

# Scranton Housing Authority

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## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD MEMBERS OF THE SCRANTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOVEMBER 4, 2024

The members of the Scranton Housing Authority met in a regular session at the office of the Scranton Housing Authority in the City of Scranton, Pennsylvania, at 5:00 P.M. on November 4, 2024.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Mr. Hanley called the meeting to order.

#### 1. ROLL CALL:

##### Present

Sarah Cruz  
Megan Alpert  
Julie Schumacher Cohen  
Michael Hanley

##### Absent

Devendrabhai Dave

In addition to the Board Members, those in attendance were Karl P. Lynott, Executive Director; John Cappelloni, Deputy Executive Director, Paula McLane, Executive Assistant, Citizen-Fred Little, Citizen-John Thomas, Citizen-Gus Fahey, Citizen-Laura Rizzi, Citizen-Erlene Braithwaite.

Mr. Hanley stated that he would like to entertain a motion to change the Agenda.

Mr. Lynott: We have a motion to amend the Agenda, to move the Reorganization from New Business to Part 2 of the Agenda. May I have a roll call.

AYESNAYS

Ms. Cruz  
 Mrs. Alpert  
 Mrs. Schumacher Cohen  
 Mr. Hanley

None

Mr. Lynott: With that said the Reorganization under New Business 9 (c) will now be moved as part of an Amended Agenda to Item 2. on tonight's Agenda. The Reorganization will begin with a Motion for the Chairman.

Mr. Hanley made a motion to nominate Sarah Cruz as Chairperson. Mrs. Schumacher Cohen seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

AYESNAYS

Mrs. Alpert  
 Mrs. Schumacher Cohen  
 Mr. Hanley

None

Mr. Lynott: Ms. Cruz, you are the new Chairperson of the Scranton Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, congratulations.

Next, would be the Vice-Chair, may I have a motion for the Vice-Chair.

Mrs. Schumacher nominated Megan McDonough Alpert for Vice-Chair, seconded by Mr. Hanley.

A roll call vote was taken:

AYESNAYS

Ms. Cruz  
 Mrs. Schumacher Cohen  
 Mr. Hanley

None

Congratulations Megan, Vice-Chairperson.

Next would be Treasurer, may I have a motion for Treasurer.

Mrs. Schumacher Cohen made the motion to nominate Michael Hanley for Treasurer, seconded by Ms. Cruz.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYES

NAYS

Ms. Cruz  
Mrs. Alpert  
Mrs. Schumacher Cohen.

None

Congratulations, Mr. Hanley, Treasurer.

Next would be Secretary, may I have a motion for Secretary.

Mr. Hanley nominated Julie Schumacher Cohen for Secretary, seconded by Mrs. Alpert.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYES

NAYS

Ms. Cruz  
Mrs. Alpert  
Mr. Hanley

None

Congratulations Mrs. Julie Schumacher Cohen – Secretary.

Next would be Assistant Secretary. May I have a motion.

Mr. Hanley made the motion to nominate Mr. Devendrabhai Dave as Assistant Secretary,

Seconded by Ms. Cruz. A roll call vote was taken.

AYES

NAYS

Ms. Cruz  
Mr. Hanley  
Mrs. Alpert  
Mrs. Schumacher Cohen

None

That will be the new composition of our Scranton Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. We can return now to the regular Agenda. Next is the Executive Session.

**2. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Lynott: Atty. Doherty is not present so there was no discussion on that. Personnel was discussed.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7, 2024.**

Mr. Hanley made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 7, 2024, seconded by Mrs. Schumacher Cohen.

Mrs. Schumacher Cohen: I have one correction; my name should be Julie instead of Sarah.

Mr. Lynott: Duly noted, we will make the correction, now on the approval of the Meeting Minutes of October 7, 2024, we have our motions.

A roll call vote was taken.

**AYES**

**NAYS**

Ms. Cruz  
Mr. Hanley  
Mrs. Alpert  
Mrs. Schumacher Cohen

None

**4. TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1, 2024 TO OCTOBER 30, 2024.**

Mr. Hanley read the Treasurer's Report.

This report is as of October 30, 2024, the balances in our Checking Accounts and Money Market Accounts are \$1,276,823.19.

