



Main Office and Public Housing Department  
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Cathy Hoog, Executive Director

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024  
6:00 p.m.**

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**I. Called Meeting to Order at 6:00**

**II. Roll Call**

Present

John A. Boris  
Veronica J. Miranda  
Aaron Paternoster  
Romell Kidd

Absent

Carly McClain (arrived at 6:14 p.m.)

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

**III. Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)**

John A. Boris moved to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on Wednesday, February 14, 2024. Veronica J. Miranda seconded the motion and the vote is as follows:

Ayes

John A. Boris  
Veronica J. Miranda  
Aaron Paternoster  
Romell Kidd

Nays

Veronica J. Miranda moved to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on Wednesday, March 13, 2024. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Ayes

John A. Boris  
Veronica J. Miranda

Nays



Aaron Paternoster  
Romell Kidd

#### **IV. Tenant/Public Engagement**

Sue Kirby – 45 St. Peter Street, Salem, MA commented as follows:

Sue thanked the Housing Authority for paying for tenants to attend the Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants Convention and also stated they are trying to get a scholarship so that they are able have their hotel accommodation paid for.

Cathy Hoog – You are very welcome.

Jane Ayers – 45 St. Peter Street, Salem, MA – President of the Morency Manor Tenants Association commented as follows:

Jane thanked Cathy Hoog and Gary Dean for meeting the Morency and Dalton Tenants Organization to hear their ideas and comments on what they would like to see happen in the green area in front of their buildings.

Cathy Hoog – Thank you. We are excited to see what we can do for the tenants.

Ann Fridgen – Thanked the Housing Authority for sponsoring the tenants so that they are able to attend the Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants Convention. She also expressed the need for equality at Bertram Terrace. She mentioned the following:

- Painting front doors – Forest Green
- Mitigate the flooding in the laundry room.
- First floor laundry room painted
- Table and chairs with umbrella
- Spicket so that they can water flowers when planted
- Improve quality of life issues

Gary Dean – Please email me any issues that you may have.

Ann Fridgen – I will email you. These are minor things. It is a safe, lovely neighborhood. Thank you.

Teri McDonough – Teri is the Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator at the Salem Housing Authority. She read a statement to the Board of Directors. Please see statement attached.

Cathy Hoog – Thank you Teri.

## **V. Executive Director Report**

Executive Director Report – April 2024

Cathy Hoog reviewed her Executive Director Report with the Board and gave them the hi-lights of the past month. She answered all of the Board's questions.

Veronica Miranda – Asked about translation devices and mentioned how great they were if you needed translation.

Cathy Hoog – We purchased one for the Morency Manor Tenants Organization.

Gary Dean – We have a translation device here.

Veronica Miranda – Thank you.

Cathy Hoog – We use a great translation company for meetings and document translation.

Veronica Miranda – it would be nice to have a translator on Zoom once a month for Board Meetings. The entire Zoom Webinar would be in their language.

## **VI. Communications**

- Mass NAHRO News Letter – January/February
- Updated Waitlist
- SHA Department Reports ( Move In, Move Out, State and Federal, CHAMP Report, Modernization Report, Voucher Report, Family Self-Sufficiency Program Report (Quarterly), Resident Service Coordinator Reports and Completed Work Orders for Month of March 2024)
- Email from Kevin Connor, EOHLC dated March 26, 2024, RELEASE: Secretary Augustus at Mass NAHRO Conference
- Performance Management Review Results

## **VII. Reports of the Committees**

There were no reports of the committees. The Policy Committee has not met as of this date.

## **VIII. Recommendations of the Chair**

There were no recommendations of the Chair.

**IX. Report of the Treasurer**

Bills and Transfers

The Bills and Transfers were presented to the Board for the months of February 2024 and March 2004.

Aaron Paternoster moved to approve the bills and transfers for the period February 1, 2024 through February 29, 2024 as presented. Veronica J. Miranda seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

John A. Boris

Veronica J. Miranda

Carly McClain

Aaron Paternoster

Romell Kidd

Aaron Paternoster moved to approve the bills and transfers for the period March 1, 2024 through March 31, 2024 as presented. Veronica J. Miranda seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

John A. Boris

Veronica J. Miranda

Carly McClain

Aaron Paternoster

Romell Kidd

Balance Sheet and Statements of Revenues and Expenses

Veronica J. Miranda moved to accept the Balance Sheet and Statements of Revenues and Expenses prepared by Paul Pavia of Fenton, Ewald & Associates, P.C. for four (4) months ending January 31, 2024. Carly McClain seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

John A. Boris

Veronica J. Miranda

Carly McClain

Aaron Paternoster

Romell Kidd

Veronica J. Miranda moved to accept the Balance Sheet and Statements of Revenues and Expenses prepared by Rick Fenton of Fenton, Ewald & Associates, P.C. for five (5) months ending February 29, 2024. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

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

**X. Unfinished Business**

**XI. New Business**

New Hire – Property Manager

There were three (3) candidates chosen to be interviewed for the open position of Property Manager. Cathy Hoog and Maureen Thomas interviewed the three (3) candidates along with the LTOs. Cathy presented her candidate of choice.

