



Office of the Mayor

Hon. Stephanie A. Miner, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: October 17, 2012

CONTACT: Alexander Marion

Press Secretary (315) 263-7968

MINER ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES EFFORT TO CHANGE OPERATIONS AT URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY

Item before Council would address concern of state agency with regard to payroll funds

Administration will also continue to shift SURA employees to regular payroll

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – The City of Syracuse announced it would take several steps in ongoing efforts to revamp the operation of Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency (SURA). The administration has put before the Council a transfer of \$200,000 from the general fund to SURA that would address a state agency concerns over payroll practices.

Mayor Stephanie A. Miner also said the administration will continue to work with County Civil Service officials to transition more of the 103 employees on SURA over to the city payroll directly.

“Since I took office, we have been working to address decades old concerns raised by outside agencies about the operation of SURA,” said Mayor Miner, who serves as Chair of the SURA Board of Directors. “We’ve been the first administration in decades to reduce the roster of SURA employees and we will continue to work with County Civil Service personnel to transition even more employees over to the city budget line.”

233 EAST WASHINGTON STREET * SYRACUSE, NEW YORK 13202

315-448-8005 | www.syracuse.ny.us

[Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#)



Office of the Mayor
Hon. Stephanie A. Miner, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: October 17, 2012

CONTACT: Alexander Marion
Press Secretary (315) 263-7968

The roster of SURA employees, now at 103, is down 14 percent since Miner took office.

SURA, a public benefit corporation separate from city government, is charged with the rehabilitation and sale of vacant property in the Northside, Washington Square, Lincoln Hill, Near Eastside, Hawley Green, Prospect Hill, Park Avenue, Near Westside, Skunk City, Southwest, and Southside neighborhoods of the city. SURA transitions property to meet the identified needs of the neighborhood community. The Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency was created in 1962 for the purpose of administering federal funds under the now defunct urban renewal program. After the urban renewal program was discontinued at the federal level in the early 1970s to make way for the Community Development Block Grant program, the agency still retained much of its organizational structure, leadership, and ability to manage money and personnel.

The administration changes to the operation of SURA include:

- **Funding:** The administration has forward to the Common Council a measure that Commissioner of Finance David J. DelVecchio, CPA, authored to improve the funding structure. DelVecchio proposes to transfer \$200,000 from the City of Syracuse General Fund to SURA Revolving Payroll Fund to increase the amount of funds currently advanced to ensure adequate cash flow in case of delayed reimbursements from city departments. SURA has an average biweekly payroll of \$260,000. This legislation, which will be discussed by the Common Council at their study session on Wednesday, October 17 would address state concerns over payroll practices.
- **Personnel:** The administration also will work to transition employees who perform non-SURA duties onto the City of Syracuse payroll. Currently, 103 employees are assigned to the Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency. Spread between 14 different departments, some do not regularly or directly perform duties corresponding to the agency mission. Personnel decisions will be made between the leadership of the administration and the board of the Urban Renewal Agency and employees whose primary function is not related to the mission of SURA will be gradually transitioned to the main city payroll. As noted, the SURA payroll is down over 14 percent since Mayor Miner took office.



Office of the Mayor

Hon. Stephanie A. Miner, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: October 17, 2012

CONTACT: Alexander Marion

Press Secretary (315) 263-7968

- **Mission:** The creation by Mayor Miner of a regional Land Bank also presents an opportunity to modernize the mission of SURA and the city's overall efforts to address deteriorating properties. The mission of the Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation (GSPDC) complements that of the Syracuse Urban Renewal Agency. The new GSPDC, or land bank, is a county-wide agency given authority over a wide variety of projects. This will renew the focus of SURA on project rehabilitation in the neighborhoods of its mission. Given a different funding stream, the GSPDC will address a different set of priorities allowing SURA a stronger ability to focus its efforts on the priority neighborhoods.
- **Governance:** The leadership of SURA will begin new processes increasing the diligence board members must take to differentiate between their work as officials of the City of Syracuse and the independent responsibilities in the agency. For example, appointment letters for new SURA employees will come directly from the Chair of the board of directors and extra care will be taken to ensure changes in the payroll will be memorialized by a resolution by the board in a timely fashion. This reform will ensure a greater distinction is made between the board members legally prescribed roles and their constitutional duties as officers of the City of Syracuse. Currently, the SURA board of directors is comprised of the Mayor, acting as chair, the City of Syracuse Commissioner of Finance acting as Treasurer, and the President of the Syracuse Common Council. Additionally, the Commissioner of Neighborhood and Business Development acting as Secretary and is responsible for the administration of SURA. These positions are prescribed in the New York State Law which created the agency in 1962.

###