

Commissioner roll call was given at 4:33 p.m. The Briefing was held via teleconference, with an in-person option at the SHA Central office. Commissioners Crutchfield and Minor were absent from the Briefing.

Housing Operations, “A Day in the Life”

Mr. Brandon introduced this topic and Housing Operations Director Dave Wellings, who then introduced Low Income Public Housing (LIPH) and Seattle Senior Housing Program (SSHP) Property Management Administrator Erica Alexander, LIPH South Sr. Property Manager Marisa Breton, LIPH Downtown Sr. Property Manager James Suarez, and Jefferson Terrace Sr. Property Manager Martha Owens. Ms. Alexander described how the LIPH properties are grouped together under each property management administrator and provided an overview of the staff hierarchy within property management. She also described how JobLink participants are able to fill some of the positions in that hierarchy.

At Ms. Alexander’s request, Ms. Breton provided more details about the LIPH South portfolio which includes seven different properties. She described monthly staff meetings of each position in the portfolio, as well as monthly all-portfolio meetings. There are also quarterly meetings with residents and special events that go above-and-beyond the SHA community builder-run activities. As for one very important update at an LIPH South property, Ms. Breton described a Center Park trash enclosure relocation project that was completed in March 2026 which both improved the enclosure as well as made it secure. Another high note is the support provided to non-paying residents as well. In 2025 there were five evictions and only one was for non-payment of rent. In 2026, there has only been one eviction. As for non-paying residents, twenty are now paid in full and five households voluntarily moved out. As compared to the encouraging numbers there, the number of security-related incidents in 2025 were unfortunately double or more-than-double what were encountered in 2024; this tracks with the overall crime and general incident rate reported across Seattle. This includes people picking through garbage, vandalism of residents’ doors, shattered building door glass, fires set, and resident mental health concerns. On a more humorous note, two ferrets were found roaming the hallway by staff one morning and the owner was never determined.

Commissioner Purcell asked about how there are fewer staff numbers than properties in the LIPH South portfolio; does this mean each employee is assigned two buildings? Ms. Alexander replied with an explanation of staffing and hierarchy in that portfolio. Commissioner Purcell asked how much time each staff person spends in each building. Ms. Breton replied that one property manager has four buildings and the other property manager has three. They split their time between these buildings throughout the week but have to be flexible and pivot as needed to meet any urgent needs at specific properties. Commissioner Howard commented that it should be known that property managers aren’t always present in any of their buildings as they may have office work to complete. Assistant property managers are more likely to be present, but they have various administrative tasks, trainings, and crises at other buildings that also require their attention. She stated that having staff covering a number of buildings is generally inadequate. Mr. Brandon replied that it’s fluid, and at times it is inadequate, but SHA can

share more details about it and ask the commissioners what they want in the future. Commissioner Howard responded that only she and one other commissioner live in an SHA building; the others don't understand what needs to be done to run a property. Mr. Brandon re-emphasized his comment that this is a starting point.

Upon an invitation from Mr. Brandon, Mr. Suarez described the LIPH Downtown portfolio. It comprises six high-rise buildings and 15 staff members. Throughout 2025, staff hosted gatherings to allow residents to interact with one another and with staff and strengthen these relationships with one another. He stated that two high-rises experienced elevator issues, and one of those also encountered power outages. At Bayview Tower, there was an impressive flooring replacement project completed in 2025, and at two other properties, some significant pest control issues were addressed successfully. Commissioner Howard asked about the "homelessness mitigation" noted on the presentation slide regarding Capitol Park. Mr. Suarez responded that physically cleaning up trash and grime from the exterior of that property also deterred loitering. Continuing with his presentation, Mr. Suarez stated that a resident survey resulted in staff hearing that residents most want availability from staff and reliable communications with them. To that end, there is a single person whose phone number anyone at an LIPH Downtown property can call, anytime, and get a response. Commissioner Howard asked if that person was in a permanent role or a temporary one, and Mr. Suarez replied that it is a temporary program, but he hopes it becomes permanent.

Mr. Suarez described some challenges that staff face. These include managing multiple residents' needs at once, responding to emergencies or health and safety situations, mediating conflicts between neighbors, working in aging buildings with ongoing maintenance issues, and staff safety and security. He described marked increases from 2024 to 2025 in critical incidents at LIPH Downtown properties, with a decrease solely in the category of property damage and vandalism. Commissioner Howard asked how SHA can support staff members who face safety, security, and stress issues. Mr. Wellings replied that Housing Operations has a contractor who SHA refers staff to, and Rachel Steward (Deputy Director, Housing Operations) added that this group is called Restore Therapy and is meant to support staff who encounter shocking things during their work. This service is meant to be immediately available to staff and act as a bridge to more long-term support that utilizes the general benefits staff have. Commissioner Ryan asked for more details about the critical incident report process at SHA. Mr. Wellings replied that there is a large group who these reports are distributed to and it includes himself and Ms. Steward, as well as safety employees in Human Resources and others. These reports are written by the staff who encountered the incident, and they are typically completed after the incident has been addressed. These incidents can run the gamut from more common things like a trip and fall incident due to uneven sidewalks, to something more unusual like a resident attempting self-harm and a property assistant intervening.