Investments made in Certificates of Deposits amounted to \$8,376,689.15. Petty Cash & Magistrate Funds totaled \$11,400.00 for a grand total of \$9,664,912.34.

Paid bills from October 1, 2024, to October 30, 2024, were forwarded to all members.

If there are no questions, may I have a motion to approve.

A motion was made for the approval of the Treasurer's Report by Ms. Cruz and seconded by Ms. Alpert.

**AYES**

**NAYS**

- Ms. Cruz
- Mr. Hanley
- Mrs. Alpert
- Mrs. Schumacher Cohen

**5. SECRETARY'S REPORT**

No correspondence was received.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Cruz: Does everybody who signed the Sign-In sheet want to speak, or is this just an Attendance sheet? Who is here to speak? We will do this in order.

Mr. Lynott: Before we began, there was a motion last month that was approved for a 5-minute time limit, so everyone is clear.

Ms. Cruz: First on our list is Mr. Rick Little.

Mr. Little asked if he could go later.

Ms. Cruz inquired if that was permitted. Mr. Lynott stated that Mr. Little had to speak first. Mr. Little disagreed, stating he was the third person on the sign-in sheet, but he was informed by Ms. Cruz that the first 2 people on the sign-in sheet were attendees only and did not want to speak.

Mr. Little: I need the minutes from the last meeting. (Oct. 7, 2024)

Mr. Lynott stated that we had the minutes prepared for him and he could have them since they were approved at this meeting.

Mr. Little: I'm not prepared, my question is about code enforcement, who does code enforcement for Scranton Housing Authority?

Mr. Lynott: Under that, we are subject to the city rules like everybody else. The City of Scranton would do the inspections for the code enforcement.

Mr. Little: Well, that's what it said in my lease that you are subject to all the laws of the city, county and state. But I go to code enforcement, and it's written that Scranton Housing Authority is exempt which goes against my lease.

Mr. Lynott: I can't speak for the code enforcement office, but we've been subject to their rules and regulations for several years. We have been cited by them for different issues over the years. Like, after a fire, the building or an apartment may be condemned by the code enforcement office, sidewalks, or garbage, outside, different things of that nature. Any type of condemnation is through the city, we don't do that. We do have annual inspections which we conduct internally, and HUD inspects us annually. Code Enforcement is a City of Scranton department, and they enforce at their will. We are subject to it, just so you are clear.

Mr. Little: Yeah, but don't they have sheets that the SHA is exempt, so that's the problem, sometimes you're exempt and sometimes you are not.

Mr. Lynott: Absolutely we are subject to the City of Scranton, no different from any other entity in the city of Scranton.

Mr. Little: So, you say you have inspectors, and if a person violates the inspection they can be evicted?

Mr. Lynott: It's a possibility, depending on the violation. For example, if a smoke alarm was removed and damaged, that is a basis for an eviction. If a toilet overflows, obviously not. Certain items are and certain items are not. Anything to do with smoke alarms or fire protection that is altered with or damaged by tenants are automatically subject to eviction.

Mr. Little: Ok, what if a tenant leaves the water on and floods the apartment below it?

Mr. Lynott: That would be again up to the management, but I would say yes, put them under eviction.

Mr. Little: When you say management, do you mean the manager of that development?

Mr. Lynott: That's correct.

Mr. Little: How would the tenant know who the manager is?

Mr. Lynott: Depending on where you live, you would know the manager of your development. Each development has its own manager.

Mr. Little: Is Debbie Lettieri still a manager, is she still on the payroll?

Mr. Lynott: Mrs. Lettieri has retired.

Mr. Little: Yes, but I did a right-to-know and I see that she was being paid \$70,000.00 a year at the SHA.

Mr. Lynott: I certainly hope not, she retired two years ago I believe.

Mr. Little: Do you have a date when she retired?

Mr. Lynott: I want to say June 1, 2022, but it might have been 2023. I don't know what records you have access to, but she is retired.

Mr. Little: I did a right-to-know and Mr. Cappelloni gave me a print-out and Debbie Lettieri was still on the payroll.

Mr. Lynott: She is not on the payroll; I can assure you of that. The manager up the street is Kris Nesko. Ok, we must move on now.

Ms. Cruz: Next is John Thomas.

Mr. Thomas: I'm just an observer.

Ms. Cruz: Alright next is Gus Fahey.

