

SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

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SHEILA M. CUSOLITO
Executive Director

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

October 13, 2023

The SHA met in open session at 12:30 p.m. Those present: Vice Chair: A. Lepak; Treasurer: S. Cline; Assistant Treasurer: S. Swanger; Member: F. Riepe; Executive Director: S. Cusolito

Absent: Chair: T. Vitvitsky

MINUTES

None

FINANCIALS

S. Cline noted that both the New Duplex and SHALIP July financial reports, reflected higher rent cash receipts than the pro-rated amount. S. Cusolito responded that the budget cycle and the effective dates for new rents do not coincide and that a budget revision, such as is required for the State program, is not undertaken for these programs.

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

NEW BUSINESS

FYE24 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): S. Cusolito explained that this is the kick-off for updating the CIP, which will culminate with its incorporation in the Annual Plan. She further noted that the SHA's longstanding priority capital project to replace the Village fire alarm system is now in line to be undertaken, supported by both Formula Funding and ARPA funds. The ARPA funds must be expended by the end of 2024. A second priority project, to replace valves on the Village water main, was added this year after unsuccessful attempts to identify a contractor who could perform the work for under \$10K.

The Annual Plan will be taken up at a public hearing scheduled as part of the December 2023 Regular Session. The CIP is the primary component of the Annual Plan that is forward-looking, rather than based on prior-year data.

Sudbury Duplexes Request for Rent Increase: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to request from South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) a contract rent increase to the FY23 or FY24 fair market rent, whichever is the higher approvable rent permitted by SMOC, for the 11 units in the Sudbury Duplex program.

S. Cusolito reported that the current rent, requested during SHA's FYE23, is based on FY22 numbers published by HUD. She explained that SMOC no longer provides information on approvable rents, which creates a challenge for making an informed request. She noted that if requests are not made each year, the increases may not be approved because of the bigger jumps.

Credit Card Use Policy Amendment: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to amend the Credit Card Use Policy to increase the single-item expenditure limit from \$1,500 to \$3,000 without requiring pre-authorization of the SHA Treasurer.

Bid/Quote Authorization Limit Increase: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to increase the dollar limit on bids/quotes requiring board approval from \$5,000 to those less than \$10,000.

FISH 288080 ADA Door Project: A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by S. Cline, and unanimously voted, to ratify approval of project costs proposed by DH Pace Company/Pasek Security for FISH 288080, 667 ADA Door Project, which increased from \$9,395.79, approved in January 2023, to \$9,856.67.

The project expands on previously installed equipment and is responsive to a Request for Reasonable Accommodation/Modification. The cost increase is the result of construction cost increases in the interim since the original quote was received.

Legal Services Agreement Renewal: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to continue participation in the Regional Legal Services Program, and, following review of the Program requirements, agree to abide by the terms of the Participation Agreement and to authorize A. Lepak, Vice Chair, and S. Cusolito, Executive Director, to sign on behalf of the SHA.

The legal funding allocation for FYE24 is \$4,000 and is specific to the State public housing portfolio.

State Bond Bill: State Representative Carmine Gentile had reached out to the SHA for information on capital work that might be fundable (generalized at \$2.5M) under a pending bond bill. S. Swanger provided an outline of needs across the state portfolio, which the Board agreed by consensus is underfunded priority work: comprehensive modernization of Musketahquid Village, including HVAC; accessibility features; emergency alert system; building envelope and security; electrical and water main; and expanded/improved administrative space. The 705 portfolio needs include HVAC; stormwater and other site improvements; building envelope; boilers; water lines; updated interior finishes.

Public Housing Administration Notices: S. Cusolito distributed the link to the Notices published since the September 12, 2023 Regular Session, including an announcement of a statewide vacant unit initiative to occupy the significant number of vacant units within 90 days. S. Cusolito sought CHAMP assistance during the recent Mass NAHRO conference, just prior to the publication of PHN 2023-17, and plans to pursue such assistance in the absence of sufficient administrative staff, coupled with the significant number of vacancies. Expenses associated with the initiative will be covered by budget exemptions.

Liaison Reports: CPC: S. Cline reported the first meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday. Eleven applications for FY25 funding were received, but not yet distributed to the CPC.

SHT: A. Lepak reported on a third round of rent relief that will utilize remaining ARPA funds. SHA residents represent 43% of relief recipients. Coolidge residents accounted for 26% of recipients.

An estimate of \$55K was received for installation of a whole-house heat pump in one of the home preservation units.

