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LOWELL HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
FEBRUARY 9, 2022

Mercier House
21 Salem Street
Lowell, Massachusetts

--- Reported by Jacqueline P. Travis ---

1 Board of Commissioners:

2 Philip L. Shea, Chairman

3 Joanie L. Bernes, Commissioner

4 Mony Var, Commissioner

5 Matt Marr, Commissioner

6 Rodney Elliott, Commissioner

7

8 Lowell Housing Committee:

9 Gary K. Wallace, Executive Director

10 Adam J. Garvey, Assistant Executive Director,
11 Chief Operating Officer

12 Sherry Giblin, Chief Financial Officer

13 Kevin J. Murphy, General Counsel

14

15 Presentations by:

16 Tha Chhan, Director of Leased Housing

17 MaryAnn Maciejewski

18 Denise Ryan

19 Rita Brousseau, Chief Procurement Officer

20 Jonathan Goldfield, Capital Asset Manager

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Mr. Shea: I talked to Mony. Mony's on his way. It's tax season. Actually, he's here. We can open up the meeting. And with that being the case, we'll ask the clerk to call the roll.

Mr. Wallace: Chairman Shea.

Mr. Shea: Present.

Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Var.

Mr. Var: Here.

Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Bernes.

Ms. Bernes: Here.

Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Marr.

Mr. Marr: Here.

Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Elliott.

Mr. Elliott: Here.

Mr. Wallace: All present.

Mr. Shea: Yes. Thank you.

With respect to the item that's in front of us, the next is Item Number 2. Before we go to Item Number 2, the Chair would like to take up Item Number 6, which is the report of the Chair. I'd like to just take up Item Number 6, if I could.

And with respect to Item 6 is the report of

1 the Chair. I'd like to just report for the record a
2 couple of events.

3 I want the record to indicate that Vice
4 Chairperson of the Lowell Housing Authority Robert
5 McMahon will no longer be with us. He has been
6 replaced. And I just want support from counsel that
7 -- former councilman Rodney Elliott will be here as
8 the new appointee of the Governor.

9 And I want the record to indicate that I
10 reached out to Bob McMahon on a couple of occasions
11 and I've had no luck in talking with him. But I want
12 to properly reflect the more than 20 years of service
13 that Commissioner McMahon gave us. 22 years of
14 service.

15 I was at City View yesterday and I noticed a
16 plaque on the wall, he served on the Board since
17 2002. And I understand.

18 So we move on to the March meeting, which is
19 our annual meeting, which is something that we hope
20 to get on and over with quickly, our annual meeting.
21 But I'd like to say that the Housing Authority would
22 like to have a Bob McMahon day to honor his presence
23 here on the Board. Because we all know that he was
24 very involved with -- particularly with Joanie and

1 the residents, he was very involved with that.

2 With respect to capital planning, he was
3 always on the phone talking to me about what was best
4 for the employees. So we just want to properly have
5 in the record an acknowledgment of his service to the
6 Housing Authority. I think that's a very, very
7 proper thing to do.

8 And with that I'd also like to acknowledge
9 and welcome to our Board our new delegate who was
10 appointed to serve by the governor. And Rodney is a
11 really good lawyer, and I want to acknowledge his
12 presence and look forward to working with him in
13 respect to the only thing we're here for is to try to
14 make the Authority a better place for the employees,
15 and more importantly, for the residents. And that's
16 the only reason we work here.

17 And as I said many, many times, so you heard
18 this record before, if I come to a conclusion that I
19 cannot be of help to the Authority, then I will leave
20 when that moment comes. I've got 2 years and 3
21 months and 14 days to go. I want to serve out my
22 term.

23 But I said here the last couple of years,
24 you heard that tune before, if I come to the opinion

1 that I cannot be helpful to the residents of the
2 place I grew up in, across the street, then I'll
3 leave. I'm 80 years of age. I can say Bob McMahon,
4 who's 82 incidentally, I can say that we served --
5 we've served the public well.

6 With that being the case, I certainly want
7 to acknowledge -- also acknowledge our new member,
8 Rodney Elliott, the young man that I met so many
9 years ago I couldn't remember. I lost count. So
10 with that being the case, I just wanted that to go
11 into the record because it's important.

12 And I have a report from the Chair with
13 respect to some other items later. However I did
14 want to properly acknowledge Bob's service and I
15 wanted to properly acknowledge Rodney's entrance to
16 our hall.

17 So with that being the case I would invite
18 Commissioner Elliott, if you'd like to say a few
19 words, this would be the time to say it.

20 Commissioner Elliott.

21 Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm
22 excited to be here. LHA has done so many good things
23 throughout the years, providing vital services and
24 housing for the people of Lowell. Interesting, I

1 started working -- certainly with calls from my boss,
2 I had a marketing interview with my boss, used to get
3 me up at the crack of dawn to get me into the State
4 House.

5 Overall, it's good to see you, Mr. Chairman.
6 I'm looking forward to it. Gary, Mr. Wallace and I
7 go back many, many years. Back in the Phil Shea
8 days. Thank you for welcoming me and I'm looking
9 forward to this.

10 A lot of good things have been done. I
11 served on the city council and former mayor for 24
12 years, working closely with Gary in housing. Mr.
13 Wallace in housing. A lot of good things have
14 happened, a lot more good things will happen, as
15 Mr. Shea mentioned.

16 I hope -- I feel like I can bring my
17 expertise in other areas, not in particular housing,
18 but being involved with the Housing Authority I've at
19 least collaborated with the city. I believe it's a
20 good time, it's an exciting time. I certainly know
21 there's a lot of need. Housing is a number one
22 priority in this city, this state, this nation.

23 So thank you, I'm looking forward. Thank
24 you for welcoming me. Nice to meet our other fellow

1 members of the Board of Commissioners, and that's it.

2 Thank you.

3 Mr. Shea: Thank you, Commissioner Elliott.

4 And also, last but not least, under this section of
5 the minutes I'd like to recognize the fact that our
6 committee member Matt Marr was elected -- re-elected
7 last night by re-appointment, and the Chair and the
8 Board would like to congratulate you on your
9 observance. We look forward to serving with you for
10 the next several years. Congratulations.

