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Cathy Hoog, Executive Director

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2023
6:00 p.m.**

I. Called Meeting to Order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Present

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

Absent

(Vacant Seat)

Also Present: : Cathy Hoog, Executive Director, Debra A. Tucker, Assistant Executive Director, Gary Dean, Director of Maintenance, Anne Cameron, Executive Assistant, Jacqueline Guzman, Director of Leased Housing and Maureen Thomas, Director of Public Housing

Chair Lezama moved the 75th Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors to the Special Meeting that will be held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Charity Lezama – Cathy and I talked about moving the Annual Board Meeting to March 2023 as the Budget Presentation would take up a majority of the time. We have moved the Annual Meeting to March 2023.

Charity Lezama – I would like to reiterate the norms that we established at the January 11, 2023 Board meeting. Please state your name and address for the record, please keep your time to 3 minutes and on topic to tonight’s Board Meeting. Please maintain a kind and appropriate approach when speaking.

III. Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

John A. Boris moved to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on Wednesday, January 11, 2023. seconds the motion and the vote is as follows:

Ayes

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama

Nays



John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

John A. Boris moved to accept the Minutes of the Special Meeting held on Thursday, January 19, 2023. Veronica Faustino seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

IV. Tenant/Public Engagement

Cynthia Carr – 13A Pioneer Terrace – I would like to thank all of you for the concern and the really good communication during this last cold spell. It was very helpful and we all made it through unscathed and I was very grateful for the involvement that the Housing Authority gave.

Cathy Hoog – Thank you Cindy. I have to say kudos to the Maintenance Department a tremendous amount of hours were put in over the weekend. It was a very challenging situation across the state. Thank you for that. We appreciate it.

Charity Lezama – Thank you Gary to you and your team. I know it was a big lift.

Gary Dean – We had a lot of people on the ground over the weekend. There was a lot of things going on and I have to say these guys have a lot of experience. They really hung in there and did a great job. We had to call in 4 or 5 guys in the span of those two days so kudos to them. They worked 12 hours plus. Great job.

Cathy Hoog – Thank you Gary for your leadership over the weekend. We had a few pipes go on us to say the least.

Sue Kirby – I just wanted to say a few words about the Special Meeting that was on the 19th of January. I want to say that I really appreciate all of you, the Board, taking an extra meeting in order to talk about tenant engagement and tenant participation. To me, it felt like we were heard and I think it is going to make a big difference in the long run. I think there is quite a bit of work to do. We feel heard and included.

Charity Lezama – Thanks Sue.

Cathy Hoog – Thanks Sue.

Gene Collins – Pioneer Terrace – made the following comments.

- Thanked the Chair for having the Special Meeting on January 19, 2023. It was very helpful.
- The idea of having participation by the LTOs is great to hear. Look forward to working together as we go forward.
- Pioneer Terrace is the only facility not allowed to have Wi-Fi Service. Would the Board please
Look into that and find out if we can have Wi-Fi Service like everybody else.
Could we give some consideration for this? I know there out some programs out there.
- Are we still having the LTO monthly meetings?

Cathy Hoog – Yes, the second Monday of every month.

Gene Collins – Could I get an answer on the Wi-Fi because that is important?

Cathy Hoog – There is Wi-Fi in the Community Room at Pioneer Terrace. There is free Wi-Fi. As far as this new grant program that we were awarded funds from the City. We only had a certain amount of money so we chose buildings that were heavily populated and a configuration of where this type of equipment could work easily. We chose 3 buildings. There are quite a few sites across Salem. We are hoping in the future to expand that for sure. We will be looking forward to pursuing that going forward.

Charity Lezama – Thanks Cathy.

Jack Harris – 86 Essex Street – the old Phillips School House – commented as follows:

- Thanks to the Housing Authority for letting him be a guest at 86 Essex Street for approaching 30 years.
One of the few buildings left in the state that allows and gives the opportunity to disabled families live in affordable housing. That is important for the community they live in and the independence it gives them.
I think it important that the Housing Authority applauds themselves for in that 30 years giving excellent service, at least from my perspective, I have had no problems with the Housing Authority from the Executive Director on down. They were accommodating, respectful and professional. It has been hard in the last 3 years and I think the Housing Authority, at least from my perspective, has gone one step further to making sure that residents are safe, healthy and are accommodating in every way that they can be. That is important given today's society to have an entity and one of the biggest entities in the City of Salem

providing low income housing which has always probably been given a bad rap not just in Massachusetts but across the country.