Concord passed two town meeting measures in support of affordable housing, including a building permit surcharge for houses over a threshold value and a transfer fee, also based on a threshold value. Approval from the State is underway.

There is no movement via the Planning Board on MBTA Communities. The new Director of Planning & Community Development will start on October 16.

Housing Production Plan: A. Lepak reported on the first meeting, at which it was noted that “Housing Production Plan” is not reflective of the purpose or content of the document. The first focus group meeting will occur via Zoom on 11/13.

OPEN FORUM

S. Swanger requested an updated staff hiring plan for next month’s agenda and for confirmation that funds are available for hiring. S. Cline stated she will look into utilizing CPA funds for contract management. In

her view, SHA has not been the recipient of all work product for which it engaged Cambridge Housing Authority and that other contracts also seem to lack attention to some elements outlined therein. S. Cusolito stated that funding is available, but that the challenge is the lack of sufficient expertise to ensure that contract requirements are carried out as specified.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

New Duplex Rent Waiver Extension: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve an extension to the waiver of the SMOC-determined tenant portion of rent for a Sudbury Duplexes HUD mixed-status household and continue to accept the full subsidy from South Middlesex Opportunity Council; waiver to expire January 31, 2024.

The original waiver, voted at the June 13, 2023 Regular Session, expires October 31, 2023. The household income is insufficient to cover the tenant portion of the rent. The family will be unable to remain in the unit unless the waiver is extended until the household qualifies for a full subsidy under HUD guidelines.

SHA Feasibility 705 Redevelopment: S. Cline reiterated a concern that the work under Task Order #1 has not been completed for all four properties, rather only for 21 Great Lake. S. Cusolito noted that an alternative development scenario for Great Lake was discussed between CHA and Hancock, but not for the other sites. She also noted that Hancock's scope included alternative layouts, but that SHA put these on hold for the single-family homes while it explored rehab options at Great Lake and additional concept plans at Frost Farm. At the Board's request, Hancock executed additional concept plans for Frost Farm beyond the two listed in the original agreement. Further, the EOHLC was in favor of advancing two of the four sites simultaneously, over all four, even if the two were staggered, given the undefined timeline of the units becoming unoccupied. Ms. Cline requested outreach to CHA for an explanation of why some of the work under Task Order #1 was not carried out.

Regarding Task Order #2, which the Board approved at the September 12, 2023 Regular Session with the addition of overseeing community engagement, S. Cline inquired if the support via CHAPA's Municipal Engagement program was no longer under consideration. S. Cusolito stated that the CHAPA program was considered for Nobscot, but the Housing Trust prefers to wait until the Housing Production Plan is finalized. She commented that the Board can choose to work with other entities on particular tasks if it wishes to do so and that CHA is already preparing an outline of the interim conveyance process. S. Cline suggested a meeting with CHA to go over the issues with the 705 project, as well as those with Nobscot.

The Board agreed that all should attend a meeting with CHA, either to coincide with the biweekly calls or as a special meeting. S. Cusolito noted that the Planning Department is circulating a poll for a collective meeting of SHA, SHT and CHA.

67-73 Nobscot Road Feasibility: F. Riepe reported that at the October 11, 2023 Subcommittee meeting, SHT Chair C. Gentile made a motion that was voted, to initiate the appraisal immediately, overseen and paid for by the SHT. Mr. Riepe noted the need for additional engineering analysis, including overall costs for the driveway, reflected in a proposal from Beals + Thomas totaling \$6K, which the Subcommittee also voted. The consensus of the Subcommittee is that the work should be completed prior to purchase and that the costs should be split between SHA and SHT. CHA has submitted a price proposal of \$1,065 to oversee this additional Beals + Thomas work, but some felt it was specified within Task Order #1, negating the need for an additional fee.

S. Swanger commented that Mr. Gentile also stated that if the SHA does not pursue development at Nobscot, the SHT will undertake an ownership development. Mr. Swanger suggested that Nobscot be added to the agenda to discuss with CHA and that there is no need for a collective meeting with SHT and CHA. The SHT took no votes at its October 12, 2023. Mr. Riepe indicated he would direct Attorney Josh Fox to pursue an appraisal. The SHA Board agreed to hold its votes on the Beals + Thomas and CHA proposals until after its meeting with the latter.

MEMBERS' FORUM

No comments.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by A. Lepak, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the October 13, 2023 Regular Session. The time was 3:35 p.m.

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: F. Riepe

Yes: S. Cline

Yes: S. Swanger