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LOWELL HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
May 11, 2022

Mercier House
21 Salem Street
Lowell, Massachusetts

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

1 Board of Commissioners:

2 Philip L. Shea, Chairman

3 Mony Var, Vice Chairman

4 Joanie L. Bernes, Commissioner

5 Matt Marr, Commissioner

6 Rodney Elliott, Commissioner

7

8 Lowell Housing Committee:

9 Adam J. Garvey, Assistant Executive Director,

10 Chief Operating Officer

11 Sherry Giblin, Chief Financial Officer

12 Kevin J. Murphy, General Counsel

13

14 Presentations by:

15 Rita Brousseau, Chief Procurement Officer

16 Jonathan Goldfield, Capital Asset Manager

17 Tha Chhan, Director of Leased Housing

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1
2 Mr. Shea: I see everyone is here, has
3 settled except myself. Just bear with me, please.
4 Okay. The meeting will come to order. This is the
5 meeting of the Lowell Housing Authority Board of
6 Commissioners for May 11th and the first item on the
7 agenda is to recognize the membership, and so the
8 clerk will call the roll for attendance.

9 Mr. Garvey: Chairman Shea.

10 Mr. Shea: Present.

11 Mr. Garvey: Vice Chairman Var.

12 Mr. Var: Yes.

13 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Bernes.

14 Ms. Bernes: Here.

15 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Elliott.

16 Mr. Elliott: Here.

17 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Marr.

18 Mr. Marr: Here.

19 Mr. Shea: Thank you.

20 The next item is Item Number 1. Also, I
21 want to recognize our general counsel, Attorney Kevin
22 Murphy, and I certainly want to recognize our chief
23 operating officer who is now running the meeting in
24 place of our executive director who is out on

1 certification, Adam Garvey. And it's nice to see our
2 Chief Financial Officer Sherry Giblin is also
3 present.

4 With that being the case, we'll go to Item
5 Number 2, and apparently we have nothing on Item
6 Number 2.

7 Mr. Garvey: Approval of minutes, Mr.
8 Chairman.

9 Mr. Shea: Thank you very much. Yes,
10 approval of the minutes of the meeting which is done
11 by motion by Commissioner Matt Marr, seconded by
12 Commissioner Rodney Elliot. The clerk will call the
13 roll.

14 Mr. Garvey: Chairman Shea.

15 Mr. Shea: Yes.

16 Mr. Garvey: Vice Chairman Var.

17 Mr. Var: Yes.

18 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Bernes.

19 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

20 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Elliot.

21 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

22 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Marr.

23 Mr. Marr: Yes.

24 Mr. Garvey: Five yeas.

1 Mr. Shea: Item Number 2, resident
2 correspondence.

3 Mr. Garvey: I have no resident
4 correspondence, sir.

5 Mr. Shea: Okay. Then we'll skip over to
6 Item Number 3, resident organization.

7 Mr. Garvey: I have no filed resident
8 organization, and none present.

9 Mr. Shea: Thank you. Now I'll skip over to
10 Item Number 4, subcommittee report.

11 I do not hear any commissioner indicated, I
12 know they'll be having an executive committee,
13 subcommittee before the next meeting, Commissioner
14 Var and myself, pertaining to some items that we want
15 to talk about. And I'm sure as we go along the
16 various subcommittees will be coming forward with
17 respect to items that they want to talk about.

18 I know that Joanie Bernes is the chairperson
19 of the residents committee and I know that there's a
20 lot of activity being planned this summer.

21 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

22 Mr. Shea: Cookouts and things like that.

23 So with that being the case, Item Number 4,
24 there's no report. Thank you.

1 The next time on the agenda is the financial
2 report, and of course our Chief Financial Officer
3 Mrs. Giblin is here to give us that report.

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

5 The Authority's operating statements for the
6 period ending March 31st, 2022 were provided to the
7 Board for their review. After six months most
8 programs remain revenue producing and are exceeding
9 budget estimates.

10 For the month of March our federal AMPs saw
11 a 71,000 increase in operating gains. Our HUD
12 multi-family development at Concord River Mill saw an
13 increase of 19,000, and our state portfolio saw an
14 increase of 10,000.

15 Rents and subsidy amounts across the four
16 AMPs are within budget tolerance. Operating fund
17 proration levels remain at 95 percent. Operating
18 fund subsidy eligibility has been estimated by HUD
19 through March based on our calendar year '21
20 eligibility. We could see a decrease in operating
21 funds subsidy once HUD processes our calendar year
22 '22 subsidy eligibility.

23 Solar net meter credit revenue in our
24 federal AMPs remain under budget due to the reversal

1 of prior year accruals. This is entirely a timing
2 issue and will correct itself.

3 The 2021 capital funding was approved and
4 released by HUD in March. Funding was received by
5 the Authority in April.

6 Most expenses across all AMPs are within
7 budget tolerance through March. Administrative
8 expenses remain under budget in legal, evictions and
9 IT expenses. Utilities remain under budget, but we
10 anticipate this will change as the year progresses.
11 Although maintenance expenses remain at or below
12 budget tolerance through March, we are seeing
13 significant increases in material costs such as
14 plumbing supplies, electrical supplies, and cabinets.

15 Insurance and benefits are under budget
16 pending quarter end March invoices. Our other
17 general expense category remains under budget in
18 three out of the federal four AMPs due to collection
19 loss deferral until year end and protective services.
20 All AMPs are exceeding budgeted gains at this point,
21 however, we do anticipate these gains will decrease
22 as the year progresses.

23 At this time I'll take any questions from
24 the Board.

1 Mr. Shea: Thank you very much for the
2 report. I invite any commissioner to ask our chief
3 financial officer any questions in regards to her
4 statements regarding the operating statement period
5 ending March 31st.

6 Commissioner Elliot.

7 Mr. Elliott: Just one. Generally speaking,
8 knowing these material costs, has there been any
9 discussion at any housing organization or meeting
10 relative to any reimbursement increase or decrease at
11 any level to housing authorities as a result of this?
12 Not yet?