The Salem Housing Authority has given folks the opportunity to live in a community such as Salem which is rich in a lot of areas and it has given folks the opportunity to experience that in a way that maybe a lot of others don't.

I would like to say that the Salem Housing Authority should give themselves a pat on the back and especially from a maintenance perspective. They have always been very courteous, very professional and have always and have always made sure that people felt safe and attentive.

Cathy Hoog – Thank you so much Jack for those kind words. We really appreciate that. Thank you for calling in.

Charity Lezama – Thank you Jack.

V. Communications

- November/December 2022 Mass NAHRO Newsletter
- Updated Waitlist
- SHA Department Reports (Move In, Move Out, State and Federal, CHAMP Report, Modernization Report, Voucher Report, Resident Service Coordinator Reports and Completed Work Orders for Month of January 2023)
- HUD Correspondence – SHA Grant Award

Ben Shallop – I am thrilled to see all the things going on at Leefort Terrace and I am very excited. With the 27 Section 8 Vouches we have out in the community, do we know how long those have been out there for? I know it is very difficult to find any rental property in Salem and it is getting more difficult. I would like to talk about that real quick and make people more aware of that.

Cathy Hoog – It is a challenge. It is a reality that we face, especially in Massachusetts. You get a voucher and you go out and find an apartment. It isn't that easy in Massachusetts.

In terms of people looking out in the community, it varies. They are given a specific period of time. A majority of the time, they request an extension and we grant it. It is very difficult for people to find units. How long does it take to find a Unit?

Jacqui Guzman – It takes about 2 months. Sometime they get a voucher and their lease is in place which is very nice. It takes about 2 months and sometimes they ask for an extension.

Cathy Hoog – We are inclined to give people extensions because we know how hard it is.

Benjamin Shallop – Is there any way to start tracking that? Having that information might be helpful to push the housing conversation in Salem overall. When this comes up, I don't think people are aware of how difficult it is to find rental property in Salem.

Jacqui Guzman - I do have a report that tells me how long the vouchers have been out. I could certainly add it to the report.

Cathy Hoog – I think we could easily run that report from our in house software program.

Thanks Jacqui.

Benjamin Shallop – Thank you.

VI. Reports of the Committees

There were no reports of the Committees

VII. Report of the Executive Director

Executive Director Report – February 2023

Cathy Hoog – Hi-lighted a few things in her Executive Directors Report included in the Board Package.

Charity Lezama – Cathy, thank you for the summary of all of the reports and pulling out the hi-lights.

VIII. Unfinished Business

- Discuss Performance Evaluation for Cathy Hoog
- Tenant Engagement – Follow-up from Special Meeting on January 19, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Charity Lezama – Each of the Board Members had the opportunity to fill out Cathy's evaluation and give feedback on the quality of work, communications, and other categories. Thanks to each of you for taking the time to fill out the evaluation. Over all the majority of Cathy's scores were 4s and 5s. From my personal view and the work that I have gotten to do from a little bit of a more closer relationship as I stepped in to the Board Role is that I continue to be

impressed with the work that she does in leading this team to move and drive the work that is happening . If you take a look at all of the pieces of the Leefort Terrace process that were finalized in January and now we are finally at this moment, it doesn't really hi-light the amount of work and lift that Cathy has lead over the last 3 years to get us to this point. We should really be celebrating that and I think her evaluation is reflective of that and hard work and how you bring that to every piece of the job. It isn't only in your evaluation but through the reports that the SHA has to submit to DHCD and I think if you look at all the benchmarks and data that is available to us, you will continue to thrive as an Executive Director and really do great work. From my role, I want to thank you and it is reflected in your reviews. Thank you for another great year. You are really doing some important work.

Cathy Hoog – Thank you so much.