11 So with that being the case, I would ask
12 that a motion be taken to accept my remarks and
13 placed in the file by Commissioner Mony Var, seconded
14 by Commissioner Matt Marr.

15 The clerk will call the roll.

16 Mr. Wallace: Chairman Shea.

17 Mr. Shea: Yes.

18 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Var.

19 Mr. Var: Yes.

20 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Bernes.

21 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

22 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Marr.

23 Mr. Marr: Yes.

24 Mr. Wallace: And Commissioner Elliott.

1 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

2 Mr. Shea: And with that -- I'd actually
3 like the record to acknowledge the fact that our
4 general counsel, Attorney Kevin Murphy is present
5 tonight. Thank you.

6 I hope you know what's going on with these
7 so we can get help.

8 So Item Number 2, resident correspondence.
9 There isn't any?

10 Mr. Wallace: No. No correspondence.

11 Mr. Shea: Item Number 3, resident
12 organization. There isn't any?

13 Item Number 4, subcommittee report. I can
14 make a report, and I will make it for you -- since
15 the meeting itself took place in four and a half
16 hours last night, I will condense it.

17 The subcommittee on finance yesterday at
18 1:30, and we met with three different groups. The
19 groups we met with were the property managers, the
20 hardest working employees we have. We also met with
21 Tha Chhan, who's the chief administration officer
22 with his assistant chief officer -- administration
23 officer Allison Patel. And we also met with union
24 officials to discuss their needs and looked at some

1 of their concerns. And with that we met with the
2 Executive Director and his assistant, Adam Garvey, to
3 go over the various topics that we discussed with the
4 three groups.

5 In essence, just to abbreviate the
6 discussions that we had with the various -- our
7 meeting with the property managers was a -- there was
8 only one reason we had -- actually, there were two.
9 When we met with the managers back in August to
10 discuss the budget, Mony and I met with them and said
11 to them we'll talk to them in February. I thought
12 the other day, guess what. This is the month of
13 February. So Mony and I then went ahead to hurry up
14 to meet with these groups only to keep our
15 commitment. That we had a great meeting with the
16 five managers. We had a good dialogue in an hour in
17 15 minutes with respect to some of their thoughts and
18 some of their needs, and some of the things that came
19 up. And that was basically it, whether it be a
20 security officer or whether it be some other items of
21 concern.

22 Well I can only tell you, after an hour and
23 15 minutes, that I think we made a lot of headway.
24 We thought the property managers felt very good and

1 glad to meet with the subcommittee.

2 So that meeting took over. That was over
3 and done with. And after that we met with Tha Chhan,
4 who's the chief administration officer who's here,
5 because he's here at every meeting, and his
6 assistant, Allison Patel, and we really discussed the
7 move, the move to the new headquarters that we expect
8 to get into next month at the courthouse.

9 Allison and Tha, the both of them
10 enthusiastically supported everything the Director
11 and his staff had done. And Tha was very happy with
12 how far we got along. Particularly with --
13 particularly -- for a nontech person like myself,
14 particularly with the connections with the cable
15 work, which is only 50 percent done.

16 However, Allison felt as Tha felt, that
17 things couldn't be going better. And I know when I
18 was talking to Rita, I know the Director told me the
19 same thing, high approval rating. And we ordered
20 some furniture, which we put in our budget, and they
21 were very thankful for the effort that everyone's
22 given them. And Tha's here, he can talk about it
23 later on, but we had a very pleasant meeting. And
24 incidentally, the both of them thank the chairman of

1 the subcommittee, which he didn't have to do because
2 it's a committee. They were appreciative of the
3 enumeration efforts that we made, at the enumeration
4 of pay raises and bonuses that we gave to their
5 staff. And they together with -- basically with the
6 whole graph of employees, they're very enthusiastic
7 with respect to the level of bonuses and pay raises
8 they received. Which I told them we didn't do
9 anything for them that they didn't deserve. And I
10 think that was the feeling of the subcommittee. That
11 certainly was the feeling of the whole committee for
12 that matter.

13 So that meeting was over and then came in
14 the three meetings -- the three members of the union
15 came in to discuss with us and of course their --
16 those guys work hard. They are all pretty good guys.
17 And so we had a very candid conversation about a
18 little bit of this and a little bit of that. And a
19 couple of their needs they're talking about I think
20 we could take care of at the budget. But I think the
21 discussion with the Director, the Assistant Director,
22 you know, they were talking about a plumber, they
23 were talking about an electrician. So we're going to
24 have a further discussion with the union. But they

1 were very thankful too of the committee, because of
2 the importance of the increase. You know, the Gen
3 Air contract going with the additional year increase,
4 we gave them an increase. And so they seemed to be
5 very content with the direction that the Board has
6 taken on behalf of the union employees.

7 So with that being the case, members all
8 over the committee then met with the Director and the
9 Assistant Director to hash over some of these items
10 that were discussed during these three hours. And in
11 over an hour and a half we discussed it and I passed
12 it off to the Director, some of the thoughts that
13 came out of those draft meetings. And so that was
14 very fruitful. And little did I know, I looked at
15 the clock and it was like obviously time to get out
16 of here. And that was it.

17 So that basically -- I know Commissioner
18 Mony Var is very helpful to me as chairperson of the
19 finance committee. I know Mony, you seem to think
20 that we did a good job. And I think that's
21 important.

22 And so that's the committee on subcommittee
23 -- that's the finance committee on subcommittee
24 report. And I hope all three groups that -- I don't

1 know what the future is, who the next chairman of the
2 subcommittee will be. That will be decided next month.
3 Or the makeup of the committees will probably be
4 decided next month, in April. But I told him if I
5 was still on the subcommittee, I told him that I look
6 forward to meeting them again come August. Because I
7 do think -- particularly before the budget session,
8 which is generally in September, so we meet at the
9 budget. So I'd like to know that if I was on the
10 subcommittee I would advocate to meet with them
11 again. All three parties again in the month of
12 probably August. And in order that we could work
13 together on the budget.