Mr. Fahey: Hi everyone, I'm from a non-profit organization Valley in Motion, who has an interest in the trails that are currently behind Valley View, Skyview and Hilltop and would like to develop them into walking and biking trails. (Muffled) This forestry land is a very unique situation where 2,000 acres of forestry land is right in the city limits and accessible to the residents of the City of Scranton. My organization is proposing to develop those trails into biking and walking trails if the SHA gives us access. Since I last presented to the board, the DCNR, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resource has acquired a 40-acre tract that connects, right on the other side of (muffled) and goes right up and around Montage Mountain. What my organization would like to do is collect a bunch of stakeholders (?) around the table, the SHA, Geisinger and other important partners like Lackawanna Valley Heritage. The most important partner would be the SHA. We feel this would be an important resource for residents to access. We have this very rare resource of forestry land right beside the city limits. Last time I spoke here, there were issues with maintenance and liability. So those are the kind of issues that we would potentially discuss at the first stakeholders' meeting, what we want to do with this land, what are the possibilities for the usage of this land. I would like to get the SHA on board as an active participant in this project.

Mr. Hanley: So, at this point, Gus, are you asking for a firm commitment from us here?

Mr. Fahey: I'm asking for your participation in this stakeholders' meeting. Then further down the line if all the stakeholders decide that this project is worth pursuing, then we would look for a more formal commitment. The primary stakeholder is Geisinger and what they have proposed is that they retain a certain ability to sell their land, they are most interested in allowing the trail east of (muffled) their property. So, they want to keep the land that is the most marketable in case they want to sell it.

Mr. Hanley: At this point, you are looking for a commitment to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Lynott: I think we can do that.

Ms. Cruz: Do you have any idea when the date would be?

Mr. Fahey: We might have run out of time for this year, but I will try to get one in December.

Mr. Lynott: Gus, if you e-mail me the date and time of their next meeting, we will have someone in attendance. That's as much as I can commit to you right now.

Mr. Fahey: Thank you.

Mr. Hanley asked Mr. Lynott if he could let them know when that meeting is being held in case anyone on the SHA board would like to attend.

Ms. Cruz: Laura Rizzi, are you here just as an attendee? Ok. Next, we have Erlene Braithwaite.

Ms. Braithwaite: I am a resident of Hilltop Manor and I'm here regarding an ongoing water leakage problem that was reported many times to the Manager, Wendy Luciano and the Executive Office. Maintenance did come and inspect the area, but they didn't find any leakage. My problem wasn't really fixed, but my main concern is why I was deprived of my right to speak to or to make an appointment to see the Executive Director. Also, two or three times a year my apartment is infested with bugs. Last time in October, notices were sent to the tenants that the exterminator would be coming on the 8<sup>th</sup>. He never came to my apartment, I waited on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Never came. I called the office and was told that he had come but that I must have been out. I told her that I was home all those days. I am not happy with the way I was treated.

Mr. Lynott: If I can address that, the first time you came down to the main office I spoke to the maintenance and they went over and took video, there was no water leakage. I don't want to get into an argument or discussion with you, but at that point there was nothing else they could do, there was no leakage. They had repaired the elbow under the sink, but as for the infestation, this is the first time I'm hearing about that, but if there is such an issue I will have the head of maintenance be at your apartment first thing in the morning.

Ms. Braithwaite: Can I just say something.

Mr. Lynott: Sure, go ahead.

Ms. Braithwaite: I wrote a letter for a transfer to another project which is Valley View on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September. That problem was from August.

Mr. Lynott: Are you interested in moving? Is that what you want to do?

Ms. Braithwaite: Yes.

Mr. Lynott: How many bedrooms?

Ms. Braithwaite: I would like to get 2 bedrooms.

Mr. Lynott: How many bedrooms do you have now? What is your family composition?

Ms. Braithwaite: Actually, there is 2.

Mr. Lynott: Is there someone living with you on your lease?

Ms. Braithwaite: No, I have a sister who is there. I went to the manager and presented my case to her. I asked if they could give her an apartment. She said no, I would like to add her to my apartment, I don't know what to do, she is sick.

