

## SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

55 HUDSON ROAD  
SUDBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01776  
director@sudburyha.org

PHONE: 978-443-5112  
FAX: 978-443-5113

SHEILA M. CUSOLITO  
Executive Director

### MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

June 8, 2021

The SHA met by remote participation open session at 1:00 p.m. Those present were: Chair: S. Cline; Vice Chair: S. Swanger; Treasurer: T. Vitvitsky; Member: J. Cowan; Member: A. Lepak; Executive Director: S. Cusolito

Also present: Shane Parsons, SHA Maintenance Person; Lauren Abraham, SHA Resident Service Coordinator

**Minutes:** None.

**Financials Approvals:** A motion was made by J. Cowan, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to approve the checks written in May 2021 and to approve payment in full of the annual appropriation to Middlesex County Retirement System.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Introductions:** Commissioners and staff members introduced themselves. Maintenance person Shane Parsons noted that he started work just prior to the Covid 19 shutdown and hasn't had the opportunity to work under a typical routine, given the pandemic-related safety and cleaning protocols that stretch the already limited staff capacity. Both he and co-worker Wayne Pynn see much they'd like to accomplish, but the limited number of maintenance hours precludes and/or extends the timeline of two-person work, as well as delays planned or scheduled work.

RSC Lauren Abraham, who started in September 2020, stated that she is getting to know the types of resources needed while working one-on-one with some residents. She noted that she is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, with expertise in aging and community resources, previously serving a dual role in Boxborough as its Social Worker and Council on Aging Director. Her role is new to SHA, funded through a three-year grant.

Commissioner S. Swanger noted that it seemed staff is doing much more with less and wondered about hiring temporary help to assist. S. Cusolito responded that some work previously handled in-house has been outsourced, for instance, turnover painting. She also noted an interest in contracting out annual inspections, which are the single most time-consuming all-staff undertaking, as well as landscaping. Although the costs to outsource are often higher, maintenance staff now have significant administrative and other responsibilities that compromise time.

RSC Lauren Abraham outlined her efforts working with individual residents, local and regional partnership-/coalition-building, and community-building among residents. She noted that the role is not designed to provide services or for intensive case management; rather, it is to connect residents to needed services.

Commissioner Cline asked about opportunities for volunteers. RSC Abraham responded that SHA has been utilizing the Sudbury Neighbor Brigade and connects with others for activities such as workshops, but that liability considerations and training otherwise limit opportunities for volunteers. Commissioner Swanger asked for her perspective on providing financial management or budget workshops, with a goal toward situating residents for homeownership opportunities, to which she responded that the more typical need is for assistance with an unanticipated bill. Residents do not necessarily identify financial management or budget awareness as a need, nor do they necessarily have the financial resources to make it a realistic undertaking. Moreover, in some cases, increasing income is not a goal, given the loss of some supportive benefits that will not be replaced by increased income alone. S. Cusolito noted that the 2016 DHCD survey of residents also showed minimal interest in financial literacy programs.

**Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance (SHERA):** The SHA elected to participate in this program, which will cover rental arrears arising between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021 with Federal funds. RSC L. Abraham is administering the program. It's anticipated that the upcoming annual recertification of family tenants will underscore the need for such rental assistance.

**FISH 288066 Kitchen Ventilation Alternates:** A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to affirm its preference to limit the kitchen hood ventilation installations to first-floor units and to limit costs to no more than the sustainability grant of \$147K.

SHA received a sustainability grant of \$147K for this project. The original vision for the project proved to be cost-prohibitive. A viable option was identified that would require SHA to augment the grant with \$60K from reserves to complete second-floor kitchens; however, the Board voted against this option and limited the scope to installations in first-floor units. The Board affirmed its decision not to consider alternates that fund installations in second-floor units.

**Lodestar Net Meter Credit Contract:** A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to accept the negotiated proposal between Sudbury Housing Authority and Lodestar Energy for net meter credits; to sign a contract for purchase of net meter credits from Lodestar Energy, pending contract template approval by DHCD; and to authorize S. Cusolito or S. Cline to sign a contract on behalf of the SHA.

