



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

Annual Board Meeting
August 2, 2022
4:30 P.M.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair John Colón called the meeting of the Sarasota Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to order at 4:34 pm.
- II. **INVOCATION**
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Chair John Colón, Vice Chair Jack Meredith, Commissioner Ernestine Taylor, Commissioner Carolyn Mason, Commissioner Deborah Sargent, Commissioner Mark Vengroff and Commissioner Duane Finger (Zoom)

Commissioners Not Present: N/A

Attendees: Attorney Ric Gilmore, City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch, Jon Susce (*The Sarasota Phoenix*), Valerie Buchand and Joe Chambers (Calston Advisors)

SHA Personnel: William Russell, Rick Toney and Andrea Keddell
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. SHA Regular Board Meeting – June 8, 2022: Chair Colón put up the minutes from the June 8, 2022, Board Meeting for approval. Commissioner Finger made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Meredith seconded the motion.
 - Motion was voted on and passed unanimously. Commissioner Vengroff and Mason voted Present.
 - Chair Colón took this opportunity to welcome newly appointed Commissioners, Mark Vengroff and Carolyn Mason.
- VI. **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**
 - A. Team Member of the Quarter
 - Joel Harris, SHA’s Maintenance Supervisor, was announced as SHA’s Team Member of the Quarter. Commissioner Colón read the commendation that provided the background for his selection. Joel wasn’t able to attend but will be presented a plaque and gift card.
- VII. **PUBLIC PRESENTATION**
 - A. Jon Susce, publisher of *The Sarasota Phoenix*, expressed displeasure with the new board appointments.

- B. Valerie Buchand addressed the board and reiterated once again her displeasure with the fact that Ben Gay, a resident at the OCB property, continues to be the brunt of vandalism and harassment from his neighbor. She maintains that nothing is being done and now he's been attacked. She reports he's now receiving a voucher to move, and she hopes the Housing Authority will not block his efforts to find safe housing and employment elsewhere. Ms. Buchand also expressed concern with the Housing Authority utilizing it's reserves from the Towers for the renovation of the Towers.
- C. Jasmine Redmon, a new voucher recipient, addressed the board with concerns that she may lose her voucher because she can't reach and/or communicate with her caseworker. She states she was told she needed to wait 15 days for an inspection and this delay may cause her to lose the apartment.
 - Ms. Redmon was told that the situation will be researched and that she'll receive a call back with an update on what is being done and/or what can be done.
 - *Update Following Meeting: Inspection occurred two days after the board meeting and Ms. Redmon was able to move in that day.*
- D. Attorney Gilmore explained, for the benefit of the new commissioners, that the person(s) making public presentations submit a form and should receive a written response that will be attached to the form and become part of the record.

VIII. NOMINATION & ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- A. Nominations for Chair/Vice Chair:
 - Commissioner Colón took an opportunity to thank City Commissioner Ahearn-Koch for continually attending SHA Board and Committee meetings. He announced that he would not be running for Chair but that he would like to nominate Jack Meredith for Chair.
 - Commissioner Sargent also nominated Jack Meredith for Chair and Commissioner Taylor seconded the nomination. Hearing no other nominations, the nominations were closed.
 - Commissioner Meredith agreed to serve as Chair.
- B. Nominations for Vice Chair:
 - Commissioner Sargent nominated Commissioner Taylor for Vice Chair. Commissioner Finger seconded the nomination.
 - Commissioner Meredith nominated Commissioner Colón for Vice Chair. Commissioner Colón seconded the nomination.
 - Hearing no other nominations, the nominations were closed, and votes were recorded as follows:
 1. Votes for Commissioner Colón
 - 2-Yes: Commissioners Meredith & Colón
 2. Votes for Commissioner Taylor
 - 5-Yes: Commissioners Sargent, Finger, Mason, Taylor and Vengroff
 - Commissioner Taylor was voted to serve as Vice Chair.