Mr. Lynott: I just want to clarify with you, I sympathize with you but as your lease stands now, it's just you. You are entitled right now to a 1-bedroom. If you are seeking to add your sister on, you would get a form: Addition to Household from your manager, Wendy. She would then send it down to us. Your sister would have to go through the whole entire application process.



At that point in time, you would be eligible for a 2-bedroom. Fill out the Addition to household form tomorrow, the manager will sign it and ship it down to me and we will go from there, ok? The other issues I'm not aware of but the last couple of times when I sent the guys over, they took videos. There was no infestation, no cockroaches or bedbugs, maybe there has been since then, nor leaking pipes. They told you that multiple times because you called multiple times, and they discovered nothing further. Now, if you want to apply with your sister we can accommodate you, but the men have done their jobs. I think I did mine, because I spoke to them directly that day and they sent me the video.

Ms. Braithwaite: The maintenance told me that when the water leaks call them, I called, and nobody came.

Mr. Lynott: I'll send someone tomorrow to check for both. We will address both in the morning, are you going to be home?

Ms. Braithwaite indicated she would be home.

Mr. Lynott: Ok, and we will get that form filled out if you are interested, addition to the lease. Ok?

Ms. Braithwaite: Yes, thank you.

## **7. COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **7.(a) Chairman Report.**

Ms. Cruz: I've only been Chairperson for about a half an hour. I'd like to say thank you to my colleagues for entrusting me with this very momentous duty. I hope to fulfill the role of Chairperson of the Scranton Housing Authority. Thank you all for being here. Especially to the lady in red, my mother. I hope to do well by the residents.

### **(b) Executive Director Report.**

**Mr. Lynott read the reports:**

#### **UTILITY REPORT**

The cost for gas consumption in October was \$22,894.90 as opposed to the cost in September at \$36,379.54.

The water cost for the month of October was \$60,768.62 as opposed to the cost in September at \$84,525.20.

The electric cost for the month of October 2024 \$61,533.04 as opposed to the cost in September at \$69,957.48.

The sewer cost for the month of October was \$125,760.38 as opposed to the cost in September at \$163,196.86.

The total cost for utilities for the month of October was \$270,956.94 and for September was \$354,059.08.

### **DELINQUENTS**

October (294) \$226,707.97 as opposed to September (332) at \$232,202.20 and to August (342) \$232,169.32.

We are making steady progress in getting the delinquent accounts down.

### **CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS STATUS – November 1, 2024**

The following will serve as an update on the status of the construction projects at the Scranton Housing Authority, as of the above stated date provided by Vince Alu, the Director of Capital Improvements.

#### **Renovations Buildings 13 & 14 at Valley View**

According to the construction schedule, the project is proceeding on schedule.

#### **HVAC Construction**

The contractor has confirmed all the work has been completed. Final walkthrough will be done by 10/30/24. Punch list will be done if work still needs to be completed.

#### **General Construction**

The contractor has confirmed all the work has been completed. Final walkthrough will be done by 10/30/24. Punch list will be done if work still needs to be completed.

#### **Building #1 and #2**

The EIFS foundation covering is done on Bldg. #1.

#### **Building #13**

The contractor has confirmed all the work has been completed. Final walkthrough will be done by 10/30/24. Punch list will be done if work still needs to be completed.

### **Building #14**

The contractor has confirmed that all the work has been completed. Final walkthrough will be done by 10/30/24. Punch list will be done if work still needs to be completed.

### **Electrical Construction**

The contractor has confirmed that all the work has been completed. Final walkthrough will be done by 10/30/24. Punch list will be done if work still needs to be completed.

### **Plumbing Construction**

The contractor has confirmed that all the work has been completed. Final walkthrough will be done by 10/30/24. Punch list will be done if work still needs to be completed.

### **Renovations Building #12 – Valley View**

Abatement for Bldg. #12 is 95% complete. The contractor should be finished by Halloween, 10/31/24.

### **Site Work for Building #13 and #14**

We received a detailed schedule from KR Construction, and they have started the site work for Bldg. #13 & #14. The landscape contractor's work should be complete by 10//29/24. KR Construction has the ADA curb cuts, curbs and sidewalks along North side street have completed. The South side sidewalks and ADA ramps have started. KR Construction has completed the soil and concrete test and is still waiting for results. KR Construction have the work on the dumpster pad scheduled, no time frame was given. The parking area on the North side is complete. The installation of the EIFS and brick is delayed, KR Construction is addressing the issue.

### **Security Cameras – Jackson Terrace**

A contract was awarded on September 9, 2024, to the Higher Information Grp, under a state contract for \$62,484.73 to install security cameras at the Jackson Terrace development. HIG is working on getting all permits for the work.

### **Riverside Apartments**

A contract was awarded on September 9, 2024, to the Higher Information Group under a state contract, for \$63,843.22 to install security cameras at the Riverside Apartments development. IIG is working on getting all permits for the work.

That concludes the Construction Report.

**7. (c) Solicitor Report.**

Atty. Doherty was not present.

**7. (d) Apartments. (October 1, 2024, to October 31, 2024)**

Mr. Lynott: Under our Public Housing Program, we have an A.C.C. of 1,214 units with 1,174 units under effective lease. There are forty (40) vacant apartments, in which Twenty-seven (27) vacant units are under modernization, vacant approved by HUD.

Under our Section-8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, we have an A.C.C. of 1,050 units with 751 units under effective lease.

Total apartments under effective lease by the Scranton Housing Authority as of October 31 are 1,925 out of an A.C.C. of 2,269. That concludes the Apartment Report.

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.**

No Unfinished Business.

**9. NEW BUSINESS.**

**9. (a) Resolution No. 25-2 – Section 8 Management Assessment  
Program Certification**

Mr. Lynott read the Resolution:

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has established a Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP); and

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has developed SEMAP to objectively measure Public Housing Agency Performance in key Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance Program areas; and

WHEREAS the Scranton Housing Authority in conformance with SEMAP has reviewed, assessed and completed the SEMAP Certification Form HUD-52648; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Scranton Housing Authority Board of Commissioners do hereby certify that the SEMAP Certification Form, attached to and made a part hereof, is true and accurate.

Mr. Lynott: It is my recommendation that the Board of Directors pass Resolution No. 25-2.

Ms. Cruz made the motion to pass Resolution No. 25-2, seconded by Mrs. Schumacher Cohen.

A roll call vote was taken.

AYES

NAYS

Ms. Cruz  
Mr. Hanley  
Mrs. Alpert  
Mrs. Schumacher Cohen

None

**9. (b) Resolution No 25-3 – Ratification of Union Contract**

Mr. Lynott read the Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Scranton Housing Authority has, for a number of months, been negotiating with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union Local No. 81 for the purpose of reaching a collective bargaining agreement for employees of the Scranton Housing Authority who are members of the bargaining unit; and

WHEREAS, the said parties have agreed to the terms of a contract which reflects that the length of this new agreement shall be for a period of five (5) years commencing November 1, 2024 and that a four percent (4%) wage increase shall take place in the first year of the contract, or a \$2,000 dollar increase to the current annual base salary. The four percent (4%) wage increase shall increase or decrease for the second, third, fourth and fifth year will be at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners who will consider a wage survey for Unit A employees and local comparability for Unit B employees; and

WHEREAS, it is deemed to be in the best interest of the Scranton Housing Authority to enter into this negotiated agreement with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union Local No. 81; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the proper officers of the Scranton Housing Authority shall enter into a collective bargaining agreement with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union in accordance with the agreement reached between the representatives of the Scranton Housing Authority and representatives of the Union.

Mr. Lynott: It is my recommendation that the Board of Directors pass Resolution No. 25-3.

On the question:

Mr. Hanley: So as clarification, this Contract covers all the employees of the Scranton Housing Authority except for John, Karl and Scott.

Mr. Lynott: That is correct.

Mr. Hanley: So in the Executive Session meeting, we discussed this with our Solicitor how to handle that under a separate agreement.

Mr. Lynott: Yes, that's accurate, we are not members of the union.

Ms. Cruz made the motion to pass Resolution No. 25-3, seconded by Mrs. Alpert

A roll call vote was taken.

AYES

Ms. Cruz  
Mr. Hanley  
Mrs. Alpert

NAYS

None

Mrs. Schumacher Cohen

**10. PERSONNEL**

Mr. Lynott: There have been no changes in Personnel.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Cruz: If there is no other business to discuss, I'll make a motion to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Mr. Hanley. The meeting was adjourned.

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**Julie Schumacher Cohen, Secretary**