

From: sowens@syr.gov <sowens@syr.gov>
Subject: SHA Board Meeting and HUD Correspondence
To: wsimmons@syrhousing.org <wsimmons@syrhousing.org>
Sent: February 23, 2026 11:32 PM (UTC+00:00)

Mr. Simmons,

The event of last Thursday's SHA Board meeting has come to my attention. I hope that you had no knowledge of your perceived conflict of interest concerning Commissioner Benz when we met in my office on February 5, 2026, as that would have been the opportune time to inform me of any perceived conflict of a commissioner appointed by this office. Mr. Simmons, you relayed a perceived conflict (with no evidence) that could directly impact the success of implementing CNI funding, for which the city serves as a co-applicant. My Corporation Counsel has advised me to send the following to the HUD CNI representatives to prompt a response, as communication between your office and mine is clearly lacking:

"We understand that a staff person at SHA contacted you regarding a potential conflict of interest. As one of the two co-applicants on the CNI Grant, we were not made aware of any potential conflict. Moreover, it is our understanding that the CNI grant agreement requires conflicts to be addressed in accordance with 2 CFR Section 200.318; which in turn requires conflicts of interest to be addressed in accordance with the recipient's stated policies. SHA's by-laws govern their conflict-of-interest policy and require that any alleged conflict be brought to the board's attention, and the board must first provide the person identified as potentially having engaged in an undisclosed conflict an opportunity to be heard. That was not done in this instance, and as a sub-recipient, the city of Syracuse would like to understand the genesis of the complaint filed with HUD so we can determine whether there has been any misconduct in the handling of this matter."

Mr. Simmons, sending correspondence to HUD resulting in a response that limits the authority of a sitting Commissioner relative to the CNI grant, in which the city of Syracuse is a co-applicant, was a mistake. You failed not only to follow the CFA grant agreement, but your own bylaws.

Sharon

Sharon F. Owens

Mayor

City of Syracuse

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"Don't downgrade your dream just to fit your reality. Upgrade your conviction to match your destiny."

- Stuart Scott



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