13 Ms. Giblin: In terms of subsidy?

14 Mr. Elliott: Subsidy.

15 Ms. Giblin: No. There has been no chatter
16 about that.

17 Mr. Elliott: I mean everything is going up,
18 unfortunately, particularly with material and
19 supplies. So consequently there's got to be some
20 alternating increase on the other side. But nothing
21 yet?

22 Ms. Giblin: Nothing from HUD. Nothing from
23 DHCD at this point.

24 Mr. Elliott: Thank you.

1 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 Mr. Shea: Thank you, Commissioner. Any
3 other questions by any commissioner? If not I have a
4 couple.

5 Ms. Giblin: Sure.

6 Mr. Shea: Could you just briefly -- I was
7 looking at your report, and once again, it's
8 voluminous. I have difficulty getting through it
9 sometimes. I know previously you said if anybody
10 wants to sit down and talk about it, but the question
11 I have is do you recall we had a conversation during
12 the budget about the JobsPLUS program.

13 Ms. Giblin: Yes.

14 Mr. Shea: And that's where young people
15 come -- they'll be employed with the Housing to cut
16 grass and to -- basically it was landscaping, was
17 explicitly their job.

18 Ms. Giblin: Well that's part of the
19 JobsPLUS program. The Jobs Plus program offers
20 employment to anyone between the ages of 18 and 64.
21 Anybody employable.

22 Mr. Shea: But in the JobsPLUS plan, the
23 funding, we told the union that these young men and
24 women will come along for the summer to cut grass

1 because the chairman and others members of the
2 committee are interested in curb appeal.

3 Ms. Giblin: Yes.

4 Mr. Shea: And are interested in cutting
5 grass. Commissioner Marr may be interested in
6 building -- trying to stay and helping a situation.
7 But with respect to the young men and women coming on
8 board for summer jobs to cut grass exclusively, I do
9 -- I think the union will get back to you because
10 they were told a month or so ago other things were
11 coming into effect, which would be a violation of the
12 union contract. Of course that's not what we agreed
13 to last October, so if we got that clarified. I
14 think I see our CEO saying yes.

15 Mr. Garvey: Yes.

16 Mr. Shea: Okay. So where is the plan to
17 hire these young people working -- incidentally
18 they're going to work with the director of JobsPLUS
19 as we know -- and I just came up Market Street and I
20 looked over to O'Brien Terrace where I played touch
21 football a hundred years ago, and the grass over
22 there for some reason looks terrific.

23 Where is our plan on -- maybe it's not a
24 question for you, Sherry, but maybe a question for

1 Adam. So incidentally I did try to call you this
2 afternoon. I'm sorry that I missed -- I didn't leave
3 a message. I just was curious.

4 Mr. Garvey: Yes. So we have it all
5 developed and ready to roll out, as a matter of fact,
6 tomorrow morning. And there was some
7 misunderstanding from the union and my office about
8 what this would include. And it does solely include
9 landscaping. So we, Sherry and I have a meeting with
10 our union representatives tomorrow at 9:00 to
11 finalize it and will be rolled out this week through
12 our Jobs Plus program and also our Family
13 Self-Sufficiency Program. We're going to target our
14 two large family developments and try to pull as many
15 interested youth as we can to help us and learn some
16 skills.

17 Mr. Shea: It was my feeling and it was just
18 -- it was my presumption that they're having
19 difficulty recruiting young people.

20 Mr. Garvey: We do sometimes have some
21 difficulty recruiting. But I think with the JobsPLUS
22 team -- I mean, they're out there in the development
23 knocking on doors. They actually have what they call
24 a table talk tomorrow afternoon where they put a

1 table up with flashing balloons, we get people
2 interested, and they'll be rolling out this program
3 to any and every, you know, young kid that comes
4 through.

5 But this team has actually had some pretty
6 decent success working with North Common. We have a
7 little over 200 workable adults there, so able bodies
8 between 18 and 64. And this group has reached 165 of
9 them that are members of the program, participants of
10 the program. And of that 165 -- Sherry can correct
11 my percentage, but I believe approximately 60 to
12 70 percent of them have become employed or have got
13 additional employment or additional wages.

14 So it really has been, you know, a fabulous
15 program and I have no doubt that they'll be
16 successful in finding some kids to join this
17 landscaping program.

18 Mr. Shea: When do you expect that these
19 young men and women will be starting? I mean,
20 school's out in another six weeks.

21 Mr. Garvey: If they're interested, start as
22 soon as next week.

23 Mr. Shea: I just think it's -- are we
24 paying them enough money to enhance the recruitment

1 effort?

2 Mr. Garvey: Yes. Yup.

3 Mr. Shea: I just think that's kind of
4 important. We shouldn't let that slip through
5 because the Board has discussed that for a while now.

6 Mr. Garvey: Yes. And it's going to happen
7 this week, Mr. Chairman. You know, we also too --
8 they serve as somewhat of a leader program into our
9 maintenance facilities. And last month, the month
10 before we introduced a young man, Nation, who lives
11 on Suffolk Street that came through that JobsPLUS
12 program, so hopefully we can entice some more.

13 Mr. Shea: We were introduced to a young
14 African-American last month that lives in the North
15 Common Village. He's hired -- he's in a union.

16 Mr. Garvey: He is. He came through the
17 JobsPLUS program working to attract these kids in
18 landscaping jobs.

19 Mr. Shea: Looks like he's a former
20 basketball player.

21 Mr. Garvey: He's strong enough.

22 Mr. Shea: Okay. So I just wanted to make
23 sure that the JobsPLUS program and the cutting and
24 the -- I'm sorry to see that the union had to listen

1 to the misunderstanding, because for Mony Var and I,
2 it was very clear, that we didn't want to interrupt
3 the union contract. We didn't want to interrupt the
4 program of taking care of the landscaping. So that
5 was all. But we did get that settled and I -- I
6 think Bill -- I haven't talk to him in a month or
7 two, but I assume you contacted him.