Cathy informed the Board that she had chosen an internal candidate for this position. Lilly Rojas was the Housing Specialist who processed state and federal public housing applications, determine eligibility, and prepared notification to applicants (CHAMP System) and carried out many other duties. She did an excellent job. We are excited to have her grow with the team. Her resume was impressive.

Aaron Paternoster: I appreciate that staff is able to grow, move up and continue working for the agency.

Cathy Hoog – To be able to retain staff and have them grow within the agency is huge for me and it also promotes staff retention. We are excited to have Lilly in this new position.

Veronica J. Miranda moved to make a conditional offer of employment to Lilly Rojas for a full-time position as Property Manager at an annual salary of \$64,751.05 with a start date TBD. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

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

Romell Kidd

New Hire – Part-Time Receptionist for Section 8 Office

There were six (6) candidates chosen to be interviewed for the open position of part-time receptionist for the Section 8 Department. Two out of the six candidates that were invited to be interviewed responded to the SHA. Cathy Hoog and Jacqui Guzman interviewed the two (2) candidates along with the Resident Advisory Board. Cathy will present her candidate of choice.

( ) moved to make a conditional offer of employment to Melissa Sanchez with a six (6) month probationary period for a part-time position as receptionist for the Section 8 Office at an annual salary of \$32, 132,10 with a start date TBD. Employment is also conditioned upon receipt of a passed SHA paid physical examination including drug test (not marijuana) and a favorable Criminal Offense Record Information (CORI) check.

( ) seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

**This new hire (part-time receptionist) was not voted on as the candidate withdrew.**

Bid Tabulation for Common Area Cleaning

Cathy Hoog presented and discussed the Bid Tabulation for Common Area Cleaning to the Board of Directors.

Debbie Tucker – We went out to bid and Rafael B Cleaners was the low bidder. We have used them in the past and have been thrilled with them. They are very responsive and call me when I reach out to them.

Romell Kidd – How many hours a week do they work?

Gary Dean – We have 8 properties that they clean. They are at a different property every day.

Veronica J. Miranda moved to accept the lowest, responsive, and responsible bid of \$34,500.00 for Common Area Cleaning from Rafael B Cleaners for one year with a one -1-year option to renew at the sole discretion of the Salem Housing Authority. Romell Kidd seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

John A. Boris

Veronica J. Miranda

Carly McClain  
Aaron Paternoster  
Romell Kidd

Vote on Officers – Discussion

The Board Members agreed to hold off on voting for officers until all Board Members could be present in person at the Board Meeting.

Review the Salem Housing Authority By-Laws – Discussion

The By-Laws were reviewed by the Board Members. Those Board Members who had proposed changes sent an email to all of the members of the Board seven (7) days prior to the board meeting. At the Board Meeting the proposed changes were discussed in public as follows:

1. Change the language throughout the By-Laws to be gender neutral. For example, change “Chairman” to “Chair” and change pronouns she/her/and he/him and replace with “they/them.”
2. Article III: Meetings:  
Each Commissioner shall also make a good faith effort to attend at least three (3) Tenant Organization Meetings per year at their convenience.

After discussion, the Board Members agreed with the above proposed changes and the following votes were taken:

Veronica J. Miranda moved to amend the Salem Housing Authority By-Laws language to be gender neutral. For example: Chairman to Chair and replace pronouns she/her and he/him to read “they/them.” Carly McClain seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

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

Nays

Aaron Paternoster moved to amend the Salem Housing Authority By-Laws Article III: Meetings: by adding the following language “Each Commissioner shall also make a good faith effort to

attend at least three (3) Tenant Organization Meetings per year at their convenience.” Carly McClain seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

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

Nays

Carly McClain departed the board meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Establish a Date and Time for Strategic Planning

The Board Members and Cathy Hoog had discussion around planning a strategic planning session for the Salem Housing Authority. Below are the hi-lights of the discussion:

1. Time of year and place to have a Strategic Planning Session;
2. Look into maybe hiring a consultant to help with the Strategic Planning;
3. Who will attend the Strategic Planning Session: Board Members, Staff, LTOs, Tenants and Housing Organizations?
4. What organizations might be helpful to have in attendance for training purposes; Mass NAHRO, Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants, Mel King Institute;
5. Makes sense to have a Mission Statement and then have the Strategic Planning Session;
6. Need to establish goals and then develop a strategy; and
7. Revisit the discussion in a few months

**XII. Other Business/Late Communications**

Cathy Hoog informed the Board that she had one item that she wanted to present to the Board this evening. The Quarterly Write-Offs were included in your Board Packets but this item was not on the agenda.

