Board Commissioner's Board Meeting Minutes
Date: September 9, 2026
Start Time: 12:04PM
Quorum: 12:04PM

Mission: To provide quality, safe, and affordable housing; to create opportunities for SHA residents' self-sufficiency and economic independence, and to empower individual potential in an environment where people want to live, work, and build communities.

Commissioner Attendees: Rickey Brown, Milton Martinez, Quwanka Ellerby, Doug Reicher, Monica Williams, and Bethaida (Bea) Gonzalez

Excused: Patricia McBride

Other: Counsel Brad Hunt of Mackenzie Hughes, Allyson Carpenter of McCormack Baron Salazar, Acting Executive Director Jalyn Clifford, SHA Staff Members, Jim Ryan of Syracuse University, and Marquita Hetherington of SHA and Blueprint 15

New Board Member Welcome

Bea Gonzalez was formally sworn in at 1206pm as a member of the Syracuse Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

Officer Elections

Following the resignation of the previous Board Chair, Ryan Benz, the Board conducted elections to fill the positions of Chair and Vice Chair.

Legal counsel explained that elections would be conducted in public session in accordance with the Authority's bylaws and the New York State Open Meetings Law.

Election of Chair: Monica Williams nominated Rickey Brown to serve as Chair, with the nomination seconded by Doug Reicher. With no additional nominations, the Board unanimously elected Commissioner Brown as Chair.

Election of Vice Chair: Rickey Brown nominated Doug Reicher to serve as Vice Chair, with the nomination seconded by Monica Williams. With no additional nominations, the Board unanimously elected Commissioner Reicher as Vice Chair.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Resolution Authorizing Approval of 07/23/2026 Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Monica Williams, 2nd by Doug Reicher, abstention by Bea Gonzalez, no objections or further discussion, motion carried.

Committee Reports:

Modernization & Development Committee

Staff provided updates on ongoing modernization projects, grant awards, and anticipated construction activities.

- James Geddes Row Houses – Siding and Window Replacement
    - Bids were opened on August 27, 2026, for siding and window replacement at the remaining 18 James Geddes Row House buildings. Three bids were received, with Zero Draft submitting the

lowest bid of approximately $2.89 million. The bid was within the independent cost estimate, and the architect recommended proceeding with the award.
    - Staff also discussed the project's 30% MWBE participation goal, consisting of 18% MBE and 12% WBE participation. Commissioner Brown offered assistance to firms experiencing challenges with the certification process.

- James Geddes Security Camera Project
    - Staff reported that SHA received a $250,000 HUD Emergency Safety and Security Grant for FY 2025.
    - One bid was received from IK Systems in the amount of $373,313.62. The architect reviewed the proposal and determined that the pricing was consistent with market conditions.

Additional Modernization Updates

- Benderson Heights: An updated independent cost estimate was received, and contract documents were being prepared. Bid opening was anticipated in October, with a potential contract award in October or November.
- James Geddes Roof Replacement: Cost estimates and proposals from architectural and engineering firms remained pending.
- Central Village Flooring Replacement: SHA was awaiting a decision on supplemental HUD grant funding. No anticipated award date was available.
- Security Station Upgrades: Preliminary cost estimates were received, and staff were preparing to proceed with design and bidding.
- Scattered Sites Flooring Replacement: Work remained ongoing, with improved coordination in occupied units and fewer resident complaints.
- AMP 74 Window and Lintel Replacement: The project was substantially complete, with remaining administrative closeout and retainage items.
- Toomey Abbott Towers Elevator Modernization: Elevator No. 2 was complete, and work had begun on the final elevator. The project was approximately one month ahead of schedule, with completion anticipated in approximately 14 weeks.

Grant Updates

- SHA received approximately $100,000 through HAI (Housing Authority Insurance) Group. Funding was allocated toward several property improvements, including smoke and carbon monoxide detectors at James Geddes, pavilion repairs at Mulberry Terrace, and planned parking lot and ceiling repairs.
- Staff also announced a second $250,000 HUD Emergency Safety and Security Grant for FY 2026, which would support security camera improvements at Ross Towers.

Other

- The Board was advised that the October meeting had been rescheduled to October 22, 2026, due to scheduling conflicts.

Finance Committee Report

- The Finance Committee reviewed the ongoing Yardi software conversion, financial reporting challenges, rent collections, utility accounts, and upcoming HUD reporting requirements.

- Yardi Conversion and Financial Reporting
    - Staff reported that the transition to Yardi continued to affect financial reporting and property-level accounting. Financial statements were not available for presentation.
    - A significant discrepancy was identified at Pioneer Homes, where reported rent revenue was

approximately $50,000 compared with an expected $200,000. Staff explained that the discrepancy appeared to involve the classification of rent revenue and tenant payment agreement activity during the conversion.
    - Corrections to account coding and revenue allocations remained ongoing. Staff indicated that they were increasingly able to make corrections internally as their familiarity with the system improved.

