

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Somerville Housing Authority (SHA) duly called and held on February 20, 2025.

The Regular Meeting of the Somerville Housing Authority was held in-person at the Mystic Activity Center at 530 Mystic Avenue, Somerville on Thursday, February 20, 2025, at 4:30 PM.

The Executive Director Diane L. Cohen called the roll at 4:34. Upon roll call Commissioners present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT

Chairman Capuano

Comm. Mannion

Comm. Lemard

Comm. Rances

Vice-Chairman Zamer

ABSENT

Others in Attendance: Adam Garvey, Deputy Director; Arnaldo Velazquez, Director of Finance & Administration; Lisa Taylor, Director of Admissions, Occupancy and Compliance; Matt Lincoln, Director of Leased Housing; Brian Langton, Director of Modernization; Dan Meade, Director of Public Safety; Shannon Bennett, Director of Resident Services; Joe Macaluso, Development Consultant; Denise Lauers, Resident; Charlie Snyder, Resident; Emily Eschmann, Executive Secretary.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(a) Meeting of SHA Capen Court Corporation – January 30, 2025

Commissioner Mannion made a motion to approve the minutes of the Meeting of SHA Capen Court Corporation on January 30, 2025. Commissioner Lemard seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5-0

(b) Meeting of SHA Capen Court Corporation – January 30, 2025

Commissioner Zamer made a motion to approve the minutes of the Meeting of SHA Capen Court Corporation on January 30, 2025. Commissioner Mannion seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5-0

(c) Regular Board Meeting – January 30, 2025

Commissioner Rances made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on January 30, 2025. Commissioner Mannion seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5-0

2. COMMUNITY INPUT/RESIDENT COUNCILS

None this month.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

None this month.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

D. Cohen offered to respond to any of the Board's questions regarding the monthly Department reports.

D. Cohen updated the Board on the WIFI access project. She stated installation of networking cable will begin in April to provide low-cost or free internet to select family and elderly developments. She stated a digital navigator and SHA staff will assist residents in using the WIFI. Director of Finance Arnaldo Velazquez stated fiber optic cabling will be installed.

D. Cohen stated office updates and staff relocation will occur department wide. She stated the first relocation involved moving the Maintenance Department to 30R Memorial Road, where the Modernization Department is located. Mystic River Resident Denise Lauers asked if more units would be available for residents with the office relocations. D. Cohen clarified that all current office space will continue to be utilized with the goal of combining Management and Resident Services in various offices.

D. Cohen informed the Board of the new phone and alarm systems installed across the agency.

A. Velazquez informed the Board that the Finance Department has implemented the use of Bill.com to pay all vendors efficiently through ACH. He stated the website verifies vendors, digitizes invoices and uploads them to our user software PHA-Web.

Deputy Director Adam Garvey updated the Board on an upcoming keyless door entry and camera design study. He stated the current security camera system is dependent

on various software and is not fully functional. He stated this will eventually be a phased project costing upwards of \$1,000,000. He hopes to enter a lottery for an Emergency Solutions Grant through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to cover a quarter of the costs.

D. Cohen informed the Board that Public Safety policies are being reviewed for update. She stated Public Safety Consultant Charlie Femino is looking into software to track policy updates and officer training programs.

A. Garvey stated that since the engagement of SHA's new pest control company Page Exterminating Services, there has been a dramatic improvement of infestation rates. He stated their different treatment methodology has been successful. Additionally, Page recently met with staff to inform them of their methods and how both staff and residents can be proactive in addressing and preventing infestation issues. D. Lauers requested SHA educate residents to not leave and/or take infested furniture near the dumpsters. Additionally, she recommended pest control methods used by other housing authorities, including a dog to locate bedbugs. Commissioner Rances requested that SHA share any helpful documents regarding infestation with the residents to help prevent further spread. A. Garvey agreed to share materials received.

D. Cohen informed the Board of a recent meeting with Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services, proposing to expand support services at Capen Court for residents aging in place. These services would include wellness classes, an on-site licensed social worker, meal services and more.