8 Mr. Garvey: Yes, I did.

9 Mr. Shea: Okay. That's the only question I
10 have. Matt? Okay. So with that being the case, I
11 just wanted to indicate that as a report of the
12 Chair, and as I indicated to you, Commissioner Mony
13 Var and myself will be convening an executive meeting
14 sometime in the next 30 days to discuss items that we
15 want to bring to the Board's attention. And we also
16 want to -- well hopefully -- okay. Thank you.

17 Any other questions on Item Number 6, the
18 report of the chair because I guess I've been talking
19 too much. Okay. Thank you very much.

20 So there's really nothing to report on the
21 report of the chair. Even better, the chief
22 financial officer's report, haven't made a motion on
23 that yet. So therefore with respect to what our
24 chief financial officer just stated, is there any

1 questions of the financial report? If not I'll
2 entertain a motion by Commissioner Mony Var, seconded
3 by Commissioner Matt Marr to accept the chief
4 financial officer's report. The clerk will call the
5 roll.

6 Mr. Garvey: Chairman Shea.

7 Mr. Shea: Yes.

8 Mr. Garvey: Vice Chairman Var.

9 Mr. Var: Yes.

10 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Bernes.

11 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

12 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Elliott.

13 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

14 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Marr.

15 Mr. Marr: Yes.

16 Mr. Garvey: Five years.

17 Mr. Shea: Thank you. Item Number 6 is the
18 report of the chair. The Chair's already used his
19 12 minutes, seven minutes more than last month.

20 Okay. Report of the executive director.

21 And I'll just let our chief operating officer take it
22 from here. We have Attorney Murphy here who wants to
23 have something to say about a couple of our projects
24 for the record, and I'll just let you guys proceed

1 with that.

2 Mr. Garvey: Thank you very much.

3 Mr. Murphy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, you
4 really --

5 Mr. Shea: Can you just speak into the mic
6 and tell us -- the stenographer who you are.

7 Mr. Murphy: Thank you. Kevin Murphy,
8 general counsel for the Housing Authority.

9 Through you, Mr. Chairman, and the members
10 of the Board. I just wanted to update you on a
11 couple of projects that are going on in the City of
12 Lowell that affect the Lowell Housing Authority. The
13 first is a proposal on Broadway Street in the City of
14 Lowell. I'm sure most of you are familiar with the
15 Merrimack Valley Food Bank. A private development
16 known as Boston Capital has submitted plans and
17 petitions through the City of Lowell to convert the
18 Merrimack Valley Food Bank to 52 to 53 units of
19 affordable housing. They appeared before the Board
20 of Appeals and the Planning Board to seek variances
21 and permits to construct that development.

22 That development significantly affects the
23 rights of the Lowell Housing Authority that have
24 existed since the early '70s.

1 The Merrimack Valley Food Bank housing
2 proposal, the residents would access this development
3 through Tyng Street. Tyng Street is a private way
4 that is the access road for what we know as the
5 Francis Gatehouse Mill, and has been the access road
6 since the early '70s, the Francis Gatehouse Mill.

7 As a matter of fact and most importantly,
8 the Housing Authority has 16 parking spaces on Tyng
9 Street that they use for employees, visiting nurses,
10 and other people that need to visit the premises and
11 need to park.

12 We wanted to make sure that those parking
13 spaces would be made available solely for the use of
14 the Lowell Housing Authority. So as part of the
15 petition process by Boston Capital I appeared -- I
16 negotiated with Boston Capital and I'm happy to
17 report that the proposal was approved by the Board of
18 Appeals and the Planning Board with the following
19 conditions. First of all, that the applicant
20 acknowledges that the Lowell Housing Authority has
21 the exclusive right to use 16 parking spaces and will
22 continue to use 16 parking spaces along Tyng Street.
23 And if they do replace the fence that exists there
24 right now, they will put up signs that those 16

1 spaces are reserved solely for the employees and
2 guests of the Lowell Housing Authority.
3 The second thing, and this is at the suggestion of
4 Chairman Shea, is under the Lowell zoning code
5 construction can start in the City of Lowell at
6 7:00 a.m. and continue until 7:00 p.m., I believe it
7 is. But what they agreed to, at our insistence, is
8 that because, you know, the residents need a wake up
9 in the morning, get going and in the afternoon you
10 don't want it, construction to be a negative thing
11 for them, so they agreed and the Planning Board
12 dictated that construction will not begin until
13 8:00 a.m., and it will cease at 5:00 p.m. in the
14 evening.

15 Third, the applicant will notify the
16 residents of their new development at Tyng Street as
17 a private way and it's not supposed to be used for
18 recreational use for any resident. Because there are
19 going to be two, three bedroom units at this
20 development, so there are going to be children there.
21 And Tyng Street is only 40 feet wide. So it's not a
22 very wide street. We want to make sure that the
23 residents that are coming down, or any of the
24 visitors, that they have a clear path. We want to

1 make sure that there aren't any recreational use,
2 like bikers going up and down the street, that will
3 get in way of residents coming down.

4 And finally to me, I think it's a very
5 important thing, again, from the insistence of the
6 Chairman is that the applicant agrees that the
7 development will not contain any college or graduate
8 student housing.

9 As you know, Merrimack Valley Food Bank is
10 very close to the south campus of UMass Lowell. We
11 want to make sure that the -- that the development
12 remains quiet, because it abuts right next to our
13 Francis Gatehouse Mill. And we want to make sure
14 there are no student housing there. And the attached
15 predicates that they're going for doesn't allow for
16 student housing. We still wanted to make sure that
17 they didn't go down the tax credit way and have some
18 other way of private funds, they still wouldn't have
19 any student housing.