IX. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- A. Resident Interest Committee - Commissioner Colón asked if Commissioner Sargent wanted to serve as Chair of the Resident Interest Committee.
- Commissioner Sargent accepted appointment as Chair of the Resident Interest Committee. Commissioner Taylor requested to serve on the committee.
 - Commissioner Meredith inquired if this committee needed to always meet mid-morning, as it's difficult for him to attend in the middle of the workday. Commissioner Sargent said it could be moved to the afternoon.
- B. Development Committee - Commissioner Meredith expressed an interest to remain as Chair.
- Commissioner Meredith accepted appointment as Chair of the Development Committee. Commissioners Finger and Vengroff requested to serve on the committee.
- C. Administration & Finance Committee - Chair Colón asked for interest for the Administration & Finance committee chair. Commissioner Taylor expressed interest in serving as Chair.
- Commissioner Taylor accepted appointment as Chair of the Administration & Finance Committee. Commissioner Finger requested to serve on the committee.
- D. Bylaws Committee – Commissioner Colón asked if Commissioner Mason would serve as Chair of the By-Laws Committee.
- Commissioner Mason accepted appointment as Chair of the Bylaws Committee. Commissioner Sargent requested to serve on the committee.

X. RESOLUTIONS – ACCEPTED BY CONSENT

- A. Res 22-09: McCown Financial Closing
- B. Res 22-10: Authorization of Legal Contract-General Services
- C. Res 22-11: Authorization of Legal Contract-Development Services
- D. Res 22-12: Authorization of Legal Contract-Tenant/Landlord Services
- E. Res 22-13: Approval to Project Base Vouchers in the Courts Contract

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- Commissioner Sargent pulled Resolutions B. 22-10, C. 22-11 and D. 22-12.
 - Commissioner Finger made a motion to accept the remaining consent agenda, Resolutions A. 22-09 and E. 22-13. Commissioner Colón seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on passed unanimously to approve the remaining consent agenda, A. 22-09 and E. 22-13.
 - Attorney Gilmore, given that the pulled agenda items have to do with Legal Services contract awards, excused himself from this section of the meeting.

Discussion for Pulled Consent Agenda Legal Contract Resolutions 22-10, 22-11 and 22-12:

- Mr. Russell explained that an RFP (Request for Proposal) procurement was done, as SHA was in the 5th year of their current legal contract. Per HUD regulation, these services need to go out for proposal every 5 years. SHA stated in the RFP that it has the right to potentially award to more than one firm, based on the proposed services for General Legal Services, Development Legal Services and Tenant/Landlord Legal Services. He reports we've separated the services out similarly the last 2 times SHA has procured legal services and that 10 years ago, in 2012, Attorney Michael Syme's firm was awarded the Development contract and that Saxon Gilmore's firm was awarded the General and Tenant/Landlord contract.

In 2017 Saxon Gilmore's firm received the highest scores and was awarded all 3 legal services contracts. This year, in 2022, the evaluation panel selected a different firm for each of the 3 legal specialties: Saxon Gilmore received the highest ranking for General Services; Fox Rothschild received the highest ranking for Development Services; and the local firm of Shumaker, Loop received the highest ranking for Tenant/Landlord Service.

- Commissioner Sargent inquired why all 3 firms were not local firms. Mr. Russell responded that the development law is very specialized with regard to following HUD regulations and the legal counsel for development and general legal services does not necessarily need to be provided by a local firm if the highest-ranking most experienced firms are from out of state or in a neighboring city in Florida.
- Commissioner Meredith inquired about the cost difference between the firms for the development services, since the highest-ranking firms proposed prices are almost \$20,000 more than the other firms and what makes up score and makes them the highest-ranking firm. Mr. Russell explained that the points awarded by the evaluation panel are only based on subjective criteria and that they are not privy to the price submissions. This is in an effort to make sure the evaluation team is not biased by price and scores based on the services proposed.
- It was discussed if the proposed price could be negotiated with the top-ranking firm seeing that it was so much higher. Mr. Russell stated that this could be looked at and added that with development closings, the Housing Authority gets reimbursed for legal expenses, so all legal invoices at closings are recouped.
- Commissioner Meredith asked to have the board copied on RFP's and Evaluations for professional services such as Legal, Architect and Auditing services. Mr. Russell states there's a document that is set up for each proposal that lists exactly what the Housing Authority is requesting services for and this can be forwarded out to the board when an RFP is going out for proposals.
- Commissioner Colón inquired why a Board member isn't on the evaluation panels. Mr. Russell responded that we'd been advised by procurement specialists that contracts that come before the board for approval should not have a board member on the selection committee. Commissioner Colón states that they could at least be present to hear the discussion. The board was advised that the evaluation panel meetings are publicly noticed and that they can be added to distribution list for the professional services evaluation notices in the future.
- Commissioner Finger inquired why Saxon Gilmore, who's been doing our development legal services for the past 5 year, didn't score as well as Fox Rothschild? Mr. Russell responded that he can't speak to the other panel members but that Michael Syme, was the lead attorney for 5 years prior to this last contract period, so both firms have experience with Housing Authority development projects. Commissioner Finger inquired if SHA could choose a firm other than the one that received the top-ranking. Mr. Russell states this would invite controversy and a possible dispute or protest from the top-ranked firm.
- Commissioner Vengroff asked if the approval of the development contract could be contingent on negotiating the price down.

