

SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

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SHEILA M. CUSOLITO
Executive Director

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

November 14, 2023

The SHA met in open session at 7:00 p.m. Those present: Vice Chair: A. Lepak; Treasurer: S. Cline; Assistant Treasurer: S. Swanger; Member: F. Riepe; Executive Director: S. Cusolito

Also present: Matt Zajac & Emily Horgan, Cambridge Housing Authority development consultants (virtual participation); John Riordan, Sudbury Housing Trust Trustee

Absent: Chair: T. Vitvitsky

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

SHA Feasibility, 705 Redevelopment: Task Order #1 Closeout: Matt Zajac shared and discussed an annotated version of Task Order #1 that will be distributed after tonight's meeting. He explained how a House Doctor, already under contract with CHA, may be utilized under the reimbursable expenses umbrella to further some of the work, including a massing study and the interim conveyance. The mechanism will allow for procurement on a more streamlined basis than is otherwise available. CHA also committed to providing a summary memo on all four SHA single-family home sites.

S. Cline commented that in her view, all the items in the Task Order had not been completed and the SHA is not interested in expending additional funds to complete the outlined work. Mr. Zajac stated that this is a first step toward greater communication of the status of the various components outlined in the Agreement(s).

Task Order #2: CHA expanded the detail associated with the outlined tasks that were approved at the September 12, 2023 Regular Meeting. The Task Order was also transposed to a signable agreement template and expanded to include reimbursable expense details. S. Cline took issue with a reference to costs savings on Task Order #1, given the fact that the work was not completed under that Task Order and now the costs have increased. She cited the phase I environmental study, the survey, and title report as examples of tasks originally listed under Task Order #1 that were not executed. Mr. Zajac stated that he will amend the financial outline to zero out unspent Task Order #1 funds. He further clarified that when the tasks are in line for execution, CHA will return to the Board with actual costs of completion.

Ms. Cline asked for clarification on the reason for omission of some of the items that appeared on the September 5, 2023 proposed Task Order #2. Mr. Zajac replied that this largely relates to expanding on design work to encompass all necessary; whereas, the September 5 proposal emphasized services to cover schematic design specifically. Ms. Cline asked for an explanation of project management and due diligence related to permanent loan conversions and construction loan closeout. Mr. Zajac responded that these items represent the back end of the project, when the construction loan will convert to a permanent loan. They entail submission to lenders of such information as updated financials, the Certificates of Occupancy, final drawings and surveys. He stated that CHA could provide a proposal for construction administration services under another proposal, as well as a proposal to carry out the construction loan closeout. CHA offered to include an option to reapply for funding, should first attempts be unsuccessful.

S. Cusolito asked for confirmation that the Board will vote to affirm the September 12, 2023 approval of the Task Order #2 cost of \$86,970 based on the revised detail of the Task Order, as well as to approve the reimbursable costs estimated at \$267,677, corrected to remove Task Order #1 reimbursable costs and to add “more than one” funding application option (3d exclusion).

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve Task Order #2, including affirmation of basic services costs of \$86,970, as amended, and to authorize S. Cusolito to sign on behalf of the Housing Authority; and to approve the SHA/CHA Intergovernmental Agreement for two additional one-year periods to June 24, 2025.

CPC Funding Application: S. Cline worked with CHA to refine the CPC presentation that was distributed to the Board. S. Cusolito noted that the drawing provided by Hancock for 21 Great Lake should not be interpreted as a suggestion to change the street address to Beechwood. Ms. Cline indicated she will not be going into any detail about the funding sources or applicant financial profiles.

PHN 2023-19, Public Housing Innovations 2024 NOFA: CHA is recommending applying for this funding round for the 705 redevelopment project. Pre-applications are due by November 24, 2023. The funding scope includes both capital and operating funding options, the latter in the form of project-based vouchers. The target projects are larger than SHA’s project; however, the shortened turn-around time will likely preclude such submissions. The recommendation is to keep Nobscot considerations separate from the 705 redevelopment, owing to the significantly different timelines; however, CHA plans to reach out to the EOHLC for a recommendation on applying for this NOFA for all four single-family home sites, rather than the first two to be developed under a previously recommended staggered phase I. S. Cusolito also requested some discussion with the EOHLC regarding the interpretation of one-to-one replacement of 705 units, given it is unlikely that the four-bedroom unit will be replaced, for instance. She stated that the SHA’s wait list justified the bedroom profile of the 2012 Duplex replacement project and that the current need still favors two-bedroom units, but followed closely by three-bedroom units and would like to see an evaluation of the larger sites for 3/1 duplexes. This will be better defined in the schematic design phase. Cambridge envisions the operating budget for the 705 replacement units would include a replacement reserve, in part supported by the project-based voucher-supported units.

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to authorize Cambridge Housing Authority to prepare a pre-application in response to PHN 2023-19, Public Housing Innovations 2024 NOFA.