20 So I think it's a -- I think it's a good
21 proposal, not only from the Merrimack Valley Food
22 Bank, and based with these conditions I don't think
23 it's going to negatively impact the Housing
24 Authority. And we've preserved or right to use Tyng

1 Street as we've used it since the early '70s.

2 Is there any questions that anyone has?

3 Mr. Shea: Commissioner Elliot has some
4 questions. Thank you.

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

6 Where is the housing -- the food bank, are
7 they staying there?

8 Mr. Murphy: No, they --

9 Mr. Elliott: I know they were looking for a
10 larger space.

11 Mr. Murphy: Yeah, I think they did buy
12 something, but I'm not sure. They are relocating to
13 another place.

14 Mr. Elliott: Okay. Thank you.

15 Mr. Shea: Well I think you accomplished
16 everything that you were asked to do before the
17 Planning Board, and I -- you know, we ought to
18 circulate this among the Board. I showed this to
19 Commissioner Marr. I don't think Commissioner
20 Elliott saw this, but it is the artist's rendering of
21 the building. And the impressive item, and I've seen
22 what they're going to put on top of this building,
23 and to me it's like whoa. How can they do that? But
24 the project isn't going to start for about a year,

1 probably two years. And all the restrictions that
2 you asked for in the interest of protecting the
3 living conditions of our residents were agreed to by
4 them, according to the minutes of the meeting. So I
5 think that's very important.

6 Mr. Murphy: And you're a hundred percent
7 correct, is that construction won't start until for
8 more than a year. That's the process.

9 Mr. Shea: That's what they said, yeah. And
10 I know that as long as you got those restrictions,
11 and I think that kind of protects the integrity of
12 our development. And unfortunately some people don't
13 care about this, likely other people do, in the
14 society do care about people like that. So you can
15 actually keep that.

16 Mr. Elliott: Yes, I will. Mr. Chair.

17 Mr. Shea: Commissioner Elliot.

18 Mr. Elliott: Having seen this and listening
19 to the presentation, it is -- we know affordable
20 housing is in such extreme demand now and I like the
21 restrictions that were placed. So use of the
22 building in proximity to the university, so it's a
23 good project. Thank you for the update and I
24 appreciate the Chairman also including those

1 restrictions. It is important to the residents and
2 the Housing Authority complex.

3 Mr. Murphy: This building literally abuts
4 off of Francis Gatehouse Mill.

5 Mr. Elliott: And hopefully DCR can be in
6 agreement to improve the home. You had years ago.

7 Mr. Murphy: 25 years ago.

8 Mr. Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Mr. Shea: Thank you. You have another
10 report?

11 Mr. Murphy: Yes. The second report is an
12 update on the River's Edge development. I think it's
13 important to note again that it's the Residents First
14 Development Corporation that owns the property at
15 River's Edge commonly known as the Julian Steel
16 project. And RFDC is the developer.

17 The only anticipation that the Lowell
18 Housing Authority has in the future development of
19 this is that we approve the plan that they're going
20 to present as far as how many units they're going to
21 develop there. And we provide technical assistance
22 for the development of the property. Technical
23 assistance is legal services, accounting services,
24 and a clerk of the works that we'll provide for that

1 proposal. But that's how we're involved.

2 We were originally scheduled to meet with
3 the board of Residents First Development Corporation
4 last February where they were going to present to us
5 the final plan and the plans to construct the
6 28 units of affordable housing at River's Edge, but
7 that meeting was canceled and we're still waiting for
8 Residents First Development Corporation to provide us
9 with a number of issues before this Board can take
10 any action whatsoever.

11 First of all, we're waiting for them to
12 provide us with the final plan of the 28 units that
13 they proposed to construct. I want them to show a
14 nice plan that sets it out, how that's going to look.
15 Floor elevations, floor plans and everything. We're
16 waiting for those plans from the RFDC. And we're
17 also waiting for them to present us with the final
18 construction agreement between them and Kevin
19 O'Brien, who is the person that did the original
20 development and had the first right to do the final.
21 We're waiting for a construction contract from them.
22 We're also waiting to find out how the contractor
23 intends to finance the buildup of these 28 units and
24 how Mr. O'Brien's going to pay for the past services

1 that he claims he has rendered at the premise.

2 So I just want you to know that we're just
3 waiting for the RFDC to provide us with this
4 information. Once we -- we can't do anything until
5 they provide us with this information. And once they
6 provide us with this information, then we'll be able
7 to come to the Board with a more intelligent
8 representation of what is planned to go there in the
9 future.

10 So all I can tell you is that we were
11 supposed to get this information last February. We
12 didn't get the information. We are just still
13 waiting. As soon as we do get that information we
14 will present it to the Board.

15 Mr. Shea: Thank you for those remarks. I'm
16 going to just take a moment to say a couple of
17 things, but I'll ask -- prior to my statement I will
18 open it up to any member of the Board of
19 Commissioners.

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

21 Thank you for the update. I think it's good
22 to keep the Board involved. I understand our role
23 and the role of all the other parties. I appreciate
24 the update. Hopefully we'll see something sooner

1 than later. This is a great proposal for more
2 affordable housing, the project, that was the intent
3 of it. So fingers crossed that things get worked out
4 and planned and things have moved forward on the
5 issue that's important to the Housing Authority and
6 for the people of the City of Lowell.

7 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Mr. Shea: Thank you, Commissioner Elliott.

9 I'd like to just explain my agenda, and I
10 understood what was coming up, however, I went
11 through my pile and I found a report that I looked at
12 a year ago. In fact, it's amazing, the last time we
13 talked about it was 367 days ago. It was last
14 May 10th. And I went to my file and I remember
15 reading this. This report. Matt himself, Mony,
16 Joanie read the report. However, I wanted to ask
17 Adam, or if Gary was here, did you give this report
18 to Commissioner Elliott?

19 Mr. Garvey: I don't believe we did. Unless
20 Gary -- I know I did not.

21 Mr. Shea: Well just for the public record,
22 we spent \$10,000 for this report. And I got through
23 the report. It took me -- it didn't take me four
24 hours to get through it. It took me 14 days.

1 Because that's complex. And it dawned upon me,
2 Commissioner Elliott doesn't have this report. And I
3 know that he's been on top of this issue. Rightfully
4 so. And I said to myself, I wonder if he's ever seen
5 that report. We paid \$10,000 for this report. And
6 you may remember -- you have to talk to Waterman.
7 But what Waterman had to say in this report, and I
8 shouldn't -- I'm going to say in my opinion, okay,
9 because, you know, we don't want to talk about this
10 because there could be future litigation. But let me
11 just say in my opinion this report is revealing. You
12 know, two people can read the story, read a book and
13 come away with different conclusions. Maybe it's the
14 same case here. But this is important and
15 Commissioner Elliott is a commissioner and he should
16 have access to that report.