14 And once again, I can only tell you that
15 they're all very thankful to have that opportunity.
16 So I think it's all good stuff and I want the
17 Director to know what they've done, particularly with
18 respect to Tha Chhan and the organization. So that's
19 a long-winded report from the subcommittee, but we
20 were there for quite a while.

21 With that being the case, if there's
22 questions I'd be glad to answer them. If not, I
23 would ask the roll call to be shifted for comments of
24 the chairman of the subcommittee on finance and I

1 would say that Mony Var would make the motion to
2 accept that with Commissioner Elliott seconding, the
3 clerk will call the roll.

4 Mr. Wallace: Chairman Shea.

5 Mr. Shea: Yes.

6 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Var.

7 Mr. Var: Yes.

8 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Bernes.

9 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

10 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Marr.

11 Mr. Marr: Yes.

12 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Elliott.

13 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

14 Mr. Wallace: That's five yeas.

15 Mr. Shea: Thank you.

16 The next item on the agenda is the finance
17 and audit report. I see with us our Chief Financial
18 Officer Sherry Giblin. And Mrs. Giblin, will you
19 give us the report.

20 Ms. Giblin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 The Authority's operating statements for the
22 period ended December 31st, 2021, have been provided
23 to the Board for their review. After our first
24 quarter of fiscal year '22 most programs are

1 exceeding budget estimates to date. While this is a
2 positive trend, it is typical at this time of the
3 year as many of our administrative and maintenance
4 expenses trend lower in the first quarter of the
5 year. The majority of our capital and extraordinary
6 items have not been realized to date. Rent and
7 subsidy estimates across the four AMPs are being met
8 or exceeded. Final operating subsidy proration level
9 for calendar year '21 was 96.74 percent, exceeding
10 our budgeted estimates of 95 percent.

11 Solar net meter credit revenue is under
12 budget due to the reversal of prior year accruals.
13 This is entirely a timing issue and will correct
14 itself.

15 Net meter credit rates have risen from a
16 budgeted of 18 cents to 23 cents.

17 The 2021 capital fund is pending
18 environmental review and has not been released
19 through December. This causes a budget variance in
20 our other income.

21 Most expenses across all AMPs are within
22 budget tolerance after the first quarter. Utilities
23 remain under budget, but this will change as the
24 winter progresses and we receive quarterly water and

1 sewer bills. Insurance and benefits are under budget
2 pending the quarter ended December payment of group
3 insurance costs.

4 Our other general expense category is also
5 under budget in three out of four federal AMPs due to
6 collection loss deferral. AMP 3 is over budget in
7 protective services due to a third-party contracted
8 security service. All AMPs are exceeding budgeted
9 gains at this point, but this is not expected to
10 carry throughout the year.

11 We currently have a forced account union
12 plumber covering from a long-term workers'
13 compensation leave of absence which we anticipate
14 will cause budget overages in plumbing and heating
15 services as well as maintenance, labor in our central
16 office call center.

17 In addition, we are seeing significant price
18 increases in materials and supplies, as well as
19 contracted services that will impact the budgets
20 going forward.

21 Calendar year 2022 operating subsidy forms
22 are due to HUD on February 14th. The Authority has
23 calculated it's final operating fund subsidy
24 eligibility. The Authority is eligible for

1 \$7.9 million before proration. While currently
2 unknown, it is anticipated that the final proration
3 for calendar year '22 will be approximately
4 95 percent. I have provided the Board with an
5 executive summary of the operating fund eligibility
6 calculations for calendar year '22.

7 The Authority was successful in its request
8 for a rate reduction incentive for our third-party
9 electricity supply rate locks. These contracts
10 yielded \$12,000 in savings which the Authority will
11 be permitted to retain a hundred percent.

12 Our annual financial audit is in progress
13 and field work wrapped up this week. Final audited
14 financial statements are due to be submitted to HUD
15 by June 30th, 2022. I will provide the Board with a
16 copy of the audited financial statements and audit
17 reports once they are released.

18 At this time I'll take any questions from
19 the Board.

20 Yes, Commissioner Elliott.

21 Mr. Shea: Any member of the Board of
22 Commissioners have a question for our chief financial
23 officer? I'd like to recognize Commissioner Elliott.

24 Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1 Ms. Giblin, can you -- you went over this,
2 I'm just was curious.

3 Ms. Giblin: Sure.

4 Mr. Elliott: In relation to the forced
5 account plumber, it's a long-term workers' comp. So
6 what's the status of that?

7 Ms. Giblin: We have an employee that's out
8 on workers' compensation, so a workers' comp claim.
9 So we brought in a union plumber from the union hall
10 to cover that position. His pay rates are higher
11 than our pay rates.

12 Mr. Elliott: Okay. So do we have any
13 expectation on when it's going to be settled or if
14 this is going to provide a deficit?

15 Mr. Wallace: I think it's been settled,
16 right? He's back to work this week so we will be
17 laying off the forced account plumber.

18 Mr. Elliott: Okay. Good. No, this is a
19 good explanation. I'm a hundred percent familiar
20 with the solar. Let me iterate the whole solar
21 SRECs, not on the city level, but -- so could you
22 just explain the prior reversals on the approvals?

23 Ms. Giblin: So we -- at the end -- our
24 fiscal year ends in September. So our final -- the

1 credits that come in, they cover mainly a little bit
2 of September and then October. So we have to reverse
3 those. So we're always a month behind the budget
4 really.

5 Mr. Elliott: That's fine. That makes
6 sense.

7 I think that's it, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

8 Mr. Shea: Are there any other questions by
9 any member of the board?

10 I'd like to just state the comment, one of
11 the items that I talked to about with the Director --
12 Mony and I talked about to the Director was to give
13 the directors -- the management -- the property
14 managers a runoff every month of their budget. And
15 this was -- we mentioned it. That would just be
16 helpful to the managers to understand or to guide
17 them specific with their budget. I guess you used to
18 do that years ago.

19 Ms. Giblin: Yes.

20 Mr. Shea: So could we invent that again?

21 Ms. Giblin: Okay.

22 Mr. Shea: That would be helpful.

23 Ms. Giblin: Absolutely. I'll get these out
24 to them tomorrow.

1 Mr. Shea: It's something that just came to
2 my mind, just one of the items, that the managers
3 wondered if they could see their budget. They could
4 see how much they spend, what's in their budget would
5 help them. And the more information we can give
6 them, that would help a lot.

