## **OPEN FORUM**

Resident and prospective Board member T. Vitvitsky asked about funding to supply residents with items such as disinfecting wipes. S. Cusolito responded that the SHA has received a small quantity of supplies from MEMA, but is otherwise limited by availability with its suppliers and would be subject to quantity limitations established by local merchants.

Ms. Vitvitsky also asked if information on COVID-19 positive cases is being reported to SHA by the local Board of Health. S. Cusolito responded that the Sudbury Board of Health will not notify SHA of positive cases; the only notification would be a self-report. T. Layden reported that residents of Longfellow Glen are being notified of presumed-positive cases at that development. After some discussion of the balance between privacy/HIPPA and public health concerns, Commissioners asked about the policy at Musketahquid Village. S. Cusolito stated that there isn't a policy at this time and that if she became aware of a positive case, she would likely notify all residents without identifying the building. She noted that she emphasizes to residents that they must assume others are positive and consider what they might do differently to minimize exposure. DHCD has asked LHAs to report any cases of which they become aware.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Capital Projects Update:** None.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The cash receipt report was presented.

The annual NAHRO conference has been rescheduled from May to September.

S. Cusolito outlined the SHA's pandemic response and general practices, including signage, resident communication, coordination of volunteers, disinfection of "high-touch" areas, and office closure. There is a need for increased/enhanced communication with the senior center and social work office to communicate SHA's on-site practices and to better coordinate services for residents. DHCD has scheduled weekly calls with LHAs. Staff is also participating on periodic calls with Resident Service Coordinators and receives daily updates from MEMA.

At the end of March, S. Cusolito participated in a focus group conference call on impediments to fair housing, related to the update of the WestMetro HOME Consortium Five-year Consolidated Plan.

Most, if not all, housing authorities received a public records request from a Boston Globe reporter. The request focuses on payroll, budgets, and wait list information for the most recent three years.

**Vacancies:** A death at the Village occurred in late March. The vacancy is likely to be filled by an emergency applicant. Another vacancy at the Village will occur at the end of May.

SMOC suspended all inspections, including on vacant units, and has not responded to queries about a move-in inspection of 10 Landham Rd. The work on the vacancy on Great Rd. is nearly complete. Tenant selection for the New Duplex program has been compromised by lack of response from shelter applicant case managers, exacerbated by the pandemic.

**Evictions:** A moratorium is currently in effect.

**Maintenance:** Twice-daily disinfection is in effect. Vacancy work is otherwise prioritized. Part-time maintenance staff is overseeing preventive and scheduled maintenance.

## **ADJOURN**

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the April 14, 2020 Regular Session and move to Executive Session to discuss real property acquisition, for to do so in open session might compromise the position of the SHA. The time was 5:55 p.m.

Yes: S. Cline

Yes: K. Kang

Yes: T. Layden

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: S. Swanger

Minutes prepared by S. Cusolito, Executive Director