Benjamin Shallop – I can repeat everything that Charity just said. You have done an incredibly impressive job and especially since I first came in. One of the things that continues to impress me is that this is hard and there is not a lot of money out there for housing, but you continue to find every way possible to squeeze any type of dollars and engage in any type of program and approach like “ let's just find out how to get it done and let's just get it done”. I am humbled by it and impressed and I thank you for your time here.

Cathy Hoog – Thank you so much Ben. I really appreciate your comments Ben and Charity. It has been quite a journey since coming to Salem. I never expected that we would have a global crisis months after starting the job. It made things interesting to say the least. We prevailed. I can't say enough about the team that works together with me. The success of this agency would not be possible without them. They are incredible and they set the stage for a lot of what we have been able to accomplish together. I have to definitely give kudos and credit to the leadership in this agency and all that they do to make everything happen on a day to day basis. I couldn't do it without them. I couldn't do it without the Board. I appreciate your support. Time and time again we have had tough talks, challenging situations and special meetings over the course of the past 3 years and the support that is behind me is very much appreciated. Thank you so much.

John Boris – I agree wholeheartedly with the comments that have been made. For many years I worked at the State Auditor's Office and I have gotten to know many housing directors in the Commonwealth and I say this with an open heart, Cathy is by far the best I have ever seen. She is doing a wonderful job.

Cathy Hoog – Thank you so much John.

Tenant Engagement Special Meeting

Charity Lezama – The intention of the meeting was to have a collaborative meeting with the LTOs and anybody else from the community that wanted to engage in that conversation. I went into the meeting thinking there was an opportunity to create a special committee on the Board. The feedback that we heard was valuable. As Sue Kirby mentioned, I too walked away feeling very positive that the dialog that was had and the trajectory that it is putting us on and that is the first of many conversations that help us develop a plan that creates opportunity for everyone that is a resident to have a voice in the process and make sure they are engaged and have access to the Board to overcome some of the barriers that we have identified. This is a work in progress. Ben, Veronica, and John, if you would like to share your thoughts on how the meeting went and what the next steps are.

Cathy Hoog – We did get started on a survey. We have a Survey Monkey Account going on. I like the idea of presenting that are recertification. It will be a valuable tool for us to collect data throughout the year or monthly or quarterly, depending on how we choose to pull that data together. When we have it drafted, I will present it to the Board for their review and opinions. I do not think it needs a vote but it would be great to take a look at it and discuss it.

Charity Lezama – One other step would be engaging the LTOs and sending them a copy for their review and feedback.

Cathy Hoog – Yes, absolutely.

Charity Lezama – Thanks to each of you. I think we heard it at the meeting and a little bit in the comments that were made at the beginning of this meeting that it is a valuable and important piece of our work as a Board and I look forward to continuing to engage all of the tenants and network. Thanks to everyone.

Veronica Faustino – I wanted to say that I thought that meeting was great and the start of something big and meaningful in Salem. I came away from that meeting feeling like we are taking the first step in changing the culture within Salem Housing Authority to make major decisions with tenants. I think that that is so big. I wanted to hi-light that. Thank you for your leadership, Chair Lezama.

Charity Lezama – Thanks Veronica.

Benjamin Shallop – I thought the meeting went really well. I am glad to hear about the surveys. I would like some feedback from the LTOs on the direction of the survey when it is presented to the Board for review and then open up the comments on the agenda to get some feedback as well in real time. I am open to everyone comfortability with in person meetings. I had discussed with you about using metrics when we go into more restrictive protocols based on the hospitalization rate in the area. If we could adopt that or something similar. If it is over 14 hospitalizations per 100,000.00 then everything is more strictly shut down. If we are under that, then we can go into more relaxed protocols. We have talked several times about doing a standing sub-committee on tenant engagement, I think that it might not be a good idea for no other reason that it is enshrined in our agenda to address it every month. I am open to other people's thoughts on that.

Charity Lezama – We can have Tenant Engagement be a standing item on the agenda. Forming a sub-committee isn't the direction that the LTOs wanted to go is what I walked away with from the special meeting with the LTOs. Let's give it a little more time before we move in the direction of forming a sub-committee.

Benjamin Shallop – Cathy any thoughts on return to hybrid?

Charity Lezama – We are going to start that late in March, correct?