- RentCafe and Online Payments
    - The Committee discussed resident adoption of RentCafe, including online payment options, registration assistance, and opportunities to improve participation.
    - During August, 75 payments were processed through RentCafe by 44 households. Staff explained that some households made multiple payments, including payments toward outstanding balances.
    - Resident Support Services continued working with residents to encourage registration and provide assistance with the platform.

- Utility Billing and National Grid
    - Staff discussed continuing challenges with National Grid and other utility providers, including missing invoices, delayed payment processing, account discrepancies, and shutoff notices.
    - Some properties experienced issues where payments made to master accounts were not properly applied to individual accounts by National Grid.
    - Staff established a working relationship with a National Grid representative to identify and reconcile SHA accounts.
    - SHA was also preparing to transition utility bill processing to Yardi Energy Services to improve account management, invoice tracking, and payment processing.
    - Commissioners expressed concern about the impact of billing discrepancies on residents. Staff reported that they had met with resident representatives to explain the issues and encouraged residents to forward notices for assistance.

- Rent Collections
    - Staff reported that rent collections through August were approximately $930,000 below normal levels.
    - The decline affected both public housing and affordable housing properties. Some properties that historically achieved near-full collections were reporting rates closer to 80%.
    - Staff attributed part of the decline to the Yardi conversion, including inaccurate resident statements and confusion about balances owed.
    - To address these issues, SHA was:
        - Conducting account reconciliations, beginning with AOT and Pioneer Homes.
        - Communicating with residents regarding payment obligations despite statement discrepancies.
        - Utilizing temporary staff to assist with account reviews.
        - Recruiting a position dedicated to collections.
        - Consulting with other housing authorities regarding their collection departments and best practices.
    - Commissioners discussed the importance of resolving discrepancies promptly, particularly before the holiday season, when collections historically become more challenging.

- HUD Financial Data Schedule
    - Staff reported that the Financial Data Schedule submission had been delayed due to the software conversion.
    - The original submission deadline was August 31, 2026, with an automatic grace period through September 15.
    - SHA had requested an extension which is expected to be granted, and was working with its financial consultants to complete the submission.

Management Report

Syracuse University Scholarship Presentation

- Representatives from Syracuse University attended to recognize the continuation of the Co-Generation Scholarship partnership between Syracuse University and SHA, established in 1988.
- The scholarship provides eligible residents from designated SHA neighborhoods with financial assistance covering tuition, housing, meals, books, and related educational expenses.
- The 2026 scholarship recipient, Marquita Hetherington, was recognized for her academic achievements, community involvement, and contributions to homeownership initiatives.
- Ms. Hetherington attended Onondaga Community College and would continue her education at Syracuse University.
- Staff highlighted the scholarship's history of supporting residents in obtaining college degrees and expressed appreciation for Syracuse University's continued partnership.

HUD Emergency Safety and Security Grants

- Staff provided additional information regarding the two $250,000 HUD awards.
- The FY 2025 grant would support interior and exterior security cameras at James Geddes, including 418 Fabius Street and 427 Tully Street.
- The FY 2026 grant would support camera upgrades at Ross Towers, including stairwells, elevators, and exterior areas.
- Commissioners asked questions regarding access to camera footage, privacy protections, and information sharing.
- Staff explained that access was restricted and that SHA maintained an agreement allowing the Syracuse Police Department to access security footage. If requests involving other agencies were to come in, that they would require additional consideration, with significant policy changes brought before the Board.
- Staff also confirmed that HUD prohibits the use of facial recognition technology under the applicable grant requirements.

418 Fabius Street HVAC and Decarbonization Project

- Staff provided an update on the proposed HVAC modernization and decarbonization project at 418 Fabius Street.
- The project would utilize an innovative exterior-mounted HVAC system intended to improve energy efficiency, ventilation, resident comfort, and building performance while minimizing disruption to occupied units.
- SHA previously secured a $3 million NYSERDA Empire Building Challenge award. However, changes to federal funding availability affected the project's financing, including approximately $1.9 million in Department of Energy funding placed on hold and the loss of another anticipated funding source.
- Staff reported a remaining funding gap of approximately $1.2 million.
- SHA continued working with NYSERDA, HCR, PEACE, and other partners to identify replacement funding and financing options.
- The proposed design would also incorporate resident input into exterior artwork and building aesthetics.
- Commissioner Gonzalez indicated that she would recuse herself from matters involving HCR funding where appropriate.