7 Ms. Giblin: Sure.

8 Mr. Shea: Okay. With that being the
9 case -- I notice there is no other questions. With
10 that being the case, motion by Commissioner Elliott,
11 seconded by Commissioner Joanie Bernes to accept the
12 report of the Chief Financial Officer. And the clerk
13 will call the roll.

14 Mr. Wallace: Chairman Shea.

15 Mr. Shea: Yes.

16 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Var.

17 Mr. Var: Yes.

18 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Bernes.

19 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

20 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Marr.

21 Mr. Marr: Yes.

22 Mr. Wallace: And Commissioner Elliott.

23 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

24 Mr. Shea: Thank you.

1 Mr. Wallace: Five yeas.

2 Mr. Shea: Next is Item Number 7.7.1, motion
3 to approve expedited regulatory waivers for the
4 housing choice voucher program. And I see with us,
5 once again, our Chief Administration Officer Tha
6 Chhan is here.

7 Tha, if you want to come up and say a few
8 words with respect to this, I will follow up by
9 asking the panel a couple of questions.

10 Mr. Elliott: Mr. Chair, I think you skipped
11 number 7.

12 Mr. Wallace: Executive Director's report.
13 It's a brief report, but I'll be happy to give it.

14 Mr. Shea: I thought you didn't have a
15 report.

16 Mr. Wallace: I do.

17 Mr. Shea: Okay. I misunderstood you.
18 Okay. Thank you.

19 Mr. Wallace: Briefly.

20 Mr. Shea: Please continue.

21 Mr. Wallace: Sure. So I'm excited tonight
22 to announce the hire of Kelsey Tower as our new
23 family self-sufficiency coordinator. Kelsey joins us
24 from the Department of Children and Families where

1 she provided case management to children, families
2 and young adults. She's a licensed social worker and
3 holds a bachelor's degree in social work. As you
4 know, our FSS program is a valuable resource to our
5 residents, and we're confident that Kelsey will serve
6 the participants well and work to expand the program.

7 She's actually here tonight in the audience
8 and I'd like her to stand up and just say hello.

9 Mr. Shea: Oh for Pete's sake.

10 Ms. Tower: Hi. It's great to be here.
11 Thank you for having me. I'm very excited for, you
12 know, what we have and to move forward and it will be
13 good.

14 Mr. Shea: Thank you and welcome.

15 Mr. Wallace: So just a couple of other
16 items. City View Towers, remember the Board had
17 voted to do the balcony repairs. So I just wanted
18 the Board to be aware that the repairs are actually
19 going to be starting next week. I think Laura's
20 clerking that job. So she's already informed Andrew,
21 who's our communications director, residents are
22 being informed, our commissioner resident is aware of
23 it. We don't anticipate any problems. It's going to
24 be on the outside of Cabot Street and the Moody

1 Street side of the balconies are going to be done
2 first. And Laura's expecting this job to last about
3 two, two and a half months.

4 Simultaneously, I understand we are out for
5 bid for the other half of the building. The interior
6 courtyard. And hopefully we'll be bringing that
7 forward sometime soon, so that project is starting.

8 I also wanted to let the Board know that we
9 did apply for a Mass Cultural Council grant. This is
10 a project that I had given to Mary Alice's
11 department. As you remember, the design that we did
12 out front here that Laura oversaw, we created either
13 three or four pedestals. Four. So there were four
14 pedestals out there that we want to put some public
15 art on so folks can see it. We didn't really have
16 the resources yet this year in the budget to do that,
17 so we applied for a grant and we were successful and
18 received \$7,000. So I guess we'll be -- Mary Alice
19 will be reaching out, working with the local arts
20 community to come with some themes that would make
21 sense here in the Acre to put on. I'll keep the
22 Board apprised of that.

23 The last item that I did want to mention as
24 well, is I did want to welcome Commissioner Elliott

1 aboard to the Housing Authority. As he had
2 mentioned, we have a long history together. And we
3 did have an opportunity to sit down recently and talk
4 about some issues that are important to him and
5 important to the Agency. And I look forward to
6 working with him. I think it's going to work out
7 terrific and look forward to working with him during
8 his term.

9 That's all I have on my report.

10 Mr. Shea: Okay. Well thank you very much.
11 It's more than I thought you had, because I thought I
12 heard you say you didn't have anything.

13 Okay. With that being the case, well thank
14 you for that report of the Executive Director and
15 I'll have Commissioner Marr, seconded by Commissioner
16 Bernes to accept your report of the executive
17 director, and you can call the roll.

18 Mr. Wallace: Chairman Shea.

19 Mr. Shea: Yes.

20 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Var.

21 Mr. Var: Yes.

22 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Bernes.

23 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

24 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Marr.

1 Mr. Marr: Yes.

2 Mr. Wallace: And Commissioner Elliott.

3 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

4 Mr. Wallace: That's five yeah's.

5 Mr. Shea: Okay. Thank you.

6 The next time on the agenda is Item Number
7 7.1.1, motion to approve the expedited regulatory
8 waivers for the housing choice voucher program. And
9 we have in front of us a member of Central West and
10 the director. Actually, we have our Chief Commission
11 Officer Tha Chhan in front of us. So please explain
12 to us what this is about and I look forward to your
13 comments. Thank you.

14 Mr. Chhan: Thank you very much,
15 Mr. Chairman, to give me the opportunity to come here
16 this evening.

17 Well this is pertaining to two separate
18 requests. We are seeking your approval to submit to
19 HUD for them to quickly do what they call expedited.
20 When they can look at the requests and try to review
21 it and send it back to us as quick as possible.

22 Now one item is called SEMAP, which stands
23 for Section Eight Management Assessment Program.
24 SEMAP. Of course the department manager has to score

1 each Housing Authority in the country. And this
2 score -- this scoring system is really strict and the
3 margin of error is really, really small. So we use
4 that guidance, that policy, that rule as our guidance
5 to perform our task. That be renting from tenant
6 selection all the way to inspecting Section 8 unit
7 and entering into a contract with the landlord.