**Juneteenth Holiday:** A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by J. Cowan, and unanimously voted, to amend the SHA Personnel Policy to include Juneteenth as a paid holiday.

This is the first year in which the June 19 holiday will be celebrated in Massachusetts.

**Public Housing Administration Notices:** S. Cusolito provided a link to those Notices published since the May 11, 2021 Regular Session.

**Liaison Reports:**

SHT: A. Lepak reported that the Dutton Road unit built and sold by Habitat for Humanity will be sold as an affordable unit outside the Habitat program. The owner passed away in early 2020 with no heir. Repairs from a water leak will be paid from equity prior to the sale.

The SHT will administer another \$21K in emergency rental assistance fund. The program was expanded to include those in subsidized housing; although, it was acknowledged that most such residents would not apply.

CPC: S. Cline reported that the CPC is soliciting applications for an open seat on the Committee.

## **OPEN FORUM**

No comments.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Feasibility Study**: The Town has confirmed that the DPW site is under active consideration for another use related to the septic system improvements; therefore, the SHA will remove the site from the scope of its feasibility proposal. Commissioner S. Swanger suggested a meeting with the Town Manager or the SHA's Select Board liaison, Jennifer Roberts, to discuss other options, such as Broadacres, the house at the entrance of Camp Sewataro, or the site near the Curtis School, which is owned by the school district.

Hancock Associates, which has the low bid response to the feasibility proposal, to date has not submitted responses to the SHA's additional questions.

Beals and Thomas anticipates completing the feasibility study of 67-73 Nobscot Road approximately four to six weeks from the contract date.

S. Cusolito reported that the Sudbury Board of Health is scheduled to conduct a public hearing at its 4:30 p.m. meeting today on the condemnation of 29 Stone Road, a single-family home that is apparently abandoned, in the event that an SHA Commissioner might attend. S. Swanger will attend.

**Tenant Board Member**: At its June 1, 2021 meeting, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint SHA resident T. Vitvitsky to the Board for a term of five years. Ms. Vitvitsky had been serving as the appointee completing the final year of former Commissioner K. Kang's term and is the first tenant appointed under the regulations arising from the Acts of 2014 Chapter 235.

## **Capital Projects Update**

FISH 288069, 21 Great Lake whole-house heat pump: the unit is under study following a site visit.

FISH 288068, attic insulation for all state units: a DHCD architect has been assigned.

FISH 288067, Fairbank Circle vacancy rehab: A motion was made by J. Cowan, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted—with reservations related to DHCD-expressed concerns—to authorize S. Cusolito to sign the contract between the SHA and Eagle Eyes Contractor in the amount of \$39,000.

At its April 13, 2021 Regular Session, the Board voted to accept the low-bid proposal from Eagle Eyes, but with reservations related to one of the references.

FISH 288066, 667 kitchen ventilation: as previously discussed.

FISH 288064, 667 utility cable replacement: additional work was recently completed by Elm Electrical. The hope is that Eversource will complete its work this month.

FISH 288053, 667 landscape: The contractor still hasn't responded regarding replacement plantings. S. Cline remarked on the poor quality of the landscaping at the Village and asked that this be prioritized. S. Swanger asked about having the Sudbury Garden Club volunteer and J. Cowan mentioned Americorps volunteer work for SVT. As mentioned during discussion with other SHA staff, it is often difficult and time-consuming for staff to engage volunteer services and it is likely that landscaping will be permanently outsourced.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Staffing: S. Cusolito and Acton HA ED K. Cronin made an offer for the joint wait list manager position that was declined. The joint hire will no longer be pursued and a part-time position will be advertised.

Management training: S. Cusolito is enrolled in a multi-day training offered through Nan McKay starting June 15-17.

Vacancies: A vacancy at the Village is anticipated.

Evictions: None pending

Maintenance: Staff is responding to emergency and routine work orders, as well as working on relocating current staff in anticipation of reopening after Covid-19 closures of public spaces. Interviews for inspection contractors are being scheduled.

## **ADJOURN**

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by S. Cline, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the June 8, 2021 Regular Session. The time was 3:45 p.m.

Yes: S. Cline

Yes: J. Cowan

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: S. Swanger

Yes: T. Vitvitsky