



Cathy Hoog, Executive Director

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**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025
6:00 p.m.**

I. Called Meeting to Order at 6:12 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Present

Romell Kidd
Doneeca Thurston-Chavez
Veronica Miranda

Absent

Aaron Paternoster
(Vacant Seat)

Also Present: Cathy Hoog, Executive Director, Debra Tucker, Assistant Executive Director, Anne Cameron, Executive Assistant, Massiel Garcia, Finance Director, Jacqueline Guzman, Director of Leased Housing, Joshua Bocko, Assistant Director of Public Housing and Luis Lopez, Maintenance Facilities Manager

There were some Maintenance Staff present as well.

III. Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

Veronica Miranda moved to table the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 12, 2025 to the next regularly scheduled board meeting. Romell Kidd seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Romell Kidd
Doneeca Thurston-Chavez
Veronica Miranda

Nays

Veronica Miranda moved to approve the minutes of the Special Board Meeting of March 4, 2025. Romell Kidd seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:



Ayes

Romell Kidd
Doneeca Thurston-Chavez
Veronica Miranda

Nays

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of March 12, 2025. Romell Kidd seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Romell Kidd
Doneeca Thurston-Chavez
Veronica Miranda

Nays

IV. Tenant/Public Engagement

Ann Friedgen – Bertram Terrace, Salem, MA

Ms. Friedgen commented on statistics on Salem's changing demographics, highlighting the need for more senior housing and improvements to existing properties.

Gene Collins – Pioneer Terrace, Salem, MA

Mr. Collins raises concerns about the lack of tenant participation in decision-making, particularly regarding the Creative Grant project, which has resulted in parking and privacy issues.

Ellen Butler – 12B Pioneer Terrace, Salem, MA

Ms. Butler expresses strong objections to the placement of benches and picnic tables near their apartment, citing privacy concerns and requesting their removal.

V. Executive Director Report

Cathy Hoog reviewed her Executive Director Report in detail with the Board of Directors.

- Executive Director Report – April 2025

VI. Communications

- Mass NAHRO Newsletter
- 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 2025)
- Independent Accountant's Report on Agreed Upon Procedure (AUP), State Audit as of and for FYE September 30, 2024
- Questions by Board:
 1. Do Staff get paid overtime for attending Board Meetings?
 2. When did Cathy Hoog become signer on checking account?

VII. Reports of the Committees

There were no reports of the Committees.

VIII. Recommendations of the Chair

There were no recommendations of the Chair.

IX. Report of the Treasurer

Bills

Veronica Miranda moved to table the bills for the period March 1, 2025 through March 31, 2025 as presented until the next regularly scheduled board meeting in May 2025.

Romell Kidd seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Romell Kidd

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez

Veronica Miranda

Nays

Balance Sheet and Statements of Revenues and Expenses

Veronica Miranda moved to table 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 28, 2025 until the next regularly scheduled board meeting in May 2025. Doneeca Thurston-Chavez seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Romell Kidd
Doneeca Thurston-Chavez
Veronica Miranda

X. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

XI. New Business

Comprehensive Modernization (CompMod) Grant Program for State Aided Public Housing

Cathy Hoog presented and discuss the Comprehensive Modernization (CompMod) Grant Program for State Aided Public Housing to the Board of Directors.

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez moved to approve submission to EOHLC of the Comprehensive Modernization (CompMod) Grant Program for State Aided Public Housing. Romell Kidd seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Romell Kidd
Doneeca Thurston-Chavez
Veronica Miranda

Nays

Amendment #20, Contract for Financial Assistance (CFA) 5001 in the amount of \$1,428,473.28

Cathy Hoog presented to the Board of Directors Amendment #20, Contract for Financial Assistance (CFA) 5001 in the amount of \$1,428,473.28.

Romell Kidd moved to approve Amendment #20 to the Contract for Financial Assistance (CFA) 5001 in the amount of \$1,428,473.28. This amendment funds the following and extends the contract dates of service from June 30, 2026 to June 30, 2028.

Scope: Formula Funding FY 2027	Award Amount: \$799,722.55
Formula Funding FY 2028	Award Amount: \$869,263.64
Resiliency Feasibility Study	Award Amount: \$ 25,000.00
Aging in Place	Award Amount: \$ 92,600.00

Reduced \$358,112.91 due to overpayment from projects 258193 and 258166

<u>CFA</u>	<u>Current CFA</u>	<u>Revised CFA</u>	<u>Change</u>
5001	\$21,564,844.46	\$22,993,317.74	+\$1,428,473.28

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Romell Kidd

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez

Veronica Miranda

Change Order #5 for Elevator Repairs at 667-5 in the amount of \$24,000.00 as presented by Delta Beckwith Elevator Company

Cathy Hoog presented to the Board of Directors Change Order #5 for Elevator Repairs at 667-5 in the amount of \$24,000.00 as presented by Delta Beckwith Elevator Company.