8 Now that we do by agreement and we submit to
9 HUD at the end of the year, which is the end of
10 November. We usually submit a month ahead of time so
11 we have everything.

12 However, the pandemic and social distancing
13 altered the way we do our -- the way we do our
14 business. So CDC guidelines, CDC guidelines changed
15 the way we do things. Ultimately CDC guidelines
16 supercedes everything that we have. Social
17 distancing prevented us from performing our tasks and
18 have close interaction with our clients. We haven't
19 been able to perform any of our special inspections.
20 And the fact that we can't see anyone most times
21 don't allow us to go in the apartment to do
22 inspections.

23 So there's so many things that we can do.
24 We have to stick with the CDC guidelines. Now if we

1 were to submit SEMAP based on such activity, based on
2 this SEMAP score we may go from high performer to
3 standard performer and we get into trouble housing.
4 And this score, high performer, standard performer
5 and trouble housing has tremendous impact on the
6 funding that they provide to our agency.

7 High performer. So they open the door to
8 say you know what, we understand that you cannot do
9 what you need to do because of social distancing.
10 You can request a waiver and you don't have to
11 submit. We don't know what it is right now, but we
12 know that we submit it and most times we know that.

13 So today what you have in front of you is my
14 request through the executive department -- through
15 the Executive Director seeking your approval so that
16 we can submit our request to HUD and ask them to
17 review it. If they approve it then we're all set.
18 We don't have to send the SEMAP issue. That's what I
19 have to this point.

20 Mr. Shea: Are there any questions by any
21 member of the Board of Commissioners? The Chair
22 recognizes --

23 Mr. Elliott: Thank you.

24 Mr. Shea: -- Commissioner Elliott.

1 Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm the
2 new guy so I'm probably going to ask a couple of
3 questions.

4 Could you just explain what the SEMAP --
5 it's a certification process, could you explain
6 because of the pandemic our board certification is
7 getting into the units to either inspect or to ensure
8 that they're in compliance?

9 Mr. Chhan: They are only indicator in the
10 SEMAP score. SEMAP rank from number one tenant
11 selection all the way to -- we go up to 13 and 15
12 without it going into effect. However, there is four
13 important component that plays a major roll. If you
14 miss one your score will go down and that becomes
15 standard. You miss two, and that becomes trouble.
16 One is inspecting, just an indicator. Number 9 is
17 annual of certification.

18 So who does play major roll? One is an
19 adjusted income. Decide whether a tenant's rent is
20 based on income. That's the most important thing.

21 Second would be quality control. HQS. How
22 is the quality standards. Quality control
23 inspection.

24 The inspection is the week before by the

1 worker or by the inspector. But I in housing, I
2 still have to go over there to conduct an inspection
3 and oversee whether an employer or employee or
4 inspector do their job. We have to certify those
5 jobs meet the criteria.

6 So with the annual certification, under the
7 regulation we have to follow the rule. The
8 guideline. You cannot accept payment, especially
9 older than 60 days. It has to be within 60 days.
10 Important for certification. You need to provide for
11 certification and everything else.

12 Now with the pandemic the company work from
13 home. They won't respond. You can send through
14 mail. You can send it three, four times. You won't
15 get it back. With that in mind HUD said you can
16 accept whatever the self-certification, which is the
17 tenant can provide a copy of a pay stub. The tenant
18 can provide. Or it's called EIV, which is Enterprise
19 Income Verification in the system. And we can follow
20 through all that. We can use that. However, that is
21 not within the guideline under HUD normal regulation.
22 It's deviated from what we normally do. The way this
23 works, how it works still remains the same. The way
24 this works, they didn't change the way this works.

1 But they allow us to submit the waiver. So that's
2 what I'm seeking from you.

3 Mr. Elliott: I appreciate the explanation.
4 I know I'll probably ask some questions about the
5 program that everybody knows, but it does -- I'm
6 going to support this. It does make sense to do this
7 because of the pandemic and because we don't have
8 access to go through the certification process. We
9 certainly don't want our ranking to go up so it's
10 important to bring this forward. Thank you for the
11 information.

12 Housing choice, that's the second waiver?

13 Mr. Chhan: Well this is the first. Today
14 I'm seeking two, this is the first waiver. So I'm
15 going to go on to the second waiver.

16 Mr. Elliott: Okay. Thank you.

17 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18 Mr. Chhan: Okay. So the second waiver that
19 I'm seeking your approval for is the extension of the
20 budget. Now people apply for Section 8. A lot of
21 people are on Section 8 because they have the freedom
22 of housing choice. The choice of affordable housing
23 of where they want or pick the kind of unit that they
24 want. People stay on the wait list sometimes for

1 years in order to get the voucher.

2 Now the lifetime of the Section 8 voucher is
3 420 day. If you cannot find in 420 days, you got to
4 take the voucher back and give it to someone else on
5 the wait list.

6 Now based on -- before the pandemic, okay,
7 the rate, the vacancy rate in the City of Lowell is
8 very low. The last time I check is 2.5 percent
9 vacancy rate. And we're looking at over 2,000
10 apartments. 2.5, nothing. Now in two bedroom,
11 1.5 percent. So it's really not falling apart. And
12 based on the number of days that people -- after they
13 received the voucher and were able to find an
14 apartment, 20 percent of the people were able to find
15 an apartment within 60 days. There's about
16 40 percent, okay, there's about 40 percent, they
17 couldn't find apartment within 90 days to 120 days.
18 The rest of them were not able to find an apartment.
19 So we're talking about greater than 30 percent.
20 That's a lot of people that would be waiting on the
21 waiting list forever and get the apartment -- get the
22 voucher in their hand to look for an apartment but
23 could not find because there's nothing available,
24 that would be devastating.

1 So what happens is the Housing Authority has
2 the discretion to extend the voucher to 120 days. So
3 HUD said you know what, we did do the right -- if you
4 can justify that they need more time, they give us
5 enough room, which is beyond 120 days. At 120 days.
6 So two 60 days of waiver request.

7 So with this data, because I don't have --
8 so with this data in mind I think it's only fair to
9 request this waiver seeking your approval for that
10 too. Thank you.

11 Mr. Shea: Thank you, Tha, for those
12 remarks. I'd like to just -- these motions -- this
13 motion is necessary to be filed with the application?

14 Mr. Wallace: That is correct.

15 Mr. Chhan: But if they approve or not, we
16 don't know.

17 Mr. Shea: So they'll take the vote of the
18 Board together with the application. Is that the
19 process?

20 Mr. Wallace: Correct.

21 Mr. Shea: Thank you. With that being the
22 case, I notice that our general counsel, Attorney
23 Murphy would like to say something.

24 Mr. Murphy: Yes. He addressed both

1 motions, 7.1.1 and 7.1.2. So you can consolidate the
2 two motions for the vote if you so choose.

3 Mr. Shea: We can combine them without
4 taking a separate vote on each?

5 Mr. Murphy: You can do it however you want.

6 Mr. Wallace: Excuse me. No, he addressed
7 two waivers but it was just in 7.1.1.

8 Mr. Murphy: He went on to 7.1.2.

9 Mr. Wallace: No, within 7.1.1 there are two
10 waivers requested.

11 Mr. Murphy: Okay. Those are separate.

12 Mr. Wallace: Yeah, that is a different
13 waiver.

14 Mr. Murphy: I apologize.

15 Mr. Shea: So we're voting on the acceptance
16 of 7.1.1, which allows the two waivers.

17 Mr. Wallace: Correct. Within this there
18 are two waivers.

19 Mr. Shea: Okay. That's exactly what he was
20 saying. Thank you.

21 So with that being the case, the Chair will
22 -- any other questions? If not the Chair will
23 recognize a motion to accept Item 7.1.1, the motion
24 by committee member Commissioner Marr, seconded by

1 Commissioner Elliott to accept Item 7.1.1. And the
2 clerk will call the roll.

3 Mr. Wallace: Chairman Shea.

4 Mr. Shea: Yes.

5 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Var.

6 Mr. Var: Yes.

7 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Bernes.

8 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

9 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Marr.

10 Mr. Marr: Yes.

11 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Elliott.

12 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

13 Mr. Wallace: Five yeas.

14 Mr. Shea: Thank you. The next item is Item
15 Number 7.1.2, motion to approve an amendment to the
16 low-income public housing program and housing choice
17 voucher program to provide emergency assistance for
18 victims dealing with domestic violence and those at
19 risk of imminent threat to life and safety. This is
20 a very important motion. With that being the case, I
21 look forward to discussion by the Director pertaining
22 to the contents of this motion. Thank you.

23 Mr. Wallace: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Yes,
24 it is an excellent motion. It's something that the

1 Chief Operating Officer has been working with, so I'd
2 like him to address it.

3 Mr. Garvey: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
4 Mr. Director. So yes, we're seeking approval tonight
5 to recommend that we revise and amend our public
6 housing and Section 8 administrative plans to further
7 protect our residents that are going through -- that
8 are victims of domestic violence. And we have
9 obviously seen an uptick in the last couple of years
10 during COVID, you know, with the amount of seclusion
11 and, you know, closer knitting of our families there.

12 But sometimes -- you know, currently in our
13 admin plan, in our policy we have the ability in our
14 public housing developments to issue an emergency
15 transfer to a victim of domestic violence. However,
16 that transfer in public housing right now is from
17 public housing in Lowell to public housing in Lowell.
18 We can't move them out of the city in our public
19 housing development. So unfortunately, in some
20 severe instances we have victims of domestic violence
21 that must flee the city because of imminent threat of
22 their life and safety.

23 So currently our admin plan is silent on the
24 ability of our executive director to issue a mobile

1 Section 8 voucher to a current public housing
2 resident.

3 So that's the approval we're seeking
4 tonight. These instances are rare, luckily. But we
5 do want to make this admin plan change so that we can
6 best protect our individuals and families.

7 So essentially this gives our executive
8 director the authority to issue a voucher in very
9 extreme cases. And in those extreme cases we will
10 seek verification from a third party, either the
11 district attorney, the Lowell police department, or a
12 professional domestic violence shelter provider. And
13 we would look for certified statements from them
14 basically stating that there is an imminent and
15 likely threat to their life and safety and it is in
16 their best interest to leave the City of Lowell. And
17 this policy change would give us that authorization
18 and ability to help those families.

19 Mr. Shea: Thank you very much for your
20 comments and remarks. And I agree with everything
21 you wrote and said. That being the case, with
22 respect to Item Number 7.1.2, does any commissioner
23 have any questions pertaining to this?

24 Mr. Elliott: Can I ask a question?

1 Mr. Shea: Commissioner Elliott.

2 Mr. Elliott: Thank you. Explain this to
3 me, I do think it's important. What's the reporting
4 structure when it comes to your attention, a property
5 manager, how does -- how does this elevate to the
6 executive director's vis-à-vis any other, you know,
7 Department of Children and Families, police
8 department, any number of --

9 Mr. Wallace: All of that. The courts call
10 us, victim advocates at the court will call us and
11 explain -- they're social workers and they contact us
12 directly. They could go through the property
13 manager, but I think more often it comes directly to
14 us.

15 Mr. Elliott: And this is the agency policy.
16 It's not a United States statute that allows for
17 this? I support -- I'm curious, do other housing
18 authorities operate with this provision? It seems
19 like it's imperative, particularly as Mr. Garvey
20 said, especially during these times.

21 Mr. Wallace: Yeah, it's an agency policy.
22 Right now our policy doesn't allow us to move someone
23 from a public housing program to a housing choice
24 voucher program. Two separate programs.

1 Mr. Elliott: I see. Thank you,
2 Mr. Chairman.

3 Mr. Shea: Thank you, Mr. Committee Member
4 Elliott. Commissioner Elliott. I'll get it
5 straight.

6 Item 7.1.2, there's a motion by Commissioner
7 Bernes, seconded by Commissioner Mony Var to certify
8 7.1.2. The clerk will call the roll.