67-73 Nobscot Road: CHA prepared an annotated Task Order, including the driveway analysis, which remains incomplete. CHA obtained an updated proposal for a grading analysis from Beals + Thomas. It has also resubmitted the fee proposal to oversee the work of Beals + Thomas. In addition to those approvals, the Intergovernmental Agreement between SHA and CHA must be extended by vote and the additional hours associated with CHA’s efforts to coordinate feedback with the EOHLC and MHP toward reconsideration of the 705 Repositioning NOFA must also be voted.

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve the following and to authorize S. Cusolito to sign on behalf of the Housing Authority as necessary:

- (a) \$780 for CHA additional hours related to the unsuccessful, previously filed 705 Repositioning NOFA;
- (b) \$1.065 for CHA additional hours related to oversee the additional engineering analysis of Beals + Thomas;

- (c) \$7,500 for Beals + Thomas budget extension to expand on the Nobscot driveway cost estimate and driveway profile, as revised;
- (d) extension of SHA/CHA Intergovernmental Agreement for two additional one-year periods to June 8, 2025.

67-73 Nobscot Road Appraisal: A proposal from Suburban Appraisal Services was received from Attorney Josh Fox. The fee is \$950 for an appraisal of highest and best use based on current zoning (single-family house lot).

A motion was made by F. Riepe, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to engage Suburban Appraisal Services to evaluate 67-73 Nobscot Road as outlined in the proposal dated October 24, 2023 for a fee of \$950.

The SHT has previously agreed to cover the cost of the appraisal.

S. Cline requested the discussion of the SHA & SHT joint meeting and the MBTA Community zoning plan be taken up out of order while Mr. Riordan is present. Ryan Poteat, of the Planning Department is overseeing scheduling the joint meeting. SHT Trustee K. Cronin would like CHA to be present for discussion of Nobscot. S. Cline suggested CHA's presence for the first hour. S. Cusolito distributed to SHA Commissioners and SHT Chair C. Gentile a proposed joint meeting agenda based on input received from SHA Commissioners S. Cline and A. Lepak and SHT Trustee J. Dretler. Topics include an overview of roles and responsibilities; coordination for CPA fund requests; Nobscot development, including involvement/role of the Subcommittee and SHT; use of the FY24 CPA funds awarded for Nobscot; use of the MOUs dated July 30, 2021 and July 7, 2022; thoughts on the MBTA Communities requirements.

The SHA is presenting its funding request to the CPC tomorrow evening. S. Cline would like to see some resolution around CPA fund requests, given the confusion around this year's simultaneously submitted applications and the lack of clarity and justification of the SHT's request. The CPC requested additional information, which it hopes to receive by the December 6 hearing date for the SHT's application.

MBTA Community Zoning Plan: The status of Sudbury's work is not clear, but the Town is currently short of land that qualifies for inclusion in the Plan. It isn't known if Nobscot will be included. F. Riepe noted that the responsibility falls under the Planning Board's purview. S. Cusolito noted that there is a component that is punitive to housing authorities in those communities that do not meet the Plan's requirements.

MINUTES

None

FINANCIALS

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve the checks written in October 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

FYE24 Q2 Financial Report: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve the FYE24 Q2 financial report.

The Tenants Accounts Receivable (TAR) report will be presented at the next regular session.

The FYE24 Q1 MOD report was presented.

SHA-LIP Rent Increase Request: S. Cusolito presented a draft request to SMOC for the Board's consideration. She noted that SMOC no longer provides information on reasonable rent increases and that any increase must be approved by both the Town and the LIP division of EOHLC. The total requested is based on the recently approved rent for the three-bedroom New Duplex unit.

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve a rent increase request for the LIP unit at 16 Willis Lake Drive not to exceed \$3,848 per month, no utilities included. the FYE24 Q2 financial report.

The Tenants Accounts Receivable (TAR) report will be presented at the next regular session.

The FYE24 Q1 MOD report was presented.

PHN 2023-18, Resident Service Coordinator NOFA: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to authorize S. Cusolito to submit a request to renew grant funding for the Resident Service Coordinator position under the criteria outlined in PHN 2023-18, dated October 17, 2023, including accepting funding totaling \$60,000 annually for a period of five years, and adhering to annual reporting requirements as outlined.

SHA Grievance Procedure: The procedure and use of a three-person hearing panel has been discussed previously with a request to consider changing to a hearing officer model, which would also have to go before the MVTO. S. Cusolito noted that it is difficult to convene the three-person panel and even more difficult to engage individuals with sufficient understanding of the regulations to be effective. At this time, the SHA does not have an alternate housing authority executive director or tenant representative. The procedure is officially only in place for the State portfolio, but could be expanded to include the other SHA programs.

The Board agreed by consensus to table the matter.