Veronica Miranda asked the following:

What happened? Was this one tenant or more than one tenant?

Aaron Paternoster – Was it one month or more than one month? Are there any operational procedures to recoup a large balance?



Cathy Hoog – On a quarterly basis the SHA is required to write off unpaid rental balances due to tenants vacating and leaving a balance or tenants who are deceased. It depends on the circumstance, whether we send to a collection agency or not. Cathy said that no matter what the circumstance, the SHA is financially required to write the balances off.

Romell Kidd – asked if it matters what the reason is? It seems as though this has to be done for the SHA’s financial records.

Discussion continued between the Board Members and Cathy Hoog. It was concluded that the Quarterly Write-Offs would be tabled until next month’s Board Meeting.

Veronica J. Miranda moved to table the Quarterly Write-Offs through March 31, 2024 to next month’s board meeting. John A. Boris seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows;

Ayes

Nays

John A. Boris  
Veronica J. Miranda  
Aaron Paternoster  
Romell Kidd

### **XIII. Adjournment**

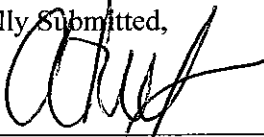
Aaron Paternoster moved that the Board adjourn the Regular Meeting of Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 7:34 p.m. Romell Kidd seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

John A. Boris  
Veronica J. Miranda  
Aaron Paternoster  
Romell Kidd

Respectfully Submitted,



\_\_\_\_\_  
Cathy Hoog, Executive Director



\_\_\_\_\_  
Anne M. Cameron, Executive Assistant

Hi, I'm Teri McDonough, the Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator here at Salem Housing. I just have a brief statement that I'd like to share with you tonight.

As a relatively new staff member, I attended the February board meeting to gain a better understanding of the programming and the budget of the housing authority. As a former social service agency director and current board member of a regional organization, I felt compelled to speak to what I witnessed and experienced at that meeting.

An initial greeting from a tenant in the audience evolved into his accusation of my being "planted" in the audience and mandated to attend the meeting by my director. At first, I was a little surprised by this comment, but then I observed an overall tone & tenor of the meeting to be what I can only characterize as adversarial as the meeting progressed.

I didn't raise my concerns on that evening, as the time for public comment had passed, but it seemed that the format did not hold to any rules of order with a disruptive back-and-forth dialogue throughout the meeting. As reports were given, audience members questioned the SHA's lending assistance to other housing authority's to help the state clear its backlog of vacancies. Again, the accusatory tone struck me as a zero sum position rather than a recognition and appreciation that our lending support to EOHLC for a widely publicized effort to fill these vacancies, may reap benefits for us as an agency down the road.

Part of our role in carrying out the mission to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing to folks is to build bridges – between neighbors, throughout communities and more. It is not the role to sow distrust.

As uncomfortable as it is to stand up here tonight, I stand in support of an incredible team and a visionary leader. The strong team that's been built doesn't just happen. It has been thoughtfully constructed – choreographed through communication and strategic team-building activities; through active support & specific acknowledgment of staff's work. We are encouraged to learn & grow in our respective fields through engaged supervision and training opportunities, clearing a path for career advancement. This leadership promotes a positive work environment, leading to better staff retention and other benefits for the agency.

The presentation by the accountant, Paul, was informative and very importantly, highlighted the mass exodus of directors from public housing. Another reason I'm here speaking tonight, is to share that I have experienced this firsthand. With the departure of our former director in Marblehead, it fell to me, the part-time social worker to carry out supervision of administrative and maintenance duties, process payroll for the staff and more, overseen by our volunteer board chair.

A healthy skepticism and a critical eye of budgets and policies is appropriate and fair. Imparting divisiveness however is risky, reckless and irresponsible and carries consequences for not just our agency, but for the community.

My hope is that the tenants and the LTOs, the staff, and each board member continue to work together on a common mission and vision for Salem Housing Authority. Thank you.