9 Mr. Wallace: Chairman Shea.

10 Mr. Shea: Yes.

11 Mr. Wallace: Commission Var.

12 Mr. Var: Yes.

13 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Bernes.

14 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

15 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Marr.

16 Mr. Marr: Yes.

17 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Elliott.

18 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

19 Mr. Wallace: That's five yeas.

20 Mr. Shea: Thank you. Next item is Item
21 Number 7.1.3, motion to improve temporary amendment
22 to the public housing administration plan's transfer
23 policy to address over or underhoused situations.

24 With that being the case, I would ask that

1 you, Gary, explain to the committee what this is.

2 Mr. Wallace: So as the memo says, we
3 identified a number of residents that are either
4 underhoused or overhoused. We're trying to get them
5 in the proper suitable unit. We brought aboard our
6 consultant, MaryAnn Maciejewski, to assist Adam with
7 this. So MaryAnn -- actually, I think I'd ask her to
8 come up and address the Board and tell you what she
9 put in place with Adam. A terrific, well-thought-out
10 plan. We've worked through this with Attorney
11 Murphy, and we've been working with legal aid on this
12 issue. So I think MaryAnn is probably best suited to
13 address it.

14 Ms. Maciejewski: Good evening,
15 Commissioners.

16 Mr. Shea: Good evening, MaryAnn. It's
17 always nice to see you.

18 Ms. Maciejewski: It's nice to see you too.
19 Thank you.

20 Mr. Shea: We look forward to your comments.
21 Thank you.

22 Ms. Maciejewski: Sure. So we have
23 identified a significant number of over -- many
24 overhoused residents in our developments. It

1 could've been impacted by COVID with, you know, the
2 number of people who were living in units that, you
3 know, for instance, for two bedrooms we have 81 units
4 that are being occupied by single individuals.

5 In most cases the client will provide a
6 letter to the property manager indicating that there
7 is a need for them to have a rise in living. Those
8 reasons can include that they have medical equipment
9 they need another bedroom for, that they need to have
10 someone stay with them because they have a medical
11 issue that would require someone to monitor them
12 overnight, not all the time but, you know.

13 So fair housing requires that we look at
14 each and every instance where someone requests a
15 larger bedroom size than what is actually needed.

16 When we looked at the numbers we were
17 really, you know, taken aback that they are quite
18 high. And when you look at the numbers of people on
19 our waiting list and families on our waiting list,
20 it's really impacting the number of assignments that
21 we can make and, you know, with resources so, you
22 know, desperately needed in the city right now, we
23 looked at how we could address it.

24 So what we're going to do is meet with the

1 families who are living in overhoused situations.
2 We're going to determine if in fact they do require a
3 larger unit for their family's needs or to
4 accommodate disability. And then what we will do is
5 if we find that that's not the case and they are
6 overhoused and do require a transfer, we're going to
7 implement a new process where we're not just going to
8 assign a unit without meeting with the resident, but
9 actually sit down, talk with the resident about their
10 family needs and discuss how we can help them,
11 provide marketing information which is being
12 developed right now to show our resident other
13 developments that may be suitable for them. And then
14 offer some incentives. Sometimes a great barrier to
15 transfers is that a client does not have enough money
16 to move. And so if we can assist with that, and then
17 that's opening up a unit so we can, you know, get a
18 resident housed, we think that would be a win/win.

19 So we're asking tonight for a temporary
20 amendment where every other transfer will be offered
21 to someone on our overhoused or underhoused list.
22 This will be in effect from March 1st through the end
23 of March 2023. If at that time it's determined that
24 it is still -- you know, we still need more time to

1 address the issues, we will come back and, you know,
2 maybe ask to extend for a few months. But there's --
3 we're going to take a comprehensive approach and
4 hopefully be able to address some of these issues
5 that we have on these residents.

6 Mr. Shea: Could you just tell us what the
7 term over -- the term you used, overhoused?

8 Ms. Maciejewski: Right. So it --

9 Mr. Shea: I never heard that -- quite
10 frankly, I think I know the answer to what overhoused
11 means, but I never heard the term.

12 Ms. Maciejewski: Sure. An overhoused
13 situation would be someone living -- single living in
14 a two-bedroom unit. Or two people living in a
15 three-bedroom unit. You know, they just -- there's
16 an extra bedroom. And so if we could relocate them
17 to the appropriate-sized unit, it's going to free up
18 that apartment to either transfer one of our clients
19 that needs a transfer or, you know, take someone off
20 the waiting list.

21 Mr. Shea: Thank you, MaryAnn. I got the
22 answer. You prefaced your whole remark based on
23 overhousing. I said oh, I didn't know what it meant.
24 It's as simple as that.

1 Ms. Maciejewski: Yes.

2 Mr. Shea: Thank you for your comments.

3 Any questions by any of the commissioners
4 pertaining to this item on 7.1.3?

5 Ms. Maciejewski: Thank you.

6 Mr. Shea: Seeing none, there's a motion by
7 counsel -- not counsel. As I say, there's a motion
8 by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner
9 Mony Var to accept Item 7.1.3. The clerk will call
10 the roll.

11 Mr. Wallace: Chairman Shea.

12 Mr. Shea: Yes.

13 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Var.

14 Mr. Var: Yes.

15 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Bernes.

16 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

17 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Marr.

18 Mr. Marr: Yes.

19 Mr. Wallace: And Commissioner Elliott.

20 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

21 Mr. Wallace: Five yeas.

22 Mr. Shea: Thank you. The next item is Item
23 Number 7.1.4, motion to approve contract award to
24 Enterprise Equipment Company, Weymouth, Mass in the

1 amount of \$637,220. And we have a recommendation
2 made not only by our chief procurement officer, I
3 noticed that our capital asset manager -- are you
4 doing this one, Jonathan?

5 Mr. Goldfield: Yes.

6 Mr. Shea: So I will ask that our chief
7 procurement office to come up and just read into the
8 record a little bit about what we're looking at so we
9 can get this moving forward. Thank you.

