



Cathy Hoog, Executive Director

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**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2023
6:00 p.m.**

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

II. Roll Call

Present

Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Miranda
Carly McClain

Absent

Benjamin Shallop (Arrived at 6:10 p.m)

Also Present: Cathy Hoog, Executive Director, Debra 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

III. Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

John A. Boris moved to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on Wednesday, July 12, 2023. Veronica Miranda seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Ayes

Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Miranda
Carly McClain

Nays

IV. Tenant/Public Engagement

Charity Lezama – Thanked the Morency folks for hosting a meeting in the Morency Manor Community Room and welcoming us to Morency. We are excited to hear from you as part of our tenant engagement. It is an opportunity for you to raise questions or give us feedback during public comment. Please state your name and address for the record when you do stand and speak and please wait for me to call you. Please keep all comments respectful to everyone that is here today. Please keep comments to 3 minutes so that it will keep us all here to a reasonable time.



Sue Kirby – 45 St. Peter Street – She welcomed everyone to Morency and was happy about the turnout. She said that most of the people that attend and participate are local tenants.

Charity Lezama – Thank you Sue.

Ann Fridgen – Bertram Terrace – She asked about heat pumps, solar panels, water saving toilets – energy efficient items. She is representing the concerns of the elderly. Sometimes our needs and life style is different from new families or immigrant people. Can you incorporate some of the elderly concerns into policy and the major refurbishing issues?

Cathy Hoog – Thanks for raising those issues. We do have a lot of opportunities to participate in grant programs. Board Member and folks in the audience, you may recall that some of the energy conservation measures we have taken over the years include toilets, new high efficiency boilers, air source heat pumps. There are a lot of incentives for us to conserve energy. The SHA also has a new contract with the solar garden. We will be able to take advantage of that very soon. It is in the construction process. We are always looking for opportunities to participate in energy efficiency. It is very important to us not just from a financial aspect but for conservation measures for our planet. On the other issue that you raised, we rely heavily on the LTOs to work in unison with us and share ideas around the specific needs or concerns for senior citizens in our developments. It has been an effective way for us to address the needs or concerns. We are always open to new ideas or committees beyond the LTOs. We are very open to that.

Nancy Zancoli - 205 Bridge Street- Why did they plant trees on the side of the building when they could have more parking spaces for visitors? I live alone and nobody can come to visit me because there is no place to park:

Cathy Hoog – It does require permitting. It is not a situation where we can get parking over there from a permitting standpoint. The division of forestry has provided us with a tremendous number of trees. We applied for a grant opportunity and we were able to get trees for any of our properties in Salem and they are wonderful for our environment.

Diane White – 205 Bridge Street, Dalton House – Building is 38 years old and I was told about 5 years ago about sprinklers in the building. We have no sprinklers in that building. If there was to be a fire, we would have no sprinklers. We need them. It is a safety issue. That is my top safety issue. I have a bunch of other safety issues that we have at the Dalton Building but Gary Dean already knows about them. Thank you very much. How are the people on the second floor going to get down those stairs. You cannot use the elevators during a fire. First floor tenants have the back door but there is no railing. We have a bunch of safety issues at that building that need to be addressed as soon as possible. Sprinklers first. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Charity Lezama – Thank you Diane.

Kathleen Burke – Was wondering if there was a program or someone in the community could come in and teach Spanish to those who would be interested in learning Spanish as a second language so that they could communicate better with the Spanish speaking tenants.

Cathy Hoog – The City just had a program like that for their staff. I will ask them about it.

Charity Lezama – It is a great idea.

-Tenant – Has anybody ever considered using window film to keep the heat, sun and cold out of the building or blinds. I am not sure which is cheaper. I researched this awhile ago to keep heat and cold out of the buildings. Received notice from Salem Recycle that our recycling must be in paper bags.

Cathy Hoog – Thank you.

Gene Collins – Pioneer Terrace, Salem, MA -I would like to take the opportunity to ask the Board again to read the comments that I passed out to them at the beginning of the meeting. Please see attached handout from Gene Collins. Gene went over his comments with the Board. Thank you for allowing the time to go over some of these issues. I would be more than happy to sit down with serious minded people.

Charity Lezama – Thank you Gene.

Debbie Tucker – I would like to address a few things down at Pioneer Terrace. We have got quite a lot of money in the pipeline and in the works and I know that it is going slow and we push as much as we can. We are ready to go out to bid for 2 of the major projects and one is the steps and paving and making that all right. EOHLC has finalized approval and we are about to go out to bid for that and finalizing dates. That will be hitting the paper this month. That is both Pioneer and Colonial Terrace. That project is about \$400,000.00 dollars. We are also about to go out to bid for Creative Place Making. That is going to be a special project down there. We are getting close to putting that out to bid and that will be putting some good seating areas, recreation, connecting the point with Pioneer Terrace and the neighborhood beyond. We are just about ready to go out to bid and that is another \$500,000.00. We have an electrical upgrade project at Pioneer Terrace. These projects move a lot slower than we would like. We receive just over \$800,000.00 per year in capital funding. We analyze the needs of all our properties. We have 23 different sites and we need to spread that money around. We do the best that we can. We could have projects in the pipelines and then something comes along and may have to bump it. We do have projects created. They are in the plan. We are trying to manage a relatively small amount of money over a lot of needs. I just wanted to clarify as to where we were down at Pioneer Terrace. Thank you.

Charity Lezama – Thanks Debbie.

Gene Collins – Pioneer Terrace – What about the renovations of kitchens and baths?

Debbie Tucker – That is the perfect example of a project that we created about 3 years ago and it is our intention to get that done but we must prioritize – what is urgent, what is an emergency. We do have the project in the Capital Improvement Plan and it is our hope to get to it at some point. \$800,000.00 does not go far and I do want to add that Cathy, Gary and I apply for extra money wherever we can get it whether it is CPA funds from the City, Resiliency Funds from the State. Cathy has gotten some great grants that has allowed us to do even more projects that we would not have been able to do with our annual \$800,000.00.

Charity Lezama – Thanks Debbie.

Tenant – Dalton House – commented on her garbage disposal that is not working and SHA is not replacing them.

Gary Dean - With the condition of the pipes in the building, the disposals can't handle the amount of volume of sediment. We deal with tens of hundreds of clogs. It can only handle water. That is why if they break, we take them out.

Cathy Hoog – I wish we could keep the disposals but the pipes can't handle it.

Kathleen Burke 205 Bridge Street – There is a statute in Massachusetts that when you rent an apartment in Massachusetts that has a refrigerator, a washing machine, a dryer – you are entitled to have it replaced. Debbie, way back in the day I talked about the washing machines and you let it go and I let it go. I called them and they said that you needed to talk to them but I think we both let it go. I know that is still a big complaint from some tenants. If you could talk to them about it. Even if one washer and one dryer was on a pedestal.

Debbie Tucker – Chair Lezama, I would be happy to put a call in and see if that is something they could provide for us.

Kathleen Burke – 205 Bridge Street – Commented on the grate outside of the Dalton Building.

Cathy Hoog – We can talk to the city to see if we can get a new grate.

Diane White – We were told that once the disposals are not working that they would be taken out and not replaced.

Charity Lezama – Thank you.

V. Report of the Executive Director

- See attached report of the Executive Director for August 2023

Charity Lezama – Any questions or comments on the Executive Directors Report from the Board?

Cathy Hoog – Board Members, do you have any questions? I have summarized all our activities over the month. We have certainly had a very busy month. Cathy hi-lighted some details in her ED Report.

Charity Lezama – Thank you Cathy.

Veronica Miranda– Last month we were discussing relationships between property managers and tenants. There seems to be a trend wherein there is a disconnect between property managers and tenants and people aren't feeling heard. I was wondering what has been addressed over the last month and how have the LTO meetings gone in terms of building relationships and needs at their developments.

