

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Somerville Housing Authority (SHA) duly called and held on July 23, 2026.

The Regular Meeting of the Somerville Housing Authority was held in-person at the Mystic Activity Center at 530 Mystic Avenue, Somerville on Thursday, July 23, 2026, at 4:00 PM.

The Executive Director Diane L. Cohen called the roll at 4:02 p.m. Upon roll call Commissioners present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT

Joseph Capuano
Eleanor Rances
Adeleine Mannion
James Zamer

ABSENT

Dennis Lemard

Others in Attendance: Adam Garvey, Deputy Director; Arnaldo Velazquez, Director of Finance & Administration; Matt Lincoln, Director of Leased Housing; Shannon Bennett, Director of Resident Services; Brian Langton, Director of Modernization; Billy Rymill, SHA Public Safety; Rey Santana, Mystic Tenant Association; Emily Eschmann, Executive Secretary.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(a) Regular Board Meeting – June 25, 2026

Commissioner Zamer made a motion to approve the minutes of Regular Board Meeting held on June 25, 2026. Commissioner Mannion seconded the motion.
All in favor: 4-0

2. COMMUNITY INPUT/RESIDENT COUNCILS

None this month.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

D. Cohen offered to respond to any questions from the Board regarding the monthly department reports. She advised that financial statements were not available for this month's meeting, explaining that the Finance Department is currently focused on preparing for the upcoming year-end audit. D. Cohen stated that the 2026 Year-End Audit

is scheduled to begin the following Wednesday and will include a review of financial records, tenant files, TARS submissions, rent calculations, and waiting list administration.

Director of Finance and Administration Arnaldo Velazquez reported that the Accounting Manager recently resigned and that two new staff members have joined the department this year. He stated that staff are working to ensure all financial records are accurate and up to date in preparation for the audit before presenting updated financial statements to the Board.

D. Cohen stated that the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is currently facing an estimated \$1.5 million funding shortfall. Staff continue to work with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and implement cost-containment measures. A waiver request is included in New Business as an additional cost-saving measure intended to preserve assistance for current voucher holders. Other efforts include reviewing payment standards and utility allowances, limiting relocations that would increase subsidy costs, and implementing additional expense controls. D. Cohen also noted that implementation of HOTMA (Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act) will require further policy updates.

D. Cohen discussed anticipated federal changes affecting households with ineligible immigration status. Currently, these households pay a higher tenant rent portion because the federal government does not subsidize undocumented household members. Under a proposed federal rule expected to become final in November, households containing ineligible members may no longer be permitted to reside in federally assisted housing. Approximately nine Section 8 households and 35–40 federal public housing households could be impacted. SHA is working with the City of Somerville regarding potential assistance through municipal voucher programs and other measures should these changes take effect. Staff have submitted comments and advocated against the proposed changes and will continue efforts to minimize any impact on affected families.

D. Cohen informed the Board that the SHA Public Safety Department will participate in National Night Out on August 4th. SHA Staff are preparing informational materials, including a new Police Department brochure, and will be attending the event. An additional community event is also being planned at the Mystic property.

D. Cohen reported that the Home Rule Petition for SHA Public Safety to regain police powers has been filed after meeting with Representative Erika Uytterhoeven. SHA will continue working with the legislative delegation to seek approval during the upcoming legislative session. Approval of the petition is necessary before the Authority can implement planned improvements and expanded capabilities for the Public Safety Department.

D. Cohen reported that staff continue working with the City of Somerville and POAH (Preservation of Affordable Housing) on the Section 108 loan, including finalizing the funding structure and determining how the loan proceeds will be utilized.

D. Cohen stated funds have been wired to Rockport Mortgage as part of the refinancing of the Capen Court and Bryant Manor developments. The refinancing will pay off existing debt, strengthen reserve balances, and improve SHA's ability to pursue future housing acquisition opportunities.

D. Cohen reported that the Housing Authority continues to make improvements throughout its properties through various grant opportunities, including the installation of new community gardens, additional trash receptacles, expanded bicycle racks, and continued efforts to improve parking availability for residents.

Director of Modernization Brian Langton provided an update on ongoing modernization and site improvement projects. He reported that the final phase of the bump-out project is underway, including repairs to concrete cracks. The cracks were temporarily filled with a black sealant, which has generated resident complaints due to its appearance. B. Langton explained that the repaired areas will be painted with a durable coating designed to provide a longer-lasting finish. Painting is expected to begin in approximately two weeks. Additional exterior building painting will also continue using lift equipment.

B. Langton also addressed concerns regarding areas of dead grass where construction work has occurred. He explained that a previous drainage project caused significant damage to the lawn, which was not adequately restored at the time. SHA is now working to replace the damaged grass and plans to install sod where necessary. He added that the irrigation system will be checked to ensure the sprinklers are functioning properly after the sod replacement.

Commissioner Zamer asked whether contractors are responsible for repairing damage caused by their work.