A. Velazquez informed the Board that he will be presenting the FY 2026 budget at the March Board Meeting.

Director of Resident Services Shannon Bennett updated the Board on recent staff training and upcoming resident information sessions addressing immigration concerns. Due to the recent Administration change, the City of Somerville's Office of Immigrant Affairs is providing sessions to inform residents of their rights if an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid occurs. A presentation regarding these concerns will be held February 22, 2025, at the Mystic Activity Center in five languages.

5. DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (IF NECESSARY)

Development Consultant Joe Macaluso updated the Board about on-going projects. He stated the Clarendon Redevelopment was on track to be completed and reoccupied by August or September 2025. There were several delays pushing the date past the original May deadline. The Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) is informing residents of any timeline changes.

J. Macaluso stated Waterworks II is set for completion on March 12, 2025. Testing and inspection of all systems are occurring to ensure Code is met. He stated this is the third phase of a 15-year development project, including 95 units at Capen Court, 99 units at the VNA Senior Living building, 25 units at Waterworks I and now 21 units at Waterworks II. He stated there are plans for a dedication to recognize the full campus as it comes to a completion.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- (a) Permanent status of Abigail Abreu, State Self-Sufficiency/Resident Services Coordinator.

Commissioner Mannion made a motion to approve the permanent status of Abigail Abreu, State Self-Sufficiency/Resident Services Coordinator. Commissioner Lemard seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5-0

- (b) Permanent status of Paul Melagrano, Maintenance Mechanic.

Commissioner Lemard made a motion to approve the permanent status of Paul Melagrano, Maintenance Mechanic. Commissioner Mannion seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5-0

- (c) Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) Contract for Financial Assistance (CFA) for decarbonization study at the Mystic River Development.

Director of Modernization Brian Langton stated this State-funded study is almost complete.

Commissioner Mannion made a motion to approve the EOHLC Contract for Financial Assistance in the amount of \$162,800 for a decarbonization study at the Mystic River Development. Commissioner Zamer seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5-0

- (d) Proposed revisions to SHA Section 8 Payment Standards to be effective January 1, 2025.

Director of Leased Housing Matt Lincoln stated a small revision was made for the Worcester area, raising the payment standard by \$8.

Commissioner Lemard made a motion to approve the proposed revisions to SHA Section 8 Payment Standards to be effective January 1, 2025. Commissioner Mannion seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5-0

7. OPEN SESSION for topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Zamer made a motion to adjourn at 5:11 p.m. Commissioner Lemard seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5-0

Diane L. Cohen

Diane L. Cohen
Executive Director

ATTEST

A True Copy

Documents presented during the Somerville Housing Authority Board Meeting on 2/20/2025.

- Agenda
- Copy of minutes from the Meeting of SHA Capen Court Corporation – January 30, 2025
- Copy of minutes from the Meeting of SHA Support Corporation – January 30, 2025
- Copy of minutes from the Regular Board Meeting – January 30, 2025
- Executive Director’s Report
 - SHA Operating Statements for Month Ending - December 2024
 - Report: Tenant Selection Report – January 2025: Public Housing and Leased Housing Waitlists
 - Report: Vacancy Report January 2025
 - Report: SHA Voucher Utilization
 - Report: Resident Services
 - Report: Public Safety – Incidents Reported by Area
 - Report: Public Safety - Incidents Reported by Date
 - Report: Work Orders Issued: January 2025
 - Report: SHA Modernization Contract Log – Active Jobs February 2025
- New Business 6(a): Memo: Recommendation for Permanency: Abigail Abreu
- New Business 6(b) Memo: Paul Melagrano (Permanent Maintenance Mechanic Position)
- New Business 6(c) Memo: Decarbonization Study Financial Assistance
- New Business 6(c): EOHLC Cover letter and Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Standard Contract Form
- New Business 6(c): EOHLC Certification of Grant Plan – Public Housing Capital Improvement/Development Grant
- New Business 6(c): Attachment A/Scope of Services – Additional Terms and Conditions and CFA Amendment
- New Business 6(d): Memo: Proposed Revisions to SHA S8 Payment Standards to be Effective January 1, 2025
- New Business 6(d): SHA Payment Standards (Effective January 1, 2025)