Staffing: S. Cusolito reported on hiring a retiree from Concord Housing Authority to oversee the waiting lists, including CHAMP administration. SHA requested 18 hours/week, but compromised on 16. In the near term, the employee will work with one of the housing authorities offering assistance through the vacant unit initiative, if such support comes to fruition. Eventually she will assume responsibility for tenant selection and lease-up processes in addition to CHAMP administration.

S. Cusolito also reported on outsourcing screening of administrative and maintenance employment applicants to Taunton Housing Authority, which has a human resources staff person. Maintenance hiring prior to winter is the priority. In the interim, the part-time maintenance staff person has increased his hours, both to support SHA and in response to the vacant unit initiative.

S. Swanger had requested preparation of a proposal for an individual to oversee CHA contract administration; however, S. Cusolito reiterated her opinion that it is more important to hire permanent employees to undertake the work the SHA is required to perform by regulation. She also noted that she would like to assess improvements that arise from the requested changes in CHA's procedures, including extending the Intergovernmental Agreements; invoicing more frequently, and calling out when SHA requests work outside the scope of the approved Task Order. She stated that, given the challenges to date, it's uncomfortable to consider hiring a contractor to oversee another contractor in that it creates even greater distance with the work being performed. She also noted that CHA has stated that it is learning along with SHA, which was not an expected outcome of some of the challenges to date.

Public Housing Administration Notices: S. Cusolito distributed the link to the Notices published since the October 13, 2023 Regular Session, two of which have been discussed within the context of specific agenda items.

Liaison Reports: SHT: A. Lepak commented that the proceedings have already been discussed. Trustee J. Dretler requested a memo with a status update on Nobscot, but Commissioners believe the upcoming joint meeting will suffice. The SHT's CPA fund request was increased to \$1.13M from \$1.075M based on the actual value of the 10% allocation. Regarding the MBTA Communities Zoning Plan, there is an add-on option to include up to 10% affordable housing.

Housing Production Plan: A Housing Production Plan forum is scheduled for December 13. Response to the recently circulated survey included a large percentage of people who live in affordable housing. S. Cusolito noted that she had sent the link to all SHA residents. There was a very low response for the focus groups.

OPEN FORUM

No comments

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Cash Receipts: The cash receipt report was presented.

New Duplex Rent Increase Request: The requested increase was approved at \$3,162 and \$3,848 for the two- and three-bedroom units respectively, less the utility allowance of \$229 and \$277 for the respective units, effective January 1, 2024.

Supportive Housing Initiative: The Executive Office of Elder Affairs published a NOFA for new supportive housing sites. Although the SHA likely doesn't qualify on the basis of having a Resident Service Coordinator present for more than 10 hours per week, RSC Lauren Abraham has submitted a notice of interest to partner with Springwell, the elder services provider in this area.

Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP): The results of the audit, conducted in October, were received. There were three exceptions: one related to the conflicting instructions for populating salary information on the Top Five form; one related to errors by the contractor who performed the 667 annual recertifications, notwithstanding corrections were made prior to the AUP; and one related to CHAMP data entry that was subcontracted to Mass NAHRO. S. Cusolito discussed the CHAMP findings with NAHRO ED Donna Brown-Rego. It's like NAHRO will discontinue the data entry after this calendar year.

Unit Inspections: All annual inspections of State units are completed.

Vacancies: Four 667 units will be vacated this month, adding to seven existing vacancies. Two transfers are included in the total. An applicant for 11 Ford Road has been referred to SMOC for its review.

Evictions: No new actions.

Maintenance: S. Cusolito plans to reach out to Framingham Housing Authority for maintenance support under the vacant unit initiative.

Capital Project Updates:

FISH 288066, 667 Kitchen Ventilation Project: Nearing completion. It has been disruptive to tenants and a challenge to keep on schedule.

FISH 288071, 667 Fire Alarm Upgrade: S. Cusolito is requesting SHA's EOHLC project manager prioritize this work.

FISH 288076, 21 Great Lake Vacant Unit Rehab: The project remains open at this time, until the SHA's feasibility work is further along.

FISH 288077, 2 Beechwood Exterior Improvements: SHA continues to experience poor quality work and work ethic from the contractor—working outside prescribed hours, using site power instead of supplying a generator—and no support from the architect project manager.

FISH 288079, 667 2C RRA Flooring Replacement: The unit was recently vacated, which will allow for a more accurate assessment of needed work.

FISH 288080, 667 RRA Automatic Door Operator Installation: The work was scheduled to begin November 13, but was rescheduled to November 28.

MEMBERS' FORUM

No comments.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the November 14, 2023 Regular Session and move to Executive Session to discuss potential liability, for to do so in open session may compromise the position of the Housing Authority, not to return to open session. The time was 9:34 p.m.

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: F. Riepe

Yes: S. Cline

Yes: S. Swanger