Cathy Hoog – We plan to have some space ready on Canal Street for the March meeting. It is large and there is parking. We can circulate in person meetings to other sites. The challenge then becomes parking for folks. There is more pros to being more accessible to folks that live on those sites. Going hybrid at every site may be a challenge depending on the set-up of the room and whether or not we have Wi-Fi available. The other thing with hybrid is that if we don't have a large TV screen it may be very difficult to see everyone who is joining us. I think it does make sense to set some metrics around the numbers and how things are going in terms of positive covid cases. That makes a lot of sense to me. We have seen a pretty big spike in our staff alone last month. If we are going to set some metric, we need to be clear on what that is and make sure we have a clear way to find that data.

Benjamin Shallop – Covid Act Now tracks everything. It has a city level, county level and regional level. You can look at the hospitalization rate and the infection rate. You pick which metric you are going on. The hospitalization rate seems to be the one that makes most sense. It is continually updated.

Cathy Hoog – That makes sense. I will investigate that and circle back to Charity and make some suggestions. I have not seen anything come out lately about the Open Meeting Law.

Veronica Faustino – Do we have Wi-Fi in all the community spaces in the developments?

Cathy Hoog – No. We will have it in Dalton. We have it at Morency, Pioneer, Charter, and Canal Street Office. Not all sites have community rooms.

Charity Lezama – First step was going to the hybrid model giving the people the opportunity to come together as every other state meeting has gone to. Those that are comfortable can come in person and those who are not can join us remotely. It gives everybody the opportunity to participate. Cathy can continue this conversation and Ben I can follow up with you.

Veronica Faustino – It seems like all of the City meetings are following this hybrid model. Although I think it is incredibly important to be healthy and mindful of all of that, this has a lot to do with the community spaces that we really need to be in. I want to stress the importance of that.

Cathy Hoog – Marblehead Housing Authority has decided to go with the hybrid model to encourage more folks to engage in the meetings. They have been doing in person meetings for a while.

IX. Recommendations of the Chair

There were no recommendations of the Chair.

X. Report of the Treasurer

Bills and Transfers

Cathy Hoog presented the Bills and Transfers to the Board of Directors.

Benjamin Shallop moved to approve the bills and transfers for the period January 1, 2023 through January 31, 2023 as presented. John A. Boris seconds the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

Nays

Balance Sheet and Statements of Revenues and Expenses

Cathy Hoog presented the Balance Sheet and Statements of Revenues and Expenses to the Board of Directors.

Benjamin Shallop moved to accept the Balance Sheet and Statements of Revenues and Expenses prepared by Rick Fenton of Fenton, Ewald & Associates, P.C. for three (3) months ending December 31, 2022. John A. Boris seconds the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

Nays

XI. New Business

Budget Presentation – Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2023

Paul Pavia, Certified Public Accountant, from Fenton, Ewald & Associates, P.C. presented in detail the State 4001 and MRVP/DMH budgets for fiscal year ending September 30, 2023.

Paul Pavia – First I would like to thank Cathy and her entire team. A lot of the backend work that I do is providing you with monthly financial statements is all dependent on her and her team and everything that they provide me and all of her administrative departments and every month they provide me with these things in a timely manner and I am able to turn around and provide you with monthly financial statements so that you can see how your programs are doing and what the programs can do in the future. I want to thank them upfront for that. It is a big help. It was a challenge during the pandemic because everything got shifted around but everything is moving along great. If there was anything to worry about, I would be reporting it right now in terms of the monthly financial statements. My goal here is to present your FY 9/30/23 draft Budget and then have any open dialogue about it. My goal here is to hi-light anything that is new or has changed or things that I am seeing across the industry and where I see things going. It is nice to report that all the programs across the board are very healthy and the reserves are very high and very strong. Paul reviewed the budget by sharing his screen so that everyone could see the entire budget and he reviewed the entire budget line by line. Paul answered all of the questions that were asked by the Board Members.

Charity Lezama – Paul, thanks for your presentation and work on that.

Paul Pavia – Thank you everybody. I do appreciate it. I can stay at the board meeting in case anything comes up that I can help with.

Cathy Hoog – Thank you Paul. You did a wonderful job.