17 So I think I'll give him my report, but if
18 you can get him a copy of the report so he can look
19 at it and read it.

20 Basically what the report says, we asked
21 them to go out and hire -- please go out and tell us
22 what you think the value is of this work that he did.
23 Because he said it was X number of dollars, right,
24 Kevin?

1 Mr. Murphy: Correct.

2 Mr. Shea: And so we said can you just go
3 out and tell us what you think. So we paid \$10,000,
4 90 days later they gave us the report. We've yet to
5 ask him any questions. But I do think it's helpful
6 to Commissioner Elliott to have access to this
7 report. And because I think -- once again, I kept my
8 own conclusions what this report says about costs.
9 But this is not the place to have that discussion
10 because of possible litigation, pending litigation.
11 But I just don't want the Housing Authority to take a
12 bum wrap on this.

13 So if you could be good enough, Adam, to
14 give to our newly-elected commissioner a copy of this
15 report for his perusal.

16 Mr. Garvey: Yes.

17 Mr. Shea: I think he'll find it
18 interesting.

19 Mr. Elliott: Thank you.

20 Mr. Shea: With that being the case, Mony
21 Var -- thank you, Attorney Murphy, for your report.
22 Those are two good recommendations and we'll let it
23 go at that. We appreciate the report.

24 With that being the case, a motion by

1 Commissioner Matt Marr.

2 Mr. Garvey: Mr. Chairman, if I may, just a
3 couple of --

4 Mr. Shea: You wanted to say something?

5 Mr. Garvey: Yes. I'll be brief, I promise.

6 I do have a few updates for the Board. So
7 recent events that are coming up that I want to get
8 on your calendar, and I'm very happy to introduce our
9 newest hire.

10 But the first thing is on Saturday the 30th
11 the Housing Authority in partnership with Lowell
12 General Hospital hosted an adult health and wellness
13 fair here at the Mercier Center. And I wanted to let
14 the Board know it was very successful. We had over a
15 hundred families in the area come through to get very
16 important medical screenings. This group did cancer
17 screenings, smoking cessation, mental and behavioral
18 health information booth, substance abuse prevention,
19 nutrition, COVID vaccines and boosters. It was an
20 excellent Saturday and I just wanted to formally
21 thank all of the LHA staff who volunteered their time
22 and a particular thanks to Paula Gouveia who is our
23 health and wellness advisor of the agency. And she
24 worked very hard with Lowell General Hospital to put

1 this together. It was her first event and she did a
2 fantastic job with it. So thanks to our LHA team and
3 Paula for doing that for us.

4 Our second update at the request of Chairman
5 Shea, Rita Brousseau, our chief procurement officer,
6 and Sherry Giblin have been working on a public
7 bidding and procurement informational session for
8 local vendors. Rita reached out to work with the
9 Chamber of Commerce and internal vendor lists. She's
10 putting together a training packet. But to the best
11 of my knowledge, Rita has done these types of
12 trainings before for the Massachusetts OIG and the
13 Mass Association of Public Purchasing Officials. So
14 we're looking to do this informational session
15 sometime in late May, and we'll keep the Board
16 apprised of when that date is, and give you a copy of
17 the educational packet that Rita put together.

18 The third item is tomorrow we're having our
19 grand opening and open house of our new leasing and
20 occupancy office at 89 Appleton Street. There was a
21 social media blast that went out, an email went out
22 to all of our stakeholders. I do believe all the
23 commissioners got a copy of that. But it's our
24 chance to kind of go over -- again, it's an open

1 house between 9:30 and 11:30 and we're going to have
2 light refreshments. It's going to be a great time
3 for the public, our clients, landlords, staff
4 members. Hopefully the commissioners will come over,
5 have a cup of coffee, meet with the staff and learn
6 and understand the very important services and
7 programs that we offer as a housing authority,
8 specifically coming out of our Section 8 offices.

9 So again, 9:30 to 11:30 tomorrow at the old
10 juvenile court building and we'd love to have you
11 there and mingle.

12 I also want to let the Board know that on Friday,
13 May 13th we have an event over at 600 Lakeview Avenue
14 with the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trusts working
15 with our Capital Asset Manager Laura Watts. They
16 partnered with Verizon and the Arbor Day Foundation
17 to donate 40 trees and shrubs at our large Lakeview
18 Avenue site. And these plants, you know, other than
19 providing, you know, beauty to the area and natural
20 screen between our development and the VFW Highway,
21 you know, everything else that trees bring, different
22 birds, even improve air quality, shade, lower heating
23 costs. So that's Friday, I believe between 9:00 and
24 1:30 that they're going to be planting all day. So

1 if anybody has interest in going by and seeing the
2 site, seeing the planting, you're more than welcome.
3 I am planning with Sherry to go over there sometime
4 to see what's go on.

5 My second to last item, at the request from the
6 motion of Commissioner Elliott to look into and
7 explore the opportunities for disposition of our
8 state scattered site housing, similar to what we did
9 on the federal side, sell out the scattered sites and
10 then take those proceeds to do, you know, much needed
11 affordable housing redevelopment.

12 So Gary and I did meet after Commissioner
13 Elliott's motion, we put together a summary plan that
14 we're going to present to the DHCD, and possibly the
15 housing -- housing committee with the state.

16 And as if divine intervention or just a very
17 big coincidence, almost like our office was bugged,
18 we just received an email, Gary and I, from DHCD in
19 early May asking us if we would participate in a
20 discovery meeting about the disposition of family
21 scattered site housing in the state portfolio, taking
22 those proceeds and reinvesting them into the new
23 affordable housing. So it is was like perfect
24 timing. I don't know if anybody made a phone call,

1 but thank you for that.

