



Sarasota Housing Authority (SHA)
269 South Osprey Avenue
Sarasota, Florida 34236

Board Meeting
McCown Towers Board Room
January 31, 2024
4:30 P.M.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Jack Meredith called the meeting of the Sarasota Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to order at 4:32 pm.
- II. **INVOCATION**
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Chair Jack Meredith, Vice Chair Ernestine Taylor, Commissioner John Colón, Commissioner Carolyn Mason and Commissioner Duane Finger

Commissioners Not Present: Commissioner Mark Vengroff

General Attendees: Vice Mayor Jen Ahearn-Koch (out at 5:40 pm), Attorney Rhonda Stringer, Attorney Ric Gilmore (out at 5:25 pm), Joe Chambers, Valerie Buchand, Agnes, Kirkland, Deborah Sargent, Rachel Johnson (in at 5 pm), Sue Ladwig and Rich Larsen-Novogradac (Special Presentations)

SHA Personnel: William Russell, Tanesha Gibbons, Ana Mejia (Special Presentations) and Andrea Keddell
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. SHA Regular Board Meeting – December 6, 2023
 - Chair Meredith put up the minutes from the December 6, 2023, Regular Board Meeting for approval.
 - Commissioner Finger made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- VI. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
 - A. SHA Regular Board Agenda – January 31, 2024
 - Chair Meredith put up the agenda from the January 31, 2024, Regular Board Meeting for approval.
 - Commissioner Colón made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- VII. **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**
 - A. Annual Audit Presentation (Rich Larsen, Novogradac)
 - Mr. Larsen presented, via Zoom presentation, the role of the auditor, key points of the audit and provided a brief overview of the processes of the audit FY Ending 3/31/23. Four major programs were tested, and one issue was addressed and corrected.

- Mr. Larsen reported an unmodified opinion on the financial condition of the authority, the highest level of assurance an auditor can provide. He explained that the authority spent over \$24 million of Federal money, necessitating audits in accordance with Government auditing standards and the uniform guidance, a federal law. Mr. Larsen also highlighted that the audit team found no significant deficiencies in the authority's internal control. He concluded by presenting the financial statements of the authority and its tax credit entities, which had separate audits.
- Mr. Larsen discussed the financial health of a housing authority, highlighting its strong liquidity position with a surplus of \$14 million and operating reserves of 29 months. The authority's overhead cost is about \$5.8 million annually, with an operating income of \$3.3 million.
- Questions were asked and answered. Mr. Larsen also offered to answer questions and address concerns privately should any member desire this. He also gave credit to the Authority staff for their assistance during the audit in providing everything that was requested.

B. Team Member of the Quarter

- Chair Meredith announced Ana Mejia, SHA's HCV Director, as SHA's Team Member of the Quarter and provided the background and reason for her selection. Ana was presented with a plaque and gift card and a commemorative photo was taken.

VIII. PUBLIC PRESENTATION

A. Ms. Deborah Sargent:

- Ms. Sargent provided an update to the board as to the reason for her departure from the board and her request not to renew her lease with Janie's Garden. She states there were miscalculations in her rent, issues with her receiving her security deposit back from Janie's and that no one would speak with her from Section 8 to rectify the situation. She stated that SHA should be looking into these situations for their residents and have better communication.
- Ms. Sargent went on to discuss other issues with residents at other properties and states that the Board has a blind eye and deaf ear to resident issues.
- Ms. Sargent was reminded about the 3-minute time limit, and she stated she will email the board so they would have her address.

B. Ms. Valerie Buchand addressed the board on outstanding issues between SHA and the Resident Council:

- Ms. Buchand presented a report raising concerns about adjustments needed in a Bertha Mitchell resident's apartment, issues with the vending machines being filled and the restrooms continuing to not being open. The issues had been raised about 30 days prior without resolution.
- Ms. Buchand further discussed the financial challenges in providing an Easter dinner for seniors at the Towers and informed SHA of the need to receive funds for this event.

IX. RESOLUTIONS – ACCEPTED BY CONSENT

- A. Res 24-01: Approval of Annual Plan/5-Year Action Plan (CFP FY21, 22, 23 and 24)
 - B. Res 24-02: Approval of Digital Public Notices
 - C. Res 24-03: Approval of Safe Children Coalition MOU
 - D. Res 24-04: Ratification of Formation of McCown Tower Redevelopment SHA II LLC
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- Commissioner Mason made a motion to accept the Resolutions Consent Agenda. Commissioner Finger seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

X. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Central Gardens/22nd Street (Income Limits/Housing Program/Design Options for Balconies)
 - Mr. Russell went over a handout from the board packet and discussed the funding and affordability of Central Gardens. The property, with 39 units, will be funded by various sources such as County ARPA, Home ARP, SHIP/Home and CDBG disaster recovery funds. The funding sources stipulate that the property must be affordable to families under 80% or less of the median income (AMI). Mr. Russell modeled two options for the board, each with a mix of income levels. Option one includes 7 units for homeless vets (30% of AMI), 4 units for very low-income families (50% of AMI), 6 units (65% of AMI), and 22 units (80% of AMI) equaling a total rental income of \$628,476. Option two includes 7 homeless vets voucher units, 32 units at 80% of AMI, and would generate a higher rental income of \$672,576. Mr. Russell also mentioned the possibility of accepting families with vouchers, but they would need to be at 80% or less to qualify. Commissioner Meredith stated that he's inclined to go with option one due to a better mix.
 - The construction of the project is expected to start by October, assuming funding is secured from the County ARPA, HOME ARP HUD, and the state SHIP/HOME. SHA plans to use some of their own funds and will consider deferring half of their developer fees. Mr. Russell also discussed a proposed project for a fourth residential building with 144 units, for which they plan to request \$7 million from the county. However, it was clarified that the funding was not guaranteed.
 - Mr. Russell brought up the balconies for discussion. He discussed the budget and cost-saving measures for the project, such as replacing hollow core planks with wood trusses, which could save up to \$300 to \$1,000. However, after consulting with architects, concerns were raised about the maintenance and operation of exposed wood balconies and walkways. So, the decision was made to discuss the option of submitting the project to the city without balconies, but with the intention of adding them if funding becomes available. The construction of balconies for the project was discussed, with the main point of contention being whether to use concrete or a mix of materials. A suggestion was made to use wood trusses for internal balconies and pass in place on the exterior to avoid exposed wood. The cost of the balconies is estimated to be around \$400,000.
 - Vice Mayor Ahearn-Koch added that she is in support of having the balconies and that they are beneficial to the quality-of-life for the residents.

- Following discussion, it was decided to submit the plan to the city without balconies to allow flexibility in financing and to avoid resubmission if funding doesn't permit balconies.

B. Overtown Mural on East End of McCown Towers

- Mr. Russell discussed the opportunity of having a mural painted on the side of McCown Towers by a diverse group of artists, each contributing their own unique letter in the word Overtown (O.V.E.R.T.O.W.N), depicting the history of Overtown. The board emphasized the importance of soliciting a mix of ethnicities including African American artists for this project. They also expressed the need to be sensitive to the community's needs and accurately represent the history and culture of the area. Mr. Russell expressed support for the idea and anticipated interest in future projects of this nature. Mr. Chambers mentioned having a previous meeting with Walter Gilbert and there was discussion that there should be involvement and collaborations from local artists, including the Black Arts Collaborative. There was also discussion of the need to move forward with the plaques on the buildings.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Board Expense Reimbursement

- Commissioner Colón made a proposal that every Commissioner receive \$100 for every meeting they attend in person to cover their expenses, gas, etc., since they don't get paid.
- Attorney Stringer read the applicable section of the Florida Statute that Commissioners cannot receive compensation for serving on the board, but they are entitled to necessary expenses and could submit a request for reimbursement after incurring expenses. Commissioner Colón added that expenses should not exceed \$100. Attorney Stringer clarified that actual expenses should be submitted for reimbursement with necessary documentation as opposed to receiving money upfront, as that could be characterized as compensation. Mr. Russell raised a question about how other housing authorities handle expenses. Attorney Stringer again reiterated that actual expenses would be submitted for reimbursement versus receiving money upfront for an anticipated expense. Discussion took place that travel expenses are provided to Commissioner's prior to travel based on actual expenses that are or will be incurred for the trip, but not estimates.
- Commissioner Colón made a motion to allow SHA Commissioners to receive an estimated \$100 in travel expense for wear and tear on their vehicle, gas, etc. for every meeting they attend in person. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed 3 to 2 (Commissioners Mason & Meredith Opposed).

B. Board Retreat

- Commissioner Meredith announced that a Board Retreat needs to be scheduled and dates will be sent out for a Saturday morning in March 2024.

XII. PROGRAM UPDATES – ACCEPTED BY CONSENT

- A. Monthly Financial Statements
 - B. Board Committee Meeting Minutes
 - C. Housing Choice Voucher Report
 - D. Housing Management Reports
 - E. Capital Improvement Report
 - F. Resident Services Monthly Report
 - G. Resident Advisory Board/Sarasota Housing Authority Agency-Wide Resident Council (SHAARC) Board Report
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- Commissioner Colón made a motion to accept the Program Updates Consent Agenda. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

XIII. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS / COMMENTS

- A. None.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The Sarasota Housing Authority Board of Commissioners meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.