Annual $10K Basketball Tournament

- Staff provided an overview of the annual youth summer basketball tournament and its positive impact on SHA residents and the surrounding community.
- The tournament included multiple youth age divisions, including a newly introduced division for children ages 9–12, and continued opportunities for high school girls.
- Staff emphasized the importance of providing free recreational activities, meals, positive role models, and community engagement throughout the summer.
- SHA recognized CenTrio for its continued sponsorship, including a $10,000 contribution, and thanked staff, volunteers, and community partners for their participation.

Neighborhood Health and Wellness Fair

- Staff reported on the August 29, 2026, Neighborhood Health and Wellness Fair.
- The event included:
    - More than 40 participating community organizations.
    - 13 sponsors and five partners.
    - Approximately $15,364 in donations and in-kind support.
    - 900 pounds of fresh produce distributed.
    - 592 lunches served.
    - 331 backpacks filled with school supplies distributed.
    - Additional services included vision screenings, blood pressure screenings, hair braiding, and healthy cooking demonstrations.
- Staff thanked participating organizations and commissioners for their continued support.

Online Rent Payment Incentives

- Staff announced an ongoing incentive program intended to encourage residents to register for and utilize RentCafe.
- Residents participating in online rent payments would be eligible for monthly prize drawings through the end of 2026.
- At the time of the meeting, 126 residents had registered for RentCafe.
- Commissioners asked about transaction fees, credit card chargebacks, cybersecurity protections, and notification procedures in the event of a data breach.
- Staff agreed to obtain additional information regarding the protections and contractual requirements associated with Yardi's payment platform.

Development Report

AOT RAD Rehabilitation

- Representatives from McCormack Baron Salazar provided updates on the ongoing AOT rehabilitation project.
- Final tenant-in-place relocations were underway to allow construction to proceed in the remaining buildings.
- The project was progressing ahead of schedule, with completion anticipated in summer 2027.
- Approximately 100 rehabilitated units were expected to become available for lease-up, with outreach focused on eligible elderly households at Pioneer Homes.

East Adams Phase I

- Construction continued to progress, with framing and stair tower construction underway.
- The project was reported to be more than 20% complete, with anticipated completion in late 2027.

East Adams Phase II

- Phase II, the senior housing development, was approximately 10% complete.
- Staff reported that earlier soil-related challenges had been addressed and that the project was moving forward.
- A groundbreaking ceremony was scheduled for September 29, 2026.

East Adams Phase III

- Staff reported that preparations continued for the anticipated Phase III financial closing by the end of 2026.
- The development team was working with Enterprise, M&T Bank, HUD, and other partners to obtain the necessary financing and regulatory approvals.
- Board resolutions supporting the closing were presented for consideration.

East Adams Phases IV, VI, and VIII

- Staff reported that work continued on brownfield program requirements and applications for state tax credit financing.
- Pre-applications to HCR were anticipated later this year.
- The development team was targeting financial closings for Phases IV and VI by the end of 2027.
- Commissioners discussed relocation planning, resident engagement, and the availability of suitable replacement housing.
- Staff explained that Phases IV and VI would require resident relocation, while Phase VIII was a vacant site and would not.
- A draft relocation plan had been prepared and was under review by project partners. Resident meetings were anticipated in late September or early October to discuss relocation rights, resources, available housing options, and timelines.
- The Board discussed the importance of engaging residents early, particularly those who may need assistance resolving credit issues, outstanding utility balances, or other barriers to securing housing in the private market.
- Staff also discussed seeking a HUD waiver related to the financial impact of holding vacant SHA units for relocating residents.

Eastwood Heights Rehabilitation

- Staff reported that rehabilitation work continued at Eastwood Heights.
- Residents in buildings A through F had returned following completion of work, with buildings G and H scheduled next.
- Elevator modernization expected to be completed in early November.
- To minimize disruption, residents on affected floors would be offered options to remain in place, temporarily relocate to hotel accommodations, or stay with family members during elevator construction.

Resolutions

Resolution Approving Award of General Construction Contract for AMP 73 James Geddes Siding and Window Replacement: Motion made by Doug Reicher, 2nd by Monica Williams, motion carried unanimously.

Resolution Approving Award of General Construction Contract for AMP 73 James Geddes Security Cameras: Motion made by Doug Reicher, 2nd by Milton Martinez, motion carried unanimously.

Resolutions of the Syracuse Housing Authority Authorizing Participation in the Phase III East Adams Redevelopment Project: Motion made by Doug Reicher, 2nd by Milton Martinez, abstention by Bea Gonzalez, no objections or further discussion, motion carried.

Resolutions of the Syracuse Housing Authority Support for City Predevelopment Funding for East Adams Redevelopment Project: Motion made by Doug Reicher, 2nd by Milton Martinez, motion carried unanimously.

Regular meeting concluded at 1:15PM: Motion by Monica Williams, 2nd by Milton Martinez, motion carried unanimously.

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Chair

ATTESTS:

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Jalyn Clifford, Secretary