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez moved to approve Change Order #5 for Elevator Repairs at 667-5 in the amount of \$24,000.00 as presented by Delta Beckwith Elevator Company. This change order represents labor and materials for additional work to install new break monitoring switches at both elevators at 27 Charter Street (667-5). Veronica Miranda seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Romell Kidd

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez

Veronica Miranda

Casey Lundregan Burns, P.C. – Engagement Letter for Legal Services

Cathy Hoog presented and discussed with the Board of Directors Casey Lundregan Burns, P.C. Engagement Letter for Legal Services.

Veronica Miranda moved to table Casey Lundregan Burns, P.C. Engagement Letter for Legal Services as presented to the next regularly scheduled board meeting. Doneeca Thurston-Chavez seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Romell Kidd

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez
Veronica Miranda

Salem Housing Authority By-Laws – Proposed Changes

Cathy Hoog presented the Salem Housing Authority By-Laws for discussion and to review the proposed changes by the Board of Directors.

(Removal of Assistant Treasurer, moving public comment before meeting minutes, adding consent agendas, minor grammatical edits)

Veronica Miranda moved to make changes to the SHA By-Laws to wit: Removal of Assistant Treasurer, moving public comment before meeting minutes, adding consent agendas and some minor grammatical edits. Romell Kidd seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes

Romell Kidd
Doneeca Thurston-Chavez
Veronica Miranda

Nays

Draft Salem Housing Authority Internal Control Policy

Cathy Hoog presented the draft Salem Housing Authority Internal Control Policy to the Board of Directors for review and discussion. This policy will be presented and discussed at the May board meeting.

Collection of Losses – Write Offs through March 31, 2025 per Public Housing Notice 2017-17

Cathy Hoog presented to the Board of Directors the Collection of Losses – Write Offs Through 03/31/25 per Public Housing Notice 2017-17.

Romell Kidd moved to approve write offs through March 31, 2025, for State Development 667 in the amount of \$8,654.88, State Development 200 in the amount of \$4,270.17, Federal Development in the amount of \$199.00 for a total amount of \$13,124.05 pursuant to Public Housing Notice 2017-17. Doneeca Thurston-Chavez seconded the motion and the **roll call** vote was as follows:

Ayes

Romell Kidd

Nays

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez
Veronica Miranda

New Vote for Section 18 Application to HUD for Federal Public Housing Units (a new vote is needed following a new tenant meeting advising tenants of the program)

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez moved to approve Section 18 Application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Federal Public Housing Units. Romell Kidd seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Nays</u>
Romell Kidd	
Doneeca Thurston-Chavez	
Veronica Miranda	

2025 Payment Standards

Cathy Hoog, Executive Director, presented the 2025 Payment Standards and explained to the Board as to how the Payment Standards are determined. Cathy explained that this is also done on a yearly basis and is required. The Board had some discussion and questions by the Board were answered by Cathy Hoog. Jacqueline Guzman had prepared a nice summary as an explanation for the Board.

Romell Kidd moved to approve the following 2025 Payment Standards, as submitted, effective fiscal year beginning May 1, 2025:

0 Bedroom:	\$2,263.00
1 Bedroom:	\$2,394.00
2 Bedroom:	\$2,837.00
3 Bedroom:	\$3,418.00
4 Bedroom:	\$3,761.00

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Nays</u>
Romell Kidd	
Doneeca Thurston-Chavez	
Veronica Miranda	

Reconsideration of Motion to Engage Conditioning Leaders for Strategic Planning

Doneca Thurston-Chavez moved to recind the motion to engage Conditioning Leaders for Strategic Planning. seconds the motion and the roll call vote is as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Romell Kidd

Doneca Thurston-Chavez

Veronica Miranda

Discussion - Consideration of Engagement for Mediation Services with Conditioning Leaders

The Board engaged in discussion.

Discussion - Consideration of Outside Counsel and Risk Assessment Consultation for the Board as Necessary

The Board engaged in discussions.

XII. Other Business/Late Communications

There was no other business or late communications.