B. Langton responded that contractors are responsible for restoring areas damaged during construction. He explained that, in this case, it was initially believed that reseeding would be sufficient to restore the grass; however, it has since been determined that sod replacement is necessary.

5. DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (IF NECESSARY)

Update provided with the Executive Director Report.

6. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE (IF NECESSARY)

Update provided with the Executive Director Report.

7. NEW BUSINESS

(a) Approval of SHA Maintenance Work Orders and Resident Charges.

Deputy Director Adam Garvey explained that the proposed policy had been discussed at the previous meeting and that resident feedback had been incorporated into the final procedure. He stated that the policy reflects the actual cost of materials and labor and that charges will only be assessed for damages resulting from malicious or negligent actions by residents.

D. Cohen noted that the policy is necessary to ensure that units can be repaired when damage occurs.

Commissioner Rances and Rey Santana asked whether residents would be informed of the charges. A. Garvey responded that the policy will be made available on the SHA website, included in resident welcome packets, and maintained in housing managers' offices. Diane also provided examples of the types of malicious damage that could result in resident charges.

Commissioner Rances made a motion to approve the SHA Maintenance Work Orders and Resident Charges. Commissioner Zamer seconded the motion.

All in Favor: 4-0

(b) Approval to terminate the current Executive Director Contract effective March 31, 2026, and authorize the execution of a new Contract effective April 1, 2026.

Commissioner Mannion made a motion to approve the termination of the current Executive Director Contract effective March 31, 2026, and authorize the execution of a new contract effective April 1, 2026. Commissioner Zamer seconded the motion.

All in Favor: 4-0

(c) Acceptance of Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) Contract for Financial Assistance (CFA) Amendment #20 in the amount of \$4,665,466.74 for the Clarendon Redevelopment Project.

D. Cohen explained that the funding had already been obligated for the project but was being transferred from a different funding source, requiring Board acceptance of the amendment.

Commissioner Mannion made a motion to accept the EOHLC Contract for Financial Assistance (CFA) Amendment #20 in the amount of \$4,665,466.74 for the Clarendon Redevelopment Project. Commissioner Rances seconded the motion.

All in Favor: 4-0

- (d) Approval of contract with P.C. Richard & Son for refrigerators, electric stoves, wall ovens, and stove tops.

A. Garvey reported that the appliances were competitively bid in June. Four bids were received, with one bid rejected. P.C. Richard & Son was recommended based on its competitive pricing, product quality, and satisfactory performance as the Authority's current vendor. The one-year contract includes two optional one-year extensions.

Commissioner Mannion made a motion to enter into a 1-year contract with two 1-year options with P.C. Richard & Son in the amount of \$276,045. Commissioner Zamer seconded the motion.

All in Favor: 4-0

- (e) Approval of Leased Housing Department Proposed Regulatory Waiver Request.

Leased Housing Director Matt Lincoln explained that the Housing Choice Voucher Program continues to experience funding shortfalls but has made significant progress in addressing the issue. He stated that the proposed waiver request is part of HUD's Shortfall Prevention Team recommendations and would provide SHA with additional cost-saving measures if needed.

He explained that the waiver would allow the Authority to implement payment standard changes immediately, after providing a 30-day notice to participants. Additionally, the waiver would allow SHA to reduce the payment standard below the HUD required minimum of 90% of the Fair Market Rent (FMR). While the changes could reduce tenant subsidies, the waiver would be used only as a last resort and in the most targeted manner possible. He emphasized that the Authority's goal is to avoid terminating participants or reducing the number of vouchers available.

Commissioner Zamer made a motion to approve the Leased Housing Department Proposed Regulatory Waiver Request. Commissioner Rances seconded the motion.

All in Favor: 4-0

8. OPEN SESSION for topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Mannion made a motion to adjourn at 4:31 p.m. Commissioner Zamer seconded the motion.

All in favor: 4-0

Diane L. Cohen

Diane L. Cohen
Executive Director

ATTEST

A True Copy

Documents presented during the Somerville Housing Authority Board Meeting on 7/23/26.

- Agenda
- 1(a) Copy of minutes from the Regular Board Meeting – June 25, 2026
- Executive Director's Report
 - Report: Tenant Selection Report – June 2026
 - Report: Vacancy Report June 2026
 - Report: Leased Housing
 - Report: Resident Services
 - Report: Public Safety
 - Report: Work Orders Issued: June 2026
 - Report: SHA Modernization Contract Log – Active Jobs July 2026
- New Business 7(a): Maintenance Work Orders and Resident Charges
- New Business 7(b): Memo: Required Board Approval to Terminate Existing Contract Prior to New Term
- New Business 7(c): EOHLC Amendment #20 to the Contract for Financial Assistance 5001
- New Business 7(d): Memo: Refrigerators, 30" Electric stoves, Wall Ovens, and Stove Tops
- New Business 7(e): Memo: Proposed Regulatory Waiver Request
- New Business 7(e): Memo: Request for Regulatory Waiver as Described in PIH Notice 2025-28
- New Business 7(e): MA031 HCV Leasing and Spending Projection