2 So we do have a meeting with DHCD next
3 Wednesday. This really seems like this could --
4 which I never would have guessed, it could have some
5 real traction here. So thank you for the motion and
6 we will keep the Board apprised of that meeting and
7 the information regarding that, and next steps.

8 And then my last item, I'm very happy to
9 welcome Ashley Bernard to our LHA team. Ashley was
10 hired last month as an assistant property manager
11 with us. Ashley comes from Metro Housing in Boston.
12 She holds a bachelor degree in psychology from Salem
13 State University. She has over eight years of
14 experience working directly in housing, property
15 management, working with the homeless, elderly,
16 families. And she does have familiarity and
17 experience in working with DHCD and HUD. So she
18 brings some good knowledge, good experience to our
19 team. She's a native Lowellian, and she'll be
20 working under Denise Ryan servicing our residents of
21 AMP 4, Cityview Towers, Belvidere Heights, Francis
22 Gatehouse and Centerville Gardens.

23 So I would like to formally welcome Ashley
24 Bernard to our LHA team.

1 (Applause)

2 And those are my comments, Mr. Chair. Thank
3 you.

4 Mr. Shea: Thank you for that report. Are
5 there any questions by any member of the Board of
6 Commissioners? If not, since Item Number 7, you took
7 general counsel's report, as well as the director's
8 report, we'll combine both those reports that were
9 given into one motion for acceptance. So there'll be
10 a motion made by Commissioner Matt Marr, seconded by
11 Commissioner Joanie Bernes to accept both reports.

12 And with that being the case, the clerk will
13 call the roll.

14 Mr. Garvey: Chairman Shea.

15 Mr. Shea: Yes.

16 Mr. Garvey: Vice Chairman Var.

17 Mr. Var: Yes.

18 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Bernes.

19 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

20 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Elliott.

21 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

22 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Marr.

23 Mr. Marr: Yes.

24 Mr. Garvey: Five years.

1 Mr. Shea: Thank you.

2 Okay. Item Number 7.1.1, motion to approve
3 a contract award to Sanibel Electric Corporation of
4 Wilmington, Mass, a one-year contract period not to
5 exceed the amount of \$100,000.

6 With that being the case, I will entertain
7 that, our Chief Procurement Officer Rita Brousseau to
8 come to the microphone and just speak for the record
9 about this particular motion. Thank you.

10 Ms. Brousseau: Good evening. This bid was
11 for on-call services for electrical. This is so that
12 we can have a vendor on staff -- actually a vendor on
13 contract for services that we can't provide
14 ourselves. We do have electricians inhouse. If
15 they're overwhelmed and we need to parse it out to
16 somebody else, this company is on contract for us to
17 call. They were the lowest, they had low hourly
18 rates, and come very highly recommended.

19 Mr. Shea: You're satisfied?

20 Ms. Brousseau: Very satisfied, yes.

21 Mr. Shea: Just on-call.

22 Ms. Brousseau: Yes, just on-call. If we
23 have a big power outage, we have something that we
24 can't handle, we have someone to call.

1 Mr. Shea: We have one electrician.

2 Ms. Brousseau: My understanding, yes.

3 Mr. Shea: This is a backup in case he needs
4 some help, like what happened to Chelmsford Street a
5 couple of years ago.

6 Ms. Brousseau: Exactly.

7 Mr. Shea: Which was almost a disaster.
8 Commissioner Marr.

9 Mr. Marr: Have we ever used them before, do
10 you know?

11 Ms. Brousseau: Here in the Housing
12 Authority, no. Not to my knowledge since I've been
13 here. I personally worked with them in Lawrence
14 quite a few times. I believe they're still under
15 contract now. I never had any problems with them.

16 Mr. Marr: Okay.

17 Mr. Shea: Okay. Mony, anything?

18 Mr. Var: No.

19 Mr. Elliott: Mr. Chair, just a question.
20 Pro local companies. I like the local companies.
21 What, is there -- was there any particular
22 significant difference? I mean, that's a pretty wide
23 margin. I understand why we're going with the low
24 bid, almost \$9,000. Is there anything that stood out

1 to you?

2 Ms. Brousseau: No, because all I had to do
3 was provide pricing based on the specifications that
4 I asked for. So when you look at the pricing you
5 look at this is what I'm going to provide.
6 Everything that we asked for, that's the price that
7 they were going to offer. So we assume everything is
8 -- there was no indication that it was anything
9 different.

10 Mr. Elliott: As I mentioned, I like local
11 companies. I like to support local businesses. We
12 have to go with the low bid if that's the best price.

13 Ms. Brousseau: Correct.

14 Mr. Elliott: Thank you for that
15 explanation.

16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17 Mr. Shea: Okay. With that being the case,
18 I accept the motion by Commissioner Matt Marr,
19 seconded by Commissioner Mony Var to accept
20 Item Number 7.1.1. With that being the case, the
21 clerk with call the roll.

22 Mr. Garvey: Chairman Shea.

23 Mr. Shea: Yes.

24 Mr. Garvey: Vice Chairman Var.

1 Mr. Var: Yes.

2 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Bernes.

3 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

4 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Elliott.

5 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

6 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Marr.

7 Mr. Marr: Yes.

8 Mr. Garvey: Five years.

9 Mr. Shea: Okay. The next item is Item
10 Number 7.1.2, motion to approve Lowell Housing
11 Authority to secure regional capital assistance
12 program waiver for the administration of state-aided
13 public housing. And I see our two capital asset
14 managers are here. And I guess -- I guess Jonathan
15 will come up and explain. Jonathan, thank you.

16 Mr. Goldfield: Mr. Chairman. Jonathan
17 Goldfield.

18 So the Regional Capital Assistance Team,
19 RCAT, was started back in 2016 by the Department of
20 Housing and Community Development to assist usually
21 small housing -- small to medium-sized housing
22 authorities that don't have an inhouse procurement
23 department like we do. So anything between \$10,000
24 and \$50,000 that's going to be done on the

1 development would be bid -- specified and bid by the
2 RCAT team, which in our case is based in Chelmsford,
3 the Northeast Group. We submitted the application in
4 2016, reapplication in 2019. Every three years you
5 have to resubmit. So this is the application for
6 this current 2022 to 2025 I suppose. And asking for
7 DHCD to grant the waiver again to allow us to
8 continue the way we've been doing our own projects.
9 As far as specifying -- and sometimes we actually
10 will hire our own outside architect as well for
11 larger projects. But we don't have too many of them.
12 Most of our projects are greater than 200,000 and
13 DHCD is directly involved with those. That's in a
14 nutshell.

15 Mr. Shea: Thank you, Jonathan, for those
16 remarks. I have a -- any commissioner have any
17 questions on Item Number 7.1.2?

18 I just have one question. In your report you
19 indicated there's 148 state aided units?

20 Mr. Goldfield: I believe that's the count,
21 yes.

22 Mr. Shea: That's the current count?

23 Mr. Goldfield: I believe it's 148.

24 Mr. Shea: Why did I think it was less than

1 that?

2 Mr. Garvey: We have 132 units in our state
3 consolidated program and 16 units of group home.

4 Mr. Goldfield: Looking at the Colonial and
5 Market Street.

6 Mr. Shea: Okay. I just thought that when I
7 read that I said I wish we did have 148 units, but I
8 guess we do but we don't. Okay. Thank you.

9 With that being the case -- thank you for
10 those comments. I will accept the motion by
11 Commissioner Matt Marr, seconded by Commissioner
12 Joanie Bernes to accept Item Number 7.1.2, and the
13 clerk will call the roll.

14 Mr. Garvey: Chairman Shea.

15 Mr. Shea: Yes.

16 Mr. Garvey: Vice Chairman Var.

17 Mr. Var: Yes.

18 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Bernes.

19 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

20 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Elliott.

21 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

22 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Marr.

23 Mr. Marr: Yes.

24 Mr. Garvey: Five years.

1 Mr. Shea: Thank you.

2 The next item on the agenda is Item Number
3 7.1.3, is the motion to accept the increase in
4 federal housing for Section 8 income limits as
5 determined by the Department of Housing and Urban
6 Development effective April 18th, 2022.

7 And I see present is our chief admission
8 officer, Tha Chhan. And Tha, would you come up and
9 tell us a little bit about this proposal. Thank you.

10 Mr. Chhan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Well typically you have the new income limit
12 on April 1st of every year. At this time it's about
13 18 days late. What's interesting is that the
14 increase is usually around 2 to 3 percent every year.
15 But this time it went up 12 percent. A big jump.
16 It's a big jump. So I'm submitting this request
17 seeking retroactive to 18 of April, because they were
18 a little late, I can put that in place by the 18th of
19 April.

20 Also, the income limit is truly used for
21 determine eligibility of public housing, Section 8.
22 It's a program that we have. We have on the income
23 limit chart, we can see there's three different
24 settings. We have programs that use 30 percent of

1 eligibility, we have programs that use 50 percent of
2 eligibility, and programs that use 80 percent of
3 limit income for eligibility.

4 So I'm submitting this seeking your approval
5 so that we can implement going back to the 18th of
6 April.

7 Thank you.

8 Mr. Shea: Thank you very much, Tha. That's
9 good use.

10 Any question by any commissioner pertaining
11 to Item Number 7.1.3? If not, a motion is made by
12 Commissioner Mony Var, seconded by Commissioner
13 Joanie Bernes to accept Item Number 7.1.3.

14 The clerk will call the roll.

15 Mr. Garvey: Chairman Shea.

16 Mr. Shea: Yes.

17 Mr. Garvey: Vice Chairman Var.

18 Mr. Var: Yes.

19 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Bernes.

20 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

21 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Elliott.

22 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

23 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Marr.

24 Mr. Marr: Yes.

1 Mr. Garvey: Five yeas.

2 Mr. Shea: Thank you. The next item is Item
3 Number 7.1.4, and before us is the motion to approve
4 the change order, furnish and install battery powered
5 lowering device in the amount of \$19,536, elevator
6 replacement at South Common Village which is at 43
7 Summer Street. And change order request is something
8 the Board hates, change orders.

9 Mr. Goldfield: We do hate change orders.
10 But sometimes you have no choice.

11 Mr. Shea: Pardon me, with respect to this
12 we have in front of us Attorney Jonathan Goldfield.

13 Mr. Goldfield: Thank you. So what we did
14 -- this is for the six-story elevator at 43 Summer
15 Street which is the first of the six high rises at
16 South Common that are getting all new elevators.

17 Actually, also the low risers are getting
18 them as well, 13 buildings. 9 buildings. Excuse me.

19 But this particular bid, we put it out for
20 both an emergency generator and the emergency
21 lowering device. And we would do what's called a D
22 duct on the bid, it's really Rita's department, but
23 that end of it.

24 So what we're concerned about is the

1 generators are expensive and it would run the
2 elevator while the fuel supply lasted, allowing
3 people to go up and down while the power outage is
4 occurring. Whereas the lowering device -- actually
5 that's not a correct term. It's actually an
6 emergency backup power device that will move the
7 elevator car to -- up or down, whichever floor is
8 closer, so that the elevator won't be stuck between
9 floors.

10 You have to have one or the other in order
11 for the state to certify, the International Building
12 Code. So obviously the device, the emergency backup
13 power device is a less expensive item. And we had it
14 in there in case the budget was -- the bids came in
15 too high we could deduct the generator and just go
16 with the emergency backup. The bids came in lower
17 than our budget and we're able to award with the
18 generator for approval. Then we find out a couple
19 weeks later, we went to order it, the generator's
20 about a 52-week lead time for a small generator under
21 100 kilowatts. This is a 42 kilowatt generator.
22 52 weeks. A full year lead time. We would not be
23 able to begin the elevator construction until we have
24 all the components in. We don't want to wait a year.

1 That would create labor increases, more parts supply
2 increases, everything would have been slowed down.
3 Plus the risk of our budget year, you know, running
4 out, you know, three-year life on the budget.