Cathy Hoog – Our property managers continue through communication and continue to be present and offer office hours at different developments to give folks an opportunity to have face to face conversations if they want. The LTO involvement has been fantastic and continue to provide us with ideas, suggestions, and feedback. I can't think of anything specific that was presented to me from the LTOs last month. If there is a concern for someone, I feel comfortable advocating for people and we have been able to follow through. That is a good question.

Veronica Miranda – Thank you. Although there are tenants that speak up, there are a lot of tenants that are not comfortable with doing that still at this point but my involvement with the Rainbow Terrace Tenants Organization and we are trying to build that trust but I am thinking what kind of trainings and things can you provide to Property Managers so that when they are speaking to tenants that they are speaking to them respectfully and in such a way that isn't eroding some of their rights. I won't speak for everyone but sometime the questions that are asked are invasive and the tenant has the choice to answer it or not. In terms of training for the staff, could you look into some training for them that would be helpful when interacting with tenants so that we can have better relationships with tenants.

Cathy Hoog – Continuing Education is very important and it is highly encouraged. Many of our staff attend trainings. We have 3 of them signed up for next month for a series of trainings. One of them is Mental Health. I will be presenting on that topic at the Mass Nahro Conference. It is a conversation that needs to be regularly had and the education needs to continue. It is a tough position to be a rule enforcer and it does require a lot of patience and respect and it is important for our staff to realize that there are two sides to every story. I value what you are saying. It is important to me. People are participating in continuing education. We must report to EOHLC on an annual basis all the trainings the staff is attending and the expectation is very low. We surpass that exponentially because I believe it is important and I encourage people regularly to attend training – maintenance staff, department heads, everyone. Mass NAHRO hosted a Board Training at 136 Canal Street which I believe you attended. We are hoping to have more trainings there and do some of our own as well.

Veronica Miranda – Thank you. I appreciate you mentioning the training and that you be willing to look into that.

VI. Communications

- Updated Waitlist
- SHA Department Reports (Move In, Move Out, State and Federal, CHAMP Report, Modernization Report, Voucher Report, Resident Service Coordinators' Reports and Completed Work Orders for Month of July 2023)

VII. Reports of the Committees

There were no reports of the committees.

VIII. Unfinished Business

Salem Housing Authority – By Laws

Cathy Hoog – Please email me a copy of the By-Laws with the proposed changes and we will distribute them in the Board Packet so that we can discuss them at the next Board Meeting and potentially vote to adopt them.

Veronica Miranda – That sounds great.

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 for the period July 1, 2023 through July 31, 2023.

Veronica Miranda moved to approve the bills and transfers for the period July 1, 2023 through July 31, 2023 as presented. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica Miranda
Carly McClain

Nays

Balance Sheet and Statements of Revenues and Expenses

Cathy Hoog presented the Balance Sheet and Statements of Revenues and Expenses prepared by Paul Pavia of Fenton, Ewald & Associates, P.C. for nine months ending June 30, 2023.

Benjamin Shallop move to accept the Balance Sheet and Statements of Revenues and Expenses prepared by Paul Pavia of Fenton, Ewald & Associates, P.C. for nine (9) months ending June 30, 2023. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Benjamin Shallop
Charity Lezama

Nays

John A. Boris
Veronica Miranda
Carly McClain

XI. New Business

Pre-2004 Section 8 Reserve Monies

On August 8, 2012, the Board of Directors authorized the former Executive Director spend Pre-2004 Section 8 Reserve Monies up to Five Thousand (\$5,000.00) Dollars without further Board approval. Cathy Hoog, Executive Director requested the Board to restore the Five Thousand (\$5,000.00) Dollars using the same guidelines as the Board authorized on August 8, 2012.

Cathy Hoog – Board Members if you recall we are very fortunate to have unrestricted Pre-2004 Reserves. Many years ago, it was decided that the Board would vote to approve \$5,000.00 at a time to be used. We are presenting that to you now with a summary of where we spent the last \$5,000.00. We are getting a little low on that. We are down to \$2,000.00. If you have any questions, I am happy to answer them.