- B. Res 22-10: Authorization of Legal Contract-General Services
 - Commissioner Mason made a motion to accept Resolutions B. 22-10. Vice Chair Taylor seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
 - C. Res 22-11: Authorization of Legal Contract-Development Services
 - Commissioner Vengroff made a motion to accept Resolutions C. 22-11 with the condition of negotiating a lower price and bring it back before the board for approval. Commissioner Meredith seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on passed unanimously.
 - D. Res 22-12: Authorization of Legal Contract-Tenant/Landlord Services
 - Commissioner Vengroff made a motion to accept Resolutions D. 22-12. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
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- *Following this meeting SHA received additional information that for legal services, since the board works so closely with the legal firm(s), allowing experienced board member(s) and staff to serve in the panel for the specialized legal services is actually recommended. It was further advised that a new panel could be convened with members that are knowledgeable in housing development to re-score the Development Legal Services proposals.*

XI. OLD BUSINESS

- A. None

XII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. None

XIII. PROGRAM UPDATES – ACCEPTED BY CONSENT

- A. Monthly Financial Statements
- B. Board Committee Reports
- C. Housing Management Reports
- D. Housing Voucher Report
- E. Capital Fund Program Report
- F. Resident Services Monthly Report

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- Commissioner Finger made a motion to accept the Program Updates Consent Agenda. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

XIV. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS / COMMENTS

- A. Commissioner Sargent reports that criminal activity that has been happening at OCB is coming into Janie’s Garden. Drug use is blatantly evident around the property. Commissioner Sargent also states that she was disappointed that Valerie Buchand was not re-appointed and she sent an e-mail/letter to the Mayor. She informed the new commissioners of the Certified Commissioner program through the NAHRO association.
 - Microphones or an amplification system for the hearing impaired was discussed and will be researched for the board room.

- B. Commissioner Mason inquired about residents smoking on the sidewalks out front at Amaryllis Park Place and if anything can be done to deter this. Mr. Russell responded that they are looking into putting up some gazebos for the smokers to give them a designated smoking area and checking with the city to see if there are any city regulations about people blocking the sidewalks.
- C. Commissioner Meredith welcomed the new commissioners and asked for follow-up on how SHA can deal with the illegal activity on the properties. William will reach out to the police department and report back on his findings.
- D. Commissioner Vengroff thanked everyone for the warm welcome and stated he has been developing affordable housing for years and that he's proud to be a part of the board. He also commented that having City Commissioner Ahearn-Koch and additional persons of interest from the community attending the meetings is commendable.
- E. Commissioner Taylor welcomed the new commissioners and thanked Valerie Buchand and Dave Morgan for their service. Commissioner Meredith also thanked the past commissioners for their service.
- F. Commissioner Finger expressed great appreciation to Valerie Buchand for her service over the years and that Dave Morgan should be thanked as well. He reminded all that Mr. Morgan provided a great amount of expertise to the agency & board. He states past commissioners need to be recognized in the future.
- G. Commissioner Colón mirrored Commissioner Finger's remarks in thanking former Commissioner Buchand and Morgan and commented he's served on the board with Ms. Buchand for many years and always valued her perspective with regard to the residents. He believes Commissioner Sargent will carry on with that contribution, as well as Commissioner Taylor who comes with expertise as a former housing recipient. Commissioner Colón welcomes the newly appointed commissioners and believes they will continue with the work, mission of furthering affordable housing and bring new energy to the board. Commissioner Colón also welcomes the new Chair and Vice Chair, Jack Meredith and Ernestine Taylor.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

The Sarasota Housing Authority Board of Commissioners meeting was adjourned at 5:51 pm.