Benjamin Shallop moved to approve the **MRVP/DMH** Budget for fiscal year ending September 30, 2023. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

Benjamin Shallop moved to approve the **Program 4001** Budget for fiscal year ending September 30, 2023. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

Executive Director Salary Calculation Sheet

Cathy Hoog presented to the Board the Executive Director's Salary Calculation Sheet to the Board of Directors.

Charity Lezama – The Executive Director's Salary Calculation Sheet as Paul Pavia mentioned is set by DHCD which is a formula that is filled out which does the calculations for us.

Benjamin Shallop moved to approve the Executive Director's Salary Calculation Sheet as presented. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

New Hire - Maintenance Laborer/Maintenance Mechanic 1

Cathy presented J. Alex Vega-Lopez for the position of Maintenance Laborer/Maintenance Mechanic 1.

Cathy Hoog- Board Members you have received a copy of Alex Vega-Lopez' resume in your packet. We are looking to hire Alex for the position of Maintenance

Laborer/Maintenance Mechanic 1. We are very pleased to present this candidate before you. We had an opportunity to do some work with Mr. Vega-Lopez in Marblehead. He did some temporary work for us and we had the opportunity to see what a great employee he is and we are excited to bring him over to Salem.

Charity Lezama moved to make a conditional offer of employment to J. Alex Vega-Lopez with a six (6) month probationary period for a full-time position Maintenance Laborer/Maintenance Mechanic 1 at an hourly rate of \$29.12 per hour with a start date February 13, 2023. Employment is also conditioned upon receipt of a passed Salem Housing Authority paid physical examination including drug test and a favorable Criminal Offense Record Information (CORI) check. Benjamin Shallop seconded the motion, and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

Nays

Reject Bid -- DHCD Project 258166 -- Waterproofing & Brick Repointing at the Phillips House 705-4

Debbie Tucker – We went out to bid for this water proofing repair project at the Phillips House. It is the old Phillips School brick building. We have some leaking issues. We have a really good architect on the project and DHCD oversight and the project was estimated at bidding at \$175,000.00 and the low bid came in quite a bit higher. We are looking to reject this bid upon the recommendation of the architect and DHCD engineers. We will be looking at the project, revising it and rebidding it. The architect did reach out to see why this was so high and the architect was told they just threw a number at it because of the timing and the climate right now. We are hoping to get a much more aggressive bid in the spring.

John A. Boris moved to reject the bid of \$579,300.00 from Folan Waterproofing for DHCD Project 258166 Waterproofing & Brick Repointing at the Phillips House 705-4. Only one bid was received, and the bid amount is over budget. The project will be revised and rebid. Benjamin Shallop seconded the motion, and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

Nays

Bid for Wi-Fi Network at 27 Charter Street, 45 St. Peter Street and 205 Bridge Street

Cathy presented to the Board of Directors Bid for Wi-Fi Network at 27 Charter Street, 45 St. Peter Street and 205 Bridge Street as per the bid specifications.

Benjamin Shallop moved to accept the lowest responsive and responsible bid from Intellibeam, LLC in the amount of \$71,000.00 for the Installation of Wi-Fi Network at 27 Charter St., 45 St. Peter St., and 205 Bridge St. as per the bid specifications. This project is funded through a CDBG grant from the City of Salem. seconds the motion, and the **roll call** vote is as follows:

Ayes

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

Nays

XII. Other Business/Late Communications

There was no other business/late communications.

XIII. Adjournment

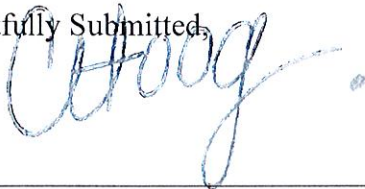
Benjamin Shallop moved that the Board adjourn the Regular Meeting of Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 7:41 p.m. Veronica Faustino seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Ayes

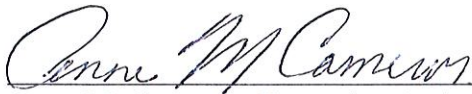
Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Faustino

Nays

Respectfully Submitted,



Cathy Hoog, Executive Director



Anne M. Cameron, Executive Assistant