



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

Board Meeting
McCown Towers Board Room
August 28, 2024
4:30 P.M.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Ernestine Taylor called the regular meeting of the Sarasota Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to order at 4:42 pm.
- II. **INVOCATION**
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Chair Ernestine Taylor, Vice Chair John Colón, Commissioner Jack Meredith, Commissioner Duane Finger (Video), Commissioner Carolyn Mason and Commissioner David Morgan

Commissioners Not Present: Commissioner Turquoise Dillard

General Attendees: Joe Chambers, Rhonda Stringer and Attorney Ric Gilmore (1st half)

SHA Personnel: William Russell and Andrea Keddell (Ana Mejia & Fred Smith-Special Presentation)
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. SHA Annual Board Meeting – July 24, 2024
 - Chair Taylor put up the minutes from the July 24, 2024, Annual Board Meeting for approval.
 - Commissioner Mason made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Morgan seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- VI. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
 - A. SHA Regular Board Agenda – August 28, 2024
 - Chair Taylor put up the agenda from the August 28, 2024, Regular Board Meeting for approval.
 - Commissioner Morgan made a motion to approve the agenda with a requested change by Attorney Gilmore to discuss section XI. New Business first. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- VII. **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**
 - A. Team Member of the Quarter
 - Chair Taylor announced Fred Smith, SHA’s HCV Inspector, as SHA’s Team Member of the Quarter and provided the background and reason for his selection. Fred was presented with a plaque and gift card and a commemorative photo was taken.

VIII. PUBLIC PRESENTATION

- A. Ms. Elvira Prince filled out a form but decided not to speak.
- B. Ms. Susie Williams, Former Waitlist Applicant, re-addressed the board that she was on one of SHA's waitlists, in 2018 and was purged from the waitlist stating she was contacted to supply confirmation of her continued interest, but that she never responded. She states she didn't receive any notices. She is requesting help with housing.
- C. Ms. Marianne Dean, from the Towers/Annex, shared that they do not have a working laundry washing machine in this building and there's talk that it's due to misuse of the machines. She's spoken to the repairmen and is told that it's an electrical issue. If the power goes out, they're unable to reset the circuit breaker. Lightening is also affecting the lights, making them flicker. They've gone a month without having the circuit breaker reset.
- D. Ms. Annelies Ostermann, from the Towers/Annex, reports being harassed by two (2) white, "racist" men (Todd and John) who live in the Towers/Annex. She's states she's on medication, not well and cannot handle stress and her psychiatrist will not prescribe her medicine that will calm her down.
- E. Ms. Pamela Runyon, from the Towers/Annex, is requesting seats be put in the new Gazebo. She also states the back gate needs to be locked. People are getting in and yet they are told it can't be locked. She is requesting a stopper be put on the front door so they can prop it open if they're unloading groceries. Finally, she asked if/when the Annex would be renovated.
- F. Ms. Valerie Buchand, from Janie's Garden, shared that the Resident Commissioner that was appointed to the SHA Board has not been at the meetings. She has only been to one (1) meeting and one (1) function. The current Resident Commissioner teaches school and doesn't have the time and a new one should be appointed. Ms. Buchand reports that the SHA Board allows for space for the City/County Commission on the agenda but not the Resident Council. And now they do not seem to have anyone sitting at the table to speak on behalf of residents. Prior to Commissioner Mason asking to add a report in the board packet, the Resident Council had asked to be added on the agenda. Lastly, the Resident Council would like to hold their own Resident Interest/Council meetings and then the Board can be invited to attend. The residents are a valuable part of these meetings and should be included.

IX. RESOLUTIONS – ACCEPTED BY CONSENT

- A. Res 24-16: Approval of Culture Guide Revisions
 - B. Res 24-17: Approval to Project-Base Units at Cypress II and Lofts on Lemon
 - C. Res 24-18: Approval of Formation of Amaryllis Park Place 4
 - D. Res 24-19: Approval of Transactions Related to Amaryllis Park Place 4
 - E. Res 24-20: Approval of Second Amendment to Ground Lease for APP 4
 - F. Res 24-21: Approval of SHA Agency-Wide Resident Council (SHAARC) MOU & Budget
 - G. Res 24-22: Approval of Conflict of Interest Policy
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- Commissioner Colón pulled Resolutions 24-16 & 24-17. Commissioner Morgan pulled Resolution 24-21.
 - Commissioner Mason made a motion to approve the remaining Consent Agenda, Resolutions 24-18, 24-19, 24-20 & 24-22. Commissioner Morgan seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- A. Res 24-16: Approval of Culture Guide Revisions
- Commissioner Colón questions what the hybrid work hours meant. Mr. Russell informed the board that some positions have been proposed by staff to allow for hybrid work hours to allow those working in those positions to work from home one day a week. Discussion took place on the pros/cons to allowing certain positions the flexibility to try this new process. Commissioner Colón maintained that staff need to be in the office to work together. Commissioner Morgan stated that finance/accounting positions may be able to go to a hybrid working schedule but inquired to our general council their thoughts.
 - Attorney Stringer stated that Mr. Russell, as the 1 employee of the board, is in the best position to gauge what positions could work a hybrid work schedule, and that it's well within the law to enact this type of work schedule. She suggested having a motion/second and discussion before moving forward.
 - Commissioner Mason stated needing more clarification before entertaining a motion and inquired what team members this new schedule applies to. Commissioner Meredith added he'd like to understand the current approved work schedule(s). It was explained that SHA's business hours are 8 am-5 pm, Monday-Thursday, but that most of the staff work 4, 10-hour days (7 am-5 pm) with a half-hour lunch included. Several administrative staff work 4, 9-hour days and a half day on Friday. Mr. Russell added that the current 4-day work week is a benefit that allowed us to hire a highly skilled worker that was making more in the private sector but who found the shortened work week was an attractive benefit.
 - Mr. Russell further explained that there are 2 directors who have been working on a procedure for how the hybrid schedule would work for their departments (HCV & Finance). Potentially it would be tried at one (1) day a week to see how it works. Commissioner Mason and Meredith mirrored that they'd like the change further defined, and the hybrid options outlined in order to approve a policy change. Attorney Stringer mentioned a work-at-home policy could serve to give more structure of what's proposed. Commissioner Morgan agreed with this and suggested it be brought to committee.
 - Commissioner Morgan made a motion to send Resolution 24-16 to an ad hoc committee to discuss the proposed Culture Guide revisions. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion. Commissioner Morgan agreed to Chair the committee. Commissioner Colón and Taylor offered to serve on the committee as well.
 - The motion was voted on and passed 5 to 1 (Commissioner Meredith Opposed).
- B. Res 24-17: Approval to Project-Base Units at Cypress II and Lofts on Lemon
- Commissioner Morgan made a motion to accept the Resolution 24-17. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

- F. Res 24-21: Approval of SHA Agency-Wide Resident Council (SHAARC) MOU & Budget
- Mr. Russell reported that he met with the Resident Council yesterday and had explained that both the proposed MOU and Exhibit A, the Tenant Participation Funds form were taken from the HUD website, so they are model policies approved by HUD. The area for discussion is the additional funds that are being requested by the Resident Council over and above the \$15 per unit that is allocated to them under the HUD guidelines. The HUD regulations state the Housing Authority would receive the other \$10 of the total \$25 allotted per unit. The breakdown is as follows: 100 units at Bertha Mitchell, 100 units at McCown and 47 units at Janie's I & II. This equals 247 units equating to \$3,705 in Tenant Participation Funds.
 - Mr. Russell then went over past funding that has historically been provided to the Resident Council, over and above the \$3,705 funds that are used to pay monthly stipends to the Resident Council members. Each year SHA has funded 1 conference/training for the council and various memberships, sponsorships and miscellaneous requests for supplies and events. Historically SHA has been funding approximately \$14,000 to \$15,000 in additional funding.
 - Mr. Russell further explained that HUD does allow for up to \$200 to be paid in stipends to a Resident Council member (tenant) before it would affect their subsidy as income. If SHA were to meet this threshold it would be an additional \$14,400 added to the \$3,705 of current stipend payments. The Resident Council then listed in their proposed budget the estimated revenue streams they anticipate, as well as amounts requested for various services, activities and events they would like to have budgeted.
 - Commissioner Meredith stated that this would be an instance where a Resident Council presentation to the board would be helpful and asked if these documents were vetted by our attorney. Mr. Russell explained that they are HUD forms and the mandates are approved by HUD but clarified that the \$200 request for stipend funds for the Resident Council members would not be directly related to any additional services being provided by the members.
 - An inquiry was made if the council participates in annual audits. Mr. Russell explained that in the past SHA has paid directly for items for the Resident Council so there was nothing in an actual Resident Council Budget to audit, as everything was budgeted and paid for with SHA funds. If SHA were to agree to a blanket \$5,000, for example, the Resident Council would need to submit a budget for SHA to approve and then they would need to have those funds audited at the end of the year to make sure it was in compliance with the agreement and HUD regulations.
 - Questions were addressed and answered by Ms. Buchand, who was in attendance at the meeting. Ms. Buchand explained the:
 - Senior Activities listed on the budget would include the seniors for all properties but would hold the events at McCown Towers because a majority live there.
 - Outreach listed on the budget are the efforts to get tenants to attend meetings, engage and voting events.
 - Holiday Events listed on the budget are for social events for residents such as Thanksgiving, Easter and Mother's Day and are open to all residents.

- Professional Services & Development listed on the budget would pay for services to assist with advocating for residents, such as accounting, attorney and consultant services. Up to this point the Faces of HUD advocate was initially hired to retain her in a partnership but she's not been paid since, and they've been working with this agency for 10 years.
- \$200 a Month Stipend listed on the budget go to the each elected representative on the Resident Council. Commissioner Meredith inquired about the time each council representative spend a month on council business. Ms. Buchand states she doesn't have exact figures but they encourage council members to attend City and County meetings in addition to council meetings and there's a lot to learn about HUD regulations.
- Further inquiries were made about SHA's responsibilities under the MOU (specifically Page 2, items C. Reporting, D. Training, E. Technical Support and F. Office Space). Mr. Russell responded that given SHA's size it's not required to provide office space but has consistently done so and is a reasonable ask. Ms. Buchand added that all their office computers are refurbished, and they've asked for upgraded machines.
- Commissioner Colón suggested that this be brought to an ad hoc committee for further discussion.
- Ms. Buchand addressed concerns about the adequacy of the current office space, stating that they do not find the current office space comfortable but that they're working with what they have.
- Commissioner Meredith asked about approving the individual items listed under expenses on the budget page. Mr. Russell explained that he's looking for direction from the board on the level participation funds the board wants to provide. The \$3,705 is the required amount and in addition to that SHA has historically provided approximately \$10,000 for travel/training and the total per year has been averaging \$14 to \$15,000 annually for Resident Council expenses. So, to approve the current, listed expense budget would mean an additional \$30,000 annually, plus an additional \$10,000 in stipends.
- Commissioner Mason added that this item has been in the works for a long time, and she'd like to see this item finalized tonight and not have it be brought to an ad hoc meeting. Commissioner Morgan inquired about the income items and what sort of money would be brought in by each line item. Mr. Russell reported that they do not have figures on how much revenue would be made by income line items. Mr. Russell explained the HUD model and how the budget works. Up to this point SHA has paid the full amount of Tenant Participation funds out in stipends and then paid for travel/conferences and other items out of capitol funds. The future will depend on what the board sets and if there's a budget for approval it can be brought before the board at the March board meeting along with the SHA budget(s). Commissioner Colón added that paying for professional services and development of the Resident Council is redundant if SHA is already paying for conference attendance/travel.

* Commissioner Mason made a motion to extend the meeting by 30 minutes. Commissioner Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed 5-1 (Commissioner Colón Opposed).

- Ms. Buchand addressed concerns about redundancy of the Professional and Development Services line item stating this item covers fees for a dedicated attorney for the residents. She asked for the Board to let the Resident Council try to make the proposed budget work before discounting their ability to manage the funds. The Resident Council have been responsible and diligent in their efforts to provide for the residents. Commissioner Mason inquired why legal aide doesn't help residents. Ms. Buchand provided the history of how the issue came about.
- Commissioner Colón provided a point of view that the commissioners are volunteers and don't receive stipends and it doesn't make sense to provide funds for the residents to hire an attorney to fight against the Housing Authority. Ms. Buchand responded that she is just looking for assistance to mediate evictions to prevent those that have extenuating circumstances that can be saved from eviction.
- Commissioner Meredith asks if there are other grants and funding that the Resident Council can try to procure. Ms. Buchand responded on ways for revenue but states they need some start up funds in order to get started.
- Mr. Russell added that the proposed budget is more a of wish list for the Resident Council, and should the Board approve a blanket amount the budget could be amended based on that amount. Commissioner Morgan again inquired about the income items and what sort of money would be brought in by each line item.
- Ms. Buchand reiterated that the Resident Council wants support to operate the Resident Council and a chance to run independently. Commissioner Meredith suggested a budget of \$20,000 and Commissioner Finger questioned where the increase funds would come from to pay for the additional budget amount. It was brought up that SHA could allocate the full \$25 that HUD allows per unit to the Council and that would add an additional \$2,470 annually.
- Commissioner Morgan made a motion to send Resolution 24-21 to the upcoming Resident Interests Ad Hoc committee meeting and discuss the proposed Tenant Participation Budget there. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Taylor. Board members will be informed when the meeting will take place.
 - The Motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Taylor asked that Ms. Buchand reach out to Legal Aide again to see about building a rapport with them. Mr. Russell added that there are 2 agencies that provide legal services, Manasota Legal Aide and Gulf Coast Legal Aide.

X. OLD BUSINESS

A. None

XI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Definition of City Commission Liaison Roll

- Attorney Gilmore addressed the board and provided background information on how he's seen them work for the three (3) housing authorities that they represent who have City Commission Liaisons (SHA, Bradenton & Hollywood). He reported that at the other two (2) housing authorities the liaison's roll is to attend the meeting, answer any questions and bring back/report information to the City Commission. There is no active participation at the other housing authorities by the liaison.

There is also no job description, however, that outlines that role. The issue to be addressed is how to validate allowing input from the City Commission Liaison, a member of the public audience, and to make it fair, since members of the public audience are not allowed to participate outside of the Public Comment section at the beginning of the meeting. Attorney Gilmore added that Vice Mayor Ahearn-Koch has, and continues to be, very supportive of SHA and her participation is of great value to SHA.

- Mr. Russell brought forth the proposal to add an item under Special Presentation that would give the City Commission Liaison an opportunity to communicate with the board, ask questions about the agenda and enable back and forth participation, but still allow the board to conduct their normal business agenda without interruption.
- Commissioner Mason commented that she believes she was the City's first liaison to the SHA Board. She confirmed there was no job description but that she understood the position was to attend the SHA Board Meetings and bring items back to the City and vice versa. She would like to protect the decorum of the board meetings and follow the rules of order, but that she's very supportive of putting a spot on the agenda for the City Commission Liaison to speak on information that they would like to exchange with the SHA Board.
- Commissioner Morgan brought up that it'd been previously discussed by this board to have the President & CEO of SHA, its Chair and/or a designee to attend City Commission meetings. Commissioner Meredith added that perhaps this could be done on a quarterly basis in order to share SHA information with the City. Commissioner Mason agreed with this suggestion as well.
- Mr. Russell reminded the board that Vice Mayor Ahearn-Koch was the one who'd suggested to the City Commission that a letter be sent to the County Commission in strong support of SHA's ARPA and Resilient SRQ funding requests. She also attended the Resilient SRQ meeting and was able to get the mayor to attend and read the letter of support. General agreement was expressed of appreciation towards the Vice Mayor's support of SHA's initiatives during her tenure as the City Commission Liaison.
- Mr. Russell inquired that if the board would want to move forward with adding a spot on the agenda and that in the meantime, he and Attorney Gilmore could work on the description of the City Commission Liaison's role to bring back before the board to review. There was a discussion about the role of the City liaison to the SHA board and which entity would be responsible to outline the role. It was brought up that the liaison is not a member of the board, and that the role is not as an ex-officio member and that perhaps this suggestion could be given to the City Attorney and Clerk.
- Commissioner Morgan made a motion to have WOR and the Chair and/or his designee attend and report at the City & County Commission meetings semi-annually (or more frequently as needed). Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

- Mr. Russell added that Vice Mayor Ahearn-Koch spoke with County Commissioner Smith, and he's expressed an interest in being the County Liaison to the SHA Board of Commissioners.
- Commissioner Mason made a motion to add an agenda item under Special Presentations for the City Commission Liaison to speak should they desire to do so. Commissioner Morgan seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- Mr. Russell will contact Vice Mayor Ahearn-Koch to update her on the outcome of this discussion.

XII. PROGRAM UPDATES – ACCEPTED BY CONSENT

- A. Monthly Financial Statements (Janie's Garden)
 - 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 Finger 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 6:54 pm.