Mr. Suarez continued with his presentation, describing some challenges staff have faced. Things such as a resident with a mental health challenge smearing blood on their door, hoarding, pest issues, and a disgruntled resident piling up books outside the

property manager's office door to prevent it from opening. Looking forward, Mr. Suarez hopes to continue with more security and safety enhancements, expanding the customer service program that provides a constant point of contact for residents, and continuing with resident engagement efforts.

After Ms. Alexanders' brief introduction of Jefferson Terrace and description of the change in its resident population following the building's recent rehab, Ms. Owens took over the presentation. She introduced her staff with a team photo and described some community events they had put on for residents and staff to attend. These include bingo, karaoke, crime prevention and fire safety events, as well as a resource fair and ongoing community meetings. Staff also hosted a meeting with residents to prepare them for their first apartment inspection. They collaborated with the pest control and clutter support teams for this meeting, and this led to 70% of residents passing inspection which is outstanding. Ms. Owens emphasized that without this kind of preparatory meeting, a much greater proportion of residents will often post notes on their door on the day of inspections stating they are ill, etc., in order to avoid the inspection. That happened far less than expected this time around, which was very encouraging.

In 2025, there were no non-payment evictions. The resident service coordinator, Julio, helped 22 of 34 non-paying residents gain financial assistance, and cultivated a relationship between residents and the United Way and El Centro de la Raza. Ms. Owens described some of the incident reports in 2025—four deaths, nine mental health/harassment incidents, four vandalism issues, and 21 assault/verbal/physical incidents. She described one incident in particular, which was when a staff member asked an unhoused person to vacate the stairway, was then chased up the stairwell by them, and finally had a machete brandished at them by the unhoused person. Following this event, staff were equipped with walkie-talkies which helped make them feel safer. In general, there are unauthorized access challenges at Jefferson Terrace that include people prying off door locks or propping doors open. In 2025, carpenter costs for door repairs totaled \$31,596 and comprised 125 work orders. The installation of floor-to-ceiling locks has helped prevent vandalism and the need for repair costs, but doors do continue to be propped open. Ms. Owens stated that she hopes an increase in staff numbers at her site is still being planned for as they are understaffed.

Commissioner Purcell expressed his appreciation for today's presentation and the staff who do this work. Commissioner Ryan echoed Commissioner Purcell and asked if SHA has experimented with different staff assignments to properties in the past. Ms. Alexander replied that the current staffing model was the result of a shift roughly one-and-a-half years ago whereas before, SHA's entire portfolio was split into just two portions—north and south. The current unit count target for property managers is approximately 300 units per property manager. Mr. Wellings added that the staff hierarchy has been the same for as long as he has worked at the agency, while the number of staff has increased. In an ideal world with more HUD funding, there would be a greater number of staff than what the agency currently has.

Commissioner Howard noted that there has been an increase in crime at SHA buildings as well as throughout the city; she wonders if there has been speculation about the causes of the giant leap in crime recently in this region. Mr. Brandon invited Ms. Steward to describe what the Seattle police chief stated at a recent meeting. Ms. Steward replied that there has been a shift in the type of crimes that Seattle police are receiving reports on, but across the country there has been more social unrest as systems that people had previously been able to depend upon have been shifting. The housing shortage across the country, challenges with people being able to access food and childcare... all these things are driving up criminal activity. Additionally, this is a result of people readjusting to life following such a disruptive event as the COVID-19 pandemic. Seattle police have talked about shifting their focus to a community policing model where they build better relationships with the people of the city, and SHA has been a part of that—police representatives regularly join recurring meetings with residents as well as with staff. Commissioner Howard also echoed Commissioner Purcell and Ryans’ thanks to staff for both today’s presentation and their daily work.

Commissioner Ryan asked where the agency is recruiting people from to become part of the property management team. Ms. Alexander replied that the property assistant position, specifically, will often be filled by people who come from the commercial cleaning industry, such as janitors. This is because cleaning is a core function of the role plus some added administrative responsibilities. Additionally, folks may come from JobLink or use the position as a way to “get their foot in the door” to a government job. Commissioner Howard asked whether high-rise buildings are an appropriate or viable housing model for the kind of people who live there, specifically those who have behavioral or mental health issues. She thinks of Jefferson Terrace which has a high proportion of residents who were formerly homeless. Ms. Steward replied that the buildings themselves are challenging because they require a large number of people to live in a condensed area. The challenge is having residents with high needs who may not be able to live independently anymore, and SHA is working on this issue and how to handle it. Across the country, housing authorities are exploring ways to bring additional services into their housing such as through nonprofit partnerships and through external funding. Ms. Steward questioned that Seattle even has the space to have a great enough number of smaller communities that could accommodate everyone who needs them here and suggested that just like classrooms that have students of varying abilities, so too do communities thrive when everyone is mixed together.

Meeting Close

The next Board meeting will occur on Monday, May 18. Hearing no further comments, Commissioner Purcell called for adjournment of the briefing. Commissioner Howard motioned, Commissioner Ryan seconded. The May 11, 2026, Regular Board Briefing was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer