



Cathy Hoog, Executive Director

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**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 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 J. Miranda
Carly McClain
Aaron Paternoster

Absent

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

Charity Lezama – Welcomed Aaron Paternoster to the Board of Directors.

Aaron Paternoster – I’m glad to be here.

III. Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

There were no minutes presented at the October 11, 2023 Board Meeting.

IV. Tenant/Public Engagement

Charity Lezama – Please state your name and address for the record.

Ann Fridgen – Bertram Terrace



- Shout out to Gary Dean and his team – he just informed me about the mailboxes for Bertram
They will no longer be a safety hazard. Thank you.
- Also, Mike Fitzgerald came by a few times in the last week and a half and fixed one of our rain gutters that was raining down over a heavy utilized door. That is appreciated.
- Locked myself out and Mike Fitzgerald came and helped me. I am very grateful to the maintenance department.
- Veronica raised the issue of the status of Bertram Terrace Tenants Association vis a vie Pioneer Terrace Tenants Association. It is important to know our status. We have elections coming up.

Gene Collins – I was hoping we could use a MOU to have Bertram Terrace join Pioneer Terrace Tenants Association since it is only a small group of tenants we are talking about. It is something we requested.

Veronica Miranda – I spoke to Cathy and also Jack in terms of you joining forces. We are able to have an umbrella organization or neighborhood tenant organization so when you have the election in December it will be under Pioneer and Bertram so delivering the literature is exactly what you want to do. People from Bertram Terrace can run for positions as well. You will be a united force and go through the process that Gene has gone through.

Veronica Miranda – You will create a bank account and go through the process that Gene has previously gone through.

Ann Fridgen – That is good to know.

Gene Collins – We still have to go through the process.

Veronica Miranda – You are already going through the process so when you do Bertram will just tag on.

Sue Kirby – so there will be two separate groups not one?

Cathy Hoog – Part of why I had shared the regulations was just to hi-light that you have the option a neighborhood association if you would like. You could form an umbrella. There are a few different options. You have to go through the election process as it is outlined in the regulation process and is what you are doing. The fact that you have come together and are participating in things together is well within your right. We have not been able to formally recognize you as an LTO because you have not had an election. Once you have an election, we will be able to recognize the LTO.

Discussion ensued amongst the Board and tenants present relative to having an umbrella association.

Cathy Hoog – Veronica has been super helpful in helping the neighborhood LTOs.

Carly McClain – Sue, you know Issac from Lynn United for Change. Have you been talking with him? This is what he does. I know we are not in Lynn but the regulations are similar to the LTOs and he may be a good resource. He is a community organizer in the City of Lynn and has been working in State Public Housing to put together LTOs to assist. That is just a suggestion.

Ann Fridgen – Am I able to hand out these forms when Jeff gives them to me Thursday?

Charity Lezama – Yes.

Ann Fridgen – the gutter facing Meservey Street is an eye sore.

Gary Dean - the maintenance department fixed the door and they will be fixing the gutter facing Meservey Street.

Ann Fridgen – 70% elderly under management of the SHA and Maintenance Department. Family vs. Elderly. When planning projects and policies, is it possible to have some elderly tenants participate in the process. People don't always think about what it is like to be an older person trying to deal with things. I think it would help you to get some input on projects.

Ann Fridgen -- Thank you for your time.

Sue Kirby – 205 Bridge Street, Morency Manor -President of the Morency Manor Tenants Association - Sue made the following comments:

- I am very appreciative that Cathy has put forward an offer to pay for and send tenants from Salem to attend Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants Convention, which is Saturday, October 28, 2023. Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants has been around for 37 years and they are on the side of trying to get policies passed at the State House that would be beneficial to tenants. They work very closely with a lot of other housing organizations. They have taken over the Mel King training as well. I am noticing in the last 3 or 4 years that there are more Tenant Organizations forming on the North Shore and are getting educated about how to run an LTO and other issues that come up and also what is needed at the State level in order to implement what we are trying to get. I have a dozen people on my list who are interested in attending so far and we have not spoken to Rainbow Terrace yet.

Cathy Hoog – it is important for us to support that initiative.

Sue Kirby – there is a deadline if you want to have the SHA name in the book.

Cathy Hoog – Yes, we have already submitted it.

Sue Kirby – I would like to express my disappointment that we are not meeting at another tenant building. We have not met at Pioneer Terrace yet. It would be helpful to have meetings at the different developments.

Charity Lezama – thanks Sue, I agree.

Gene Collins – Pioneer Terrace, President of the Pioneer Terrace Tenants Association – Gene made the following comments:

- Requests Board to read 760 CMR Regulations
 - Contracts that the Housing Authority is signing – Board Members have knowledge of that.
 - Updated Modernization Projects – if contractors are not bidding on simple projects is wrong.
 - Unit Turnover
 - No response on the Surveys conducted- please update us.
 - Common Area Painting – no mention of Pioneer Terrace for their common areas
 - Why have the projects for Bertram Terrace been eliminated? Is there a reason for that?
 - Request the Board to look at the contract for renewing kitchens and baths to see if we can have some opportunity to work with the housing authority to assist Pioneer Terrace as Units turn over there
- Thank you.

Charity Lezama – Thank you Gene.

Ann Fridgen – Bertram Terrace – commented as follows:

- Grateful to see the kitchen & bath modernization is in the works
- On the website there was something about gas meters in the basements- we are grateful for that.

Gary Dean – there is a Master Meter Service at Bertram and we have to electrify the stoves there so we have to take out the gas stoves and put in electric stoves.

Ann Fridgen – Another project that was on the list was spray washing. As far as electric boards will this be dove tailed with kitchen rehab or are they separate.

Gary Dean – It is all one project.

Cathy Hoog – The Housing Authority applied for special compliance monies for that project. They were awarded \$141,050.00. It is a good thing.

Richard Greaves – I would like to thank Gary for the new ramp at the Dalton House.

- Dalton Building need to be updated to handicap assessable. We have 1 legally blind, 2 low vision and 2 amputees. I was wondering if an independent vendor could come in and do an evaluation and bring things upgraded for the handicapped.

Cathy Hoog – I believe we did add braille to the laundry. As you all know, many of the buildings were built many years ago before a lot of the ADA Laws were updated thankfully. Little by little we manage how we can become ADA compliance with funding availability. If people do have individual needs, they have an opportunity to request a reasonable accommodation. We can individually assess that situation. It happens quite often and we are fortunately we are able to accommodate the majority of people who apply for those. If you know of someone who is struggling with something personally, encourage them to come and complete an application. It is fairly simple; Debbie Tucker manages all of those that come in and generally we can accommodate people who have certain needs. In terms of larger projects, we are always looking for ways to create user friendly environments for everyone. We have applications on-line and you can also call your property manager or you can stop in to see your property manager who can give you a paper application. We do have a few projects going at any given time to improve accessibility.

V. Report of the Executive Director

Executive Director Report for October 2023.

Cathy Hoog – There has not been a lot that has changed since we last met two weeks ago. I did hi-light our monthly numbers. If you have any questions Board Members, I am happy to answer them. Cathy did go over her report in detail with the Board.

Carly McClain – is there a project labor agreement? Is it Union, wall to wall Union?

Cathy Hoog – In terms of hat Callahan has in place, I am not entirely sure. I am assuming that he is working with the Unions especially the sub-contractors.

Carly McClain – There is no overt agreement put into the contract.

Cathy Hoog – The Agreement is between the Developer and the Contractor. The Housing Authority is not a part of that except for being at the table for all of the construction

meetings and all of the construction that takes place because it is still our property until closing then there is an agreement that takes place.

Cathy Hoog – it is worth noting that it is not super common but it does happen not to receive any bids and there are a number of things that influence that. Sometimes it is the time of year and lately it has been about the rising cost in materials and sometimes it is the way a project is bid out. If we did not receive bids, the designer and architect reach out to people to get feedback. For this particular project for Pioneer Terrace and Colonial Terrace the thought was that the scope may be too large and the project may be too large. Sometimes bidding out the project gets us better pricing. It is a good thing and is encouraged and sometimes it back fires and I think in this instance, it was probably just a lot for once contractor to take on and it may have to do with materials and timing. We are going to rebid for just Pioneer Terrace. It is being advertised and we are hopeful we will get bids from contractors who may be interested in just that job. It would have to start in the spring as it is too late in the year to dig up walkways and manage concrete pouring and all of that.

Debbie Tucker – The Engineer mapped it all out and the bid specifications will be redesigned and we can get the bidding process complete and get contracts in place with the thought that we could get started in the Spring and ready to go.

VI. Communications

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

VII. Reports of the Committees

There were no reports of the Committees.

VIII. Unfinished Business

Salem Housing Authority – By Laws

Charity Lezama – I missed the last meeting but I know that there was some discussion around the By-Laws. Veronica, I know you have been working on this and pushing for

this since June I believe. I am going to ask the Board to push this until the November Meeting so that Aaron Paternoster has time to review the By-Laws before we vote on it.

Veronica Miranda – I think we started the conversation in May or June 2023. I would love to get it going and love the input from all the Board Members.

Charity Lezama – We will push the By-laws until the November meeting and we will have more of a conversation of getting input from the Board Members and then we will vote on any changes that are recommended.