Veronica Miranda – Are we able to comment on the individual items on this list?

Cathy Hoog – You should be.

Veronica Miranda – I see some things here where we are supporting the staff and employee appreciation which is amazing and appreciate what has happened in July for Rainbow Terrace. I am wondering what other ways we can use these funds to support residents or just show some appreciation for the work that residents put in not only in our own unit but around the development. I see some things here and supporting our staff is important. I am wondering if we can see more of that go towards the residents in some way.

Cathy Hoog – We could show you some of the past summaries. We have been able to support different resident events over the course of the years through this. We have had cookouts; we have purchased a grill for resident use and we have done several different things. We do have RSC Grant money and some flexible spending money that we charge resident related activities and events to as well. We can give you a more spread-out summary.

Veronica Miranda – That would be great. I don't think that I have seen this before or maybe I am just forgetting. Maybe LTO Leaders could think of some ways that would bring out more tenant engagement and talk to the tenants and offer events and opportunities to come together.

Cathy Hoog – We also share a portion of laundry profits with all the LTOs. They utilize a lot of that money for events as well.

Charity Lezama – How much is that?

Cathy Hoog – It depends. The bigger the building the larger the profits. We take about 60% and the laundry company that manages the machines takes their cut and we share half of our profits with the residents. It is a nice opportunity for them to have that money for events and things.

Veronica Miranda – Some developments do not have that like Rainbow Terrace. We are going to have to find other ways to have events. We will work with Cathy on that.

Cathy Hoog – That is why we wanted to fund the larger event at Rainbow Terrace.

Veronica Miranda – I am wondering if the LTOs feel like they could use more funds than what the laundry funds are offering.

Discussion ensued surrounding the laundry funds.

Carly McClain – I think anecdotally and this is true because I go to a lot of the same meetings that Cathy goes to. There is a shortage in the workforce right now for housing authorities and other social service agencies across the state. I want to speak about the importance of staff building and funding activities to keep people who are on staff to stay on staff. Government jobs are notorious for not paying that great, frankly, and a lot of work. People do it because they believe in a mission. They believe in the community that they work in and they are part of the community that they work in. Whatever measures we can take as a housing authority to keep trained, qualified staff working for the agency, I think the better. With the budget that we have, we can't compete with the much larger housing authorities in terms of pay and even potentially some of the benefits they offer so to me if there is a party now and again or a way to show staff "thank you so much for doing all of the end of the month balancing" or whatever. I feel strongly that we need to put resources towards that which is not to say that we shouldn't continue to make monies available for tenants and community building amongst staff and tenants. It is super important as often as possible verbally and through action that the work is appreciated every single day. I would not want to see the programs painstakingly built fall apart because people leave. They find more gratifying work in the private sector. I feel strongly about thanking the staff for showing up every day and having a pizza party now and again acknowledging appreciation for what they do.

Charity Lezama – Thanks Carly.

Veronica Miranda moved to authorize Cathy Hoog to restore the Five Thousand (\$5,000.00) Dollars from the Section 8 Reserve Monies using the same guidelines as authorized by the Board on August 8, 2012. Benjamin Shallop seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Benjamin Shallop

Charity Lezama

John A. Boris

Veronica Miranda

Carly McClain

XII. Other Business/Late Communications

There was no other business or late communications.

XIII. Adjournment

Veronica Miranda moved that the Board adjourn the Regular Meeting of Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 7:04 p.m. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Benjamin Shallop

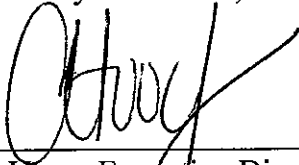
Charity Lezama

John A. Boris

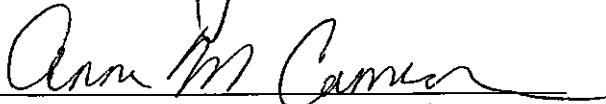
Veronica Miranda

Carly McClain

Respectfully Submitted,



Cathy Hoog, Executive Director



Anne M. Cameron, Executive Assistant