XIII. Adjournment

Doneca Thurston-Chavez moved that the Board adjourn the Regular Meeting of Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 8:56 p.m. Romell Kidd seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Ayes

Nays

Romell Kidd

Doneca Thurston-Chavez

Veronica Miranda

Summary Page for Articles V through XII of the Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of April 9, 2025

2025 Annual Plan and Budget Update/ED Report

Cathy discussed the 2025 annual plan process, which is in motion with the draft to be posted later this month. The public hearing for the draft plan and capital improvement plan is scheduled for June. The 2025 fiscal year budget was accepted by the EOHLC. Cathy also presented a draft internal control policy, which was well-received by the Federal auditors. The maintenance department completed over 334 work orders, and 12 state mob projects are in design or under construction. There were 2 new admissions through public housing, and 1,184 units are under lease for the second program. The FSS program received a quarterly report, and the resident service coordinators received 26 new referrals. The wellness Wednesday series continued, and there were upcoming fire safety talks. A grant application for comprehensive modernization was submitted, and another award for the FSS program was received. The CDBG grant application for technical assistance programs was also submitted.

Cathy discussed the agreed upon procedures (AUP) report, explaining that it the state version of an audit. Cathy also addressed questions about the report, including one about the check sign agreement and the staff's overtime for attending board meetings. She explained that staff are paid for their time, but not for overtime unless they exceed 40 hours a week. Cathy also mentioned her responsibility to manage all fiscal aspects of the housing authority, including access to bank accounts.

Legal Costs and Grant Application

The discussion focuses on legal costs and a grant application. Cathy explains that most legal expenses are related to nonpayment of rent and fraud in federal housing programs, with a backlog from the eviction moratorium. The team is considering ways to reduce legal costs, such as adjusting timelines and using form runners. They also discuss a comprehensive modernization grant application for \$2.6 million to address issues at the Charter Street building, including window replacement and water infiltration problems. The grant is highly competitive, with only one to three projects likely to be funded.

Contract Renewal for Legal Services

The board discusses a contract renewal for legal services with Casey Lundrigan Burns PC. Cathy recommends continuing with the firm due to their ability to handle the high volume of work and the efficiency of having access to multiple attorneys.. They request more data on the usage of different levels of legal staff and further discussion on the possibility of in-

house counsel. The board decides to table the decision on the engagement letter for now, with the understanding that the housing authority can continue to use the firm's services without a formal contract in the meantime.

Housing Authority Bylaw Changes Discussed

Veronica Miranda proposed changes to the housing authority bylaws, including the removal of the assistant treasurer position and the reordering of public comments and meeting minutes. She also suggested adding consent agendas to streamline business. The proposed changes were approved, and Veronica Miranda will send the updated bylaws to the SHA and board members. The draft of the Salem Housing Authority Internal Controls Policy was also discussed, but no decisions were made.

The Board also discussed the collection of losses write-offs and the need for a new vote for Section 18 application to house Federal public housing units. The conversation ended with a discussion on the 2025 payment standards.

Fair Market Rent Update Discussion

Cathy Hoog and Jacqueline Guzman discussed the annual update of fair market rents, which increased by an average of \$20 this year. They also explained the process of determining reasonable rent for units, which involves a rent reasonable analysis based on data collected during an inspection.

The discussion also touched on the engagement of a strategic planning consultant, Conditioning Leaders, and the possibility of engaging them for mediation services. The board decided to rescind the motion to engage Conditioning Leaders for strategic planning and to consider engaging them for mediation services. The cost of the mediation services was not yet determined and would be discussed in a follow-up meeting.

Board Considers Legal Counsel Engagement

The Board discusses the possibility of seeking outside legal counsel and risk assessment consultation. It is clarified that the Board already has an attorney and has the option to seek outside counsel without a formal vote. The discussion reveals some tension regarding the current legal representation and the need for additional counsel, with Veronica Miranda expressing concerns about statements made by the Executive Director. The Executive

Director asserts her right to be present with her own attorney if allegations about her are to be discussed publicly.

Board Approval and Transparency Discussion

Doneeca Thurston-Chavez expressed her desire for Aaron to be part of the decision-making process and for a full board to be present. There was a discussion about the changes made to the employee check signing agreement without board approval, which Veronica Miranda's accusations of withholding information. Cathy emphasized the importance of the board's role in approving Executive Director policy changes and the need for transparency in the day-to-day operations.

Policy Change Approval and Oversight

The board discusses concerns raised by Veronica Miranda about a policy change that was approved without full awareness of the changes made. Cathy, the executive director, stating there was no malintent and the one page policy presented describes the current practice of paper check signing. They agree to table the issue for now and revisit it at a future meeting. Cathy emphasizes that there was no intention to remove board oversight and that all financial information from every department is presented to the board monthly.