Cathy Hoog's Annual Performance Evaluation

Charity Lezama – An update on Cathy's Annual Performance Review if you have not done it already. Please complete it and send it along to Anne. We will have an open discussion at the November Board Meeting about Cathy's Evaluation. Ben Shallop will be preparing one for Cathy so Aaron you will not have to submit one this year.

Aaron Paternoster – I was going to ask to abstain.

2023 Federal Public Housing Flat Rents

Cathy Hoog, Executive Director, will present the 2023 Federal Public Housing Flat Rents and explain to the Board as to how the Federal Public Housing Flat Rents are determined.

Veronica Miranda – Thank you all for being willing to put this off. I was able to dive into some things and I appreciate the space to look at the flat rents. It is very confusing and what I took away and also what was in the packet that you included in the Board Packet last month is that often the minimum is 80 percent of the FMR. We could, if we thought it was necessary file for an exception to that 80% depending on the conditions of the units. I went on HUD's Website and found a formular for figuring out the conditions of the Units based on the year built, area, whether there is a full bath dishwasher and disposal, etc. I wanted to share that with other Board Members if that is a possibility. The benefit to having the exception to the flat rent is that it is not affordable for so many people and even though we have the FSS Program that is for Federal and not State. There are a lot of people in state public housing who would benefit from lower flat rents. That was my idea there.

Cathy Hoog – Sounds like you did some good homework. You are correct. I would add to that that the flat rent be comparable to Hud's area fair market rents. That is why they suggest 80% to make it somewhat affordable. If we were to advocate for a lower amount,

we need to be prepared to explain why because the rent reasonableness is one of the things we would use as a tool to explain why. At this point, we do not have anyone that has chosen the flat rents. It is a requirement for us to set flat rents on an annual basis. We generally go with 80%, I don't think anyone is opposed to lowering it. I think it may be hard for us to determine the need for that because 80% is fairly reasonable considering the current FMRs in place and also considering the conditions of the units and location and area that they are in. We can try it. I do not think it is worth trying to be honest. I don't know if it would be approved. If we felt strongly and there were a lot of people coming forward saying that wanted that option, it would make sense. Given the fact that people are choosing 30% of their income vs. the flat rent. I feel confident that this is reasonable for us to vote on.

Veronica Miranda – Because people are not using the flat rent, that speaks to how insufficient it is. I do acknowledge that there would need to be a market analysis on the units in order to come up with the correct number. I know that HUD has the market analysis tool. It would cost some money but I don't know how much money it would cost to do a market analysis. I want to state that clearly the flat rents are not benefiting a lot of people. If people are not utilizing the flat rents, there is a reason why and I think it is because of affordability.

Cathy Hoog – It could be true for some. The majority that live in our Federal Public Housing Units are considered very low income. 30% are below the median income, which would behoove them to choose the option of a percentage of their income vs. the flat rent. I hope that is helpful to you to have that information. All your points are valid.

Carly McClain – Does the Housing Authority have access to the “Go Section 8 Tool”?

Cathy Hoog – Yes.

Carly McClain – We could use the tool to look at the rent reasonableness in an area so that it looks at all of the amenities in the unit and the area and location. Then it makes a determination if the Unit is at the top of its game and what it would be worth when negotiating with the landlord. This is more likely used for a mobile subsidy but we could plug these units in to get an idea at what it would be at 80%.

Discussion ensued amongst the Board Members.

Carly McClain moved to approve the following 2023 Federal Public Housing Flat Rents, as submitted, effective fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023:

1 Bedroom:	\$2,377.00
2 Bedroom:	\$2,827.00
3 Bedroom:	\$3,418.00

4 Bedroom: \$3,765.00

Veronica Miranda seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Charity Lezama

John A. Boris

Veronica J. Miranda

Carly McClain

Aaron Paternoster abstained from voting.

Negotiating Team - Union Negotiations between Salem Housing Authority and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2742, Council 93 – September 2023

Cathy Hoog – Board Members – Union Contracts are typically 3 years and prior to the end of the contract we start the negotiations. That involves a series of meetings, ground rules for how it will go and then meetings where proposals are shared in consideration of the new contract coming forward. In order to begin that process, the Board would need to authorize myself and our attorney, Christina Granese to act as the negotiating agents for the housing authority. It is a standard procedure, we go through and meet with the union representatives, the union’s attorney, me, our attorney, and we go through the process of exchanging proposal and the final product comes before the Board. It is a fairly easy process. We are very fortunate. We have a great set of union members who are excellent and everything that they ask for is reasonable and they deserve every bit of it. It is a conversation that goes very smoothly.

Aaron Paternoster: How many members are covered under this contract.

Cathy Hoog – We have 9 maintenance staff.

Veronica Miranda – The last meeting this was brought up and I asked that we push it until this month. Not to delay negotiations but just until our labor council could be here. I am sure that would speak to this if something was out of the ordinary. It was brought on at the end of the meeting and I do not know anything about union negotiations so that is the only reason why.

Veronica Miranda moved to appoint Cathy Hoog, Executive Director and Christina Granese, Esq. as the negotiating team for the Salem Housing Authority during Union Negotiations between Salem Housing Authority and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2742, Council 93 – September 2023. John Boris seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Charity Lezama

John A. Boris
Veronica J. Miranda
Carly McClain
Aaron Paternoster

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.

Carly McClain moved to approve the bills and transfers for the period September 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023 as presented. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica J. Miranda
Carly McClain
Aaron Paternoster

Nays

Section 8 - Repayments Collected 10/01/2022 -9/30/2023

Cathy Hoog presented the Section 8 Repayments Collected 10/01/2022 – 9/30/2023.

The total amount collected is \$183,252.61. SHA retains fifty (50%) percent of \$183,252.61 which equals \$91,626.31.

Public Housing Retro Rents Collected 10/01/2022 – 9/30/2023

Cathy Hoog presented the Public Housing Retro Rents Collected 10/01/2022 – 9/30/2023.

The total amount collected is \$13,008.00. SHA retains fifty (50%) percent of \$13,008.00 which equals \$6,504.00.

XI. New Business

Annual Submissions

Cathy Hoog informed the Board that once a year the Salem Housing Authority is required to have each staff member, each Board Member and other individuals considered to be state employees sign the following documents and requests execution and submission at this meeting:

- Conflict of Interest/State Ethics Commission Summary

In addition, every two (2) years the above-mentioned individuals are required to complete a Conflict-of-Interest online training program. This online training last occurred in October of 2021 and will need to be completed again this October.

The Director will also request that the Board of Directors and each staff member sign the following document as part of the Annual October Submissions:

- Sexual Harassment Policy

Collection of Losses – Write Offs Through 09/30/23 per Public Housing Notice 2017-17

Cathy Hoog presented the Collection of Losses – Write Offs Through 9/30/23 per Public Housing Notice 2017-17.

Charity Lezama moved to approve write offs through September 30, 2023 for State Development 667 in the amount of \$3,691.54 pursuant to Public Housing Notice 2017-17. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica J. Miranda
Carly McClain

Nays

Aaron Paternoster abstained from voting.

Bid for Interior Painting of Common Halls

The Executive Director presented the Bid for Interior Painting of Common Halls to the Board of Directors.

Debbie Tucker – This is a small project that we are going to do with a Contractor through EOHLIC. We went out to quote for this project and Lou’s Cape Ann Painting was the low bidder. We know him well. He does interior painting of vacant units and has for quite awhile. This is for common halls at Charter, Morency, Dalton, Norton Terrace, and Colonial Terrace.

Cathy Hoog – Thanks Debbie.

Charity Lezama – Thanks Debbie.

Aaron Paternoster – Is there an opportunity for discussion? What is the process for projects like this going inside vs. going outside?

Debbie Tucker – This was a project in our Capital Plan. This is a project under \$50,000.00 and depending on the size of your housing authority we go out to bid for that. For projects over \$50,000.00 there is usually an engineer and an architect involved with the State. This is a small painting project that we could even do through our budget at this price point.

Cathy Hoog – The dollar threshold determine how we advertise the project whether it is a quote, common business sense, whether or not it is bid out. If we get into super high numbers like one million or over there are a lot of other requirements.

Charity Lezama – Did that answer your question, Aaron?

Aaron Paternoster – Yes.

John A. Boris moved to accept the lowest, responsive, and responsible bid from Lou’s Cape Ann Painting /dba Lambros Kouloris in the amount of \$24,800.00 for EOHLIC Project # 258174 Interior Painting of Common Halls. Charity Lezama seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Charity Lezama

John A. Boris

Veronica J. Miranda

Carly McClain

Aaron Paternoster

XII. Other Business/Late Communications

Veronica Miranda – In the Sexual Harassment Policy, could we replace the “she” pronoun with the “they” pronoun? You don’t have to put “he/she/they” just put “they”.

Cathy Hoog – Yes, that is not a problem.

Veronica Miranda – Thank you.

XIII. Adjournment

John A. Boris moved that the Board adjourn the Special Meeting of September 27, 2023 at 7:13 p.m. Carly McClain seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Ayes

Charity Lezama
John A. Boris
Veronica J. Miranda
Carly McClain
Aaron Paternoster

Nays

Respectfully Submitted,



Cathy Hoog, Executive Director



Anne M. Cameron, Executive Assistant