10 Ms. Brousseau: Good evening. What you have
11 before you is we had solicited bids for -- we had
12 solicited bids for the replacement of the elevator at
13 43 Summer Street, one of many elevators we're working
14 on in our capital project. And the two bids that
15 came in, the low bidder was Enterprise Equipment
16 Company, a company we worked with in the past and
17 we're very happy, and received great recommendations
18 from the architects working on the project as well.
19 They came in under budget as well too.

20 Mr. Shea: And that's it? It's that good?

21 Ms. Brousseau: Yes. That's it in a
22 nutshell.

23 Mr. Shea: Any questions by any
24 commissioner?

1 Mr. Elliott: Ms. Procurement Officer, Mr.
2 Chair, how many elevators -- you mentioned this is
3 just one of many. How many other elevators --

4 Mr. Goldfield: 19 across the Housing
5 Authority.

6 Mr. Elliott: 19 --

7 Mr. Wallace: Yes.

8 Mr. Goldfield: If I may. Good evening, my
9 name is Jonathan Goldfield, Capital Asset Manager.
10 Welcome Commissioner. Welcome Commissioners. We
11 have 19 across the entire Housing Authority. We're
12 going to be replacing all of the elevators at South
13 Common Village up on Gorman Street. Several years
14 ago we did a feasibility study with another
15 engineering firm that prioritized that said these
16 elevators, which ones need to be done sooner rather
17 than later. So at South Common Village, 43 is the
18 first. The next will be two at 50 Summer, and then
19 we'll be going to 65 Summer later on down the road.

20 We can do approximately one to two elevators
21 a year based on our capital funding. So 50 Summer is
22 -- will be prepared to go out to bid. And the other
23 elevator that's ready actually is Stackpole Street.

24 Mr. Elliott: But generally they're about

1 700,000 per elevator?

2 Mr. Goldfield: Well this is the first one
3 we've done that's -- the first one we did over was
4 over at Phillips Street, 111 Phillips Street. It was
5 about 400,000. That's a four stop hydraulic. This
6 is the first traction elevator six story we've done.
7 But it is comparable to other projects. I just read
8 of a project for about \$900,000 for the Chelsea
9 Housing Authority.

10 So I'm guessing they're going to come in the
11 700 range. 50 Summer Street has two elevators and a
12 two stop hydraulic and a six -- seven stop traction
13 elevator, so that's even more, of course, two
14 elevators. I'm hoping it will be in that range.

15 Mr. Elliott: They're all functioning?

16 Mr. Goldfield: They're all functioning.
17 They've all had preventative maintenance, you know.
18 You know, annual contract, you get it inspected every
19 year by the state. They're all functioning but they
20 are 30 years old.

21 Mr. Elliott: Okay. Thank you.

22 Mr. Shea: Jonathan, if I could just ask you
23 a question. Yesterday I was in the main building at
24 City View and I noticed that one of the elevators was

1 down there.

2 Mr. Goldfield: I don't know the day to day.
3 We don't get into that.

4 Ms. Ryan: It's been procured and should see
5 that within the week.

6 Mr. Shea: Denise, do we have someone
7 working with that?

8 Ms. Ryan: Yes, myself and Brian Dean.

9 Mr. Wallace: Yeah, it's a part issue.
10 Waiting -- yeah, waiting for a part. And Adam may
11 have more of an update. I think it's imminent.

12 Ms. Ryan: It's coming from California.

13 Mr. Wallace: Yeah, it's on its way.

14 Mr. Shea: And in our capital plan we put a
15 lot of money in there to buy the plan to -- and we
16 hired three companies, three architectural firms so
17 that we can move ahead to replace elevators.

18 Mr. Goldfield: That's right.

19 Mr. Shea: And, you know, like Jonathan just
20 said, we're talking 20, 30 years. You know,
21 Commissioner Marr was under the impression one of the
22 others broke down, I don't know, it was sitting. But
23 when we fix one there's going to be another one that
24 breaks because it's a continuation because the

1 property is so old. But I was glad to hear that
2 you're on that one, City View. Okay. Thank you for
3 your comments and your presentation.

4 So with that being the case, any questions
5 from any commissioner pertaining to Item 7.1.4? If
6 not there's a motion by Commissioner Matt Marr,
7 seconded by Commissioner Mony Var to accept Item
8 Number 7.1.4. The clerk will call the roll.

9 Mr. Wallace: Chairman Shea.

10 Mr. Shea: Yes.

11 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Var.

12 Mr. Var: Yes.

13 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Bernes.

14 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

15 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Marr.

16 Mr. Marr: Yes.

17 Mr. Wallace: And Commissioner Elliott.

18 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

19 Mr. Wallace: That's five yeas.

20 Mr. Shea: Thank you.

21 Item Number 8. There's no old business, am
22 I correct?

23 Mr. Wallace: No.

24 Mr. Shea: Item Number 9, new business. Is

1 there a motion of any board member?

2 Mr. Wallace: No.

3 Mr. Shea: Item 9 (b) executive director
4 announcements.

5 Mr. Wallace: Just a reminder that the March
6 meeting is the annual meeting, our organizational
7 meeting, and it won't be held on the second Wednesday
8 of March. The Board has already agreed to hold that
9 meeting on March 2nd, not March 9th.

10 Mr. Shea: So the next meeting will be our
11 annual meeting. It's going to held on March 2nd at
12 5:00 p.m. here.

13 Mr. Wallace: Correct.

14 Mr. Shea: And the decision has been made
15 that we're not going to have our annual dinner
16 because of the pandemic. We're going to skip it. I
17 think that that's probably in everyone's best
18 interest.

19 That being the case, there's a motion to
20 adjourn by Commissioner Bernes, seconded by
21 Commissioner Matt Marr. Motion to adjourn is Item
22 Number 10. The clerk will call the roll.

23 Mr. Wallace: Chairman Shea.

24 Mr. Shea: Yes.

1 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Var.
2 Mr. Var: Yes.
3 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Bernes.
4 Ms. Bernes: Yes.
5 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Marr.
6 Mr. Marr: Yes.
7 Mr. Wallace: Commissioner Elliott.
8 Mr. Elliott. Yes.
9 Mr. Wallace: Five yeas.
10 Mr. Shea: Thank you.
11 (Whereupon the Lowell Housing Authority
12 meeting adjourned.)
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