5 So we made a decision after doing a lot of
6 financial analysis, talking about the contract
7 inhouse, the best mechanism would be this change
8 order. Which was in the original specs to begin
9 with, and carried in the original bid. But in this
10 case we had to treat it like a change order because
11 the contract was not awarded with this device. It
12 was awarded with a generator.

13 So we're going to get, with your permission,
14 the emergency backup, approximately a 16-week lead
15 time, get the elevator built and operational within
16 the -- hopefully within a reasonable time frame.
17 When the generator comes in in a year, and we've
18 already ordered it, we'll then install it, have it
19 reinspected, and then we'll have both devices. You
20 can't reuse it somewhere else. It changes the whole
21 circuitry and wiring so it's -- the engineer says you
22 can't take it out and put it somewhere else.

23 So it is a \$19,000 item. Pretty reasonable
24 with the price range that we're dealing with here.

1 We'd be able to plan ahead with the other elevators
2 that we're putting in. It won't happen at 50 Summer
3 Street, that's a double elevator and a hundred
4 kilowatt generator. So hopefully those will come in
5 on time. That hasn't gone out to bid yet that way
6 anyway.

7 So that's where we are with this and that's
8 what this change order is about. It's complicated
9 but it makes sense. You have to have these emergency
10 devices on these elevators as a matter of code.

11 Mr. Shea: The only thing I'll say, you used
12 the word complicated. It sure is complicated.

13 With that being the case, before I ask any
14 questions, any member of the Board of Commissioners
15 want to -- I agree with this. It is complicated,
16 Jonathan, so just bear with me. You have \$700,000
17 program that's on hold.

18 Mr. Goldfield: Not really. We're moving
19 ahead.

20 Mr. Shea: But you have -- you have -- did
21 you tell us that you're not going to get it for a
22 year?

23 Mr. Goldfield: The generator.

24 Mr. Shea: Right.

1 Mr. Goldfield: That's why we have to do
2 this change order. No one knew this.

3 Mr. Shea: Is that all part of the new --
4 like I was asking Commissioner Marr, is that all part
5 of the -- you know, it's all tied up.

6 Mr. Goldfield: Yes. It's supply demand.
7 Apparently the generators, smaller generators under a
8 hundred kilowatts, they just can't get them built and
9 delivered. And the parts for them, you know, in the
10 manufacturing process, it's kind of like the chips in
11 the Ford pickup trucks, you can't get them. So
12 there's things they can't get to build them to get
13 them out to meet demand for whatever reason.

14 Mr. Shea: This item's been approved by the
15 capital committee, right? Subcommittee.

16 Mr. Goldfield: Normally change orders don't
17 go -- the project, of course. Yeah, as part of last
18 year's.

19 Mr. Shea: You have the funding?

20 Mr. Goldfield: Yes, of course.

21 Mr. Shea: So we'll go out to bid.

22 Okay. With that being the case, a motion by
23 Commissioner Matt Marr, seconded by Commissioner
24 Rodney Elliott to approve Item Number 7.1.4. And the

1 clerk will call the roll.

2 Mr. Garvey: Chairman Shea.

3 Mr. Shea: Yes.

4 Mr. Garvey: Vice Chairman Var.

5 Mr. Var: Yes.

6 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Bernes.

7 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

8 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Elliott.

9 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

10 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Marr.

11 Mr. Marr: Yes.

12 Mr. Garvey: Five yeas.

13 Mr. Shea: Thank you, Jonathan.

14 Item Number 8, Mr. Director. Item number 9
15 (a) motion of board members.

16 Mr. Garvey: No motions.

17 Mr. Shea: Item Number 9 (b), executive
18 director announcements.

19 Mr. Garvey: No more announcements.

20 Mr. Shea: Before we adjourn I just want to
21 indicate the next meeting is going to be held on
22 Wednesday, June 8th at 5:00 p.m. And as was
23 indicated earlier by our executive director tonight,
24 assistant executive director, tomorrow morning at

1 9 o'clock to 11:00 is the grand reopening of the
2 admission office at Appleton Street, which is a
3 major, major move for us. Silent, but it's major.

4 I was up there just to take a look at the
5 facilities and it's amazing how nice it is and
6 employees just -- the only question I have for the
7 director is did we get any publicity? Did you send
8 out a press clipping? I know that, from my
9 understanding, you considered sending out an article.
10 If it goes out to the paper, they select some. They
11 use some, they don't select others. Did we do
12 anything with respect to publicly advertising?

13 Mr. Garvey: We did. Our executive
14 assistant put it on our social media page, website,
15 and he sent out an invitation blast to our partners
16 and stakeholder email which includes nearly 800
17 individuals made up of residents, landlords,
18 community partners, elected officials, board members.

19 Mr. Shea: But we didn't sit down and write
20 anything to the local newspaper indicating -- or for
21 that matter WCAP, which has -- they have a good
22 following on their radio programming. I just think
23 we're missing the boat.

24 Mr. Garvey: Okay.

1 Mr. Shea: But maybe I'm wrong. But, you
2 know, some of them send -- they don't always agree.
3 Maybe I'm wrong. But I just listen to some of this
4 stuff, but I think it's a major accomplishment for
5 the Housing Authority and the Board should be
6 commended for voting the appropriation of it. This
7 is major. And it's being treated like -- I don't
8 know how it's being treated, but anyhow. I guess
9 beauty's in the eye of the beholder. And I'm looking
10 at things differently than other people.

11 With that being the case we're going to just
12 adjourn and we'll have a motion by Commissioner
13 Rodney Elliott and seconded by Commissioner Matt Marr
14 to adjourn. The clerk will call the roll.

15 Mr. Garvey: Chairman Shea.

16 Mr. Shea: Yes.

17 Mr. Garvey: Vice Chairman Var.

18 Mr. Var: Yes.

19 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Bernes.

20 Ms. Bernes: Yes.

21 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Elliott.

22 Mr. Elliott: Yes.

23 Mr. Garvey: Commissioner Marr.

24 Mr. Marr: Yes.

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Mr. Garvey: Good evening.

(Whereupon the Board of Commission's meeting
adjourned at 6:02 p.m.)