

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
March 24, 2021
675 WEST MAIN STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



MEMBERS PRESENT

Rosalie Remarais, Acting Chairperson
Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner
Duwaine T. Bascoe, Commissioner
Hershel Patterson, Resident Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT

Melissa Berrien
Shawn Burr
Sinclair Carrington
Diana Colon
Jacquetta Harris
Shawanna Lawrence
Mark Plantholt
Mariam Rodriguez-
Machuca
Shelby Simpson
Evhen Tupis

OTHERS PRESENT

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel
Julie Panna, Tipping Point Communications

Commissioner Rosalie Remarais called the February Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:01 pm. It was noted for the record that notice of this meeting was posted as required by law and that there was a quorum present.

1. Open Forum – Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

2. Approval of Minutes: February 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Larson seconded the motion to approve the February 2021 Regular Board Meeting minutes. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Larson voted yes. The motion passed three to zero

3. Director's Report and Board Approval Requests

a. Deputy Executive Director, Shawn Burr, presented his Director's report as follows:

Mr. Burr would like to **CONTINUE** to recognize Staff across the Authority who continue to go above and beyond to ensure our quality services are performed and resident and participant needs are taken care of especially during this pandemic! They are doing a remarkable job! Efforts are being made in the planning and execution of when we reopen. Procurement and Maintenance are helping greatly. The teamwork displayed before, during, and after the vaccination clinic at HRT is a true testament of the great staff we have.

Mr. Burr shared that as the pandemic continues, we all need to remain diligent in maintaining each other's safety. RHA continues to monitor and adhere to new regulations and Executive Orders as we receive them. Mark and staff have tested the new sanitizing system and is implementing at our sites. Visitor restrictions, COVID questionnaires, and temperature checks continue for all visitors. Temperature kiosks for staff and visitors are moving forward with implementation. The Executive Team monitors current conditions daily and meets weekly to discuss our processes. The reopen committee has also prepared plans to reopen and modify them as conditions change. We are currently looking at allowing "some" visitors for residents.

Mr. Burr shared that we have weekly meetings with our NYS POP grant consultant to move the grant forward. We met with our City of Rochester partners again on 3/22/21 to update on progress, strategies and target area. We will continue to update at the Project Planning meeting.

Mr. Burr shared that Trillium's COVID testing/Primary Care services for our residents continues with March schedule moving along.

Mr. Burr reported we have met with Common Ground Health, Trillium and others on opportunities for providing vaccinations for our eligible residents. Our first vaccination clinic for PH residents was held on March 4th and was a huge success! 99 residents and 11 staff members received the Moderna vaccine. I want to acknowledge the amazing job our staff have done in making this event happen!! We sent packets of information to HRT residents to sign up for vaccination appointments by 10:00am Monday morning. Only 54 signed up! Staff took the initiative to reach out to residents personally by phone, robo calls, PA systems and also went door to door at HRT and other sites. As of Wednesday afternoon, we had 110+ to fill the appointment slots and additional in case of no-show appointments. We had transportation lined up with our resident driver for one van and James Waters from resident services, for the other van. Additional transportation was arranged with Medical Motors. I'm extremely

proud of the teamwork and ingenuity of our staff!!! **GREAT JOB
TEAM!!!!**

RHA Vaccine Team:

Harolda Wilcox, Property Manager at HRT was our Team leader and did a fantastic job!
Lisa Tarantello - Lake Tower Mayor and ambassador who walked Lake Tower with Harolda going door to door to inform and sign residents up
Mariam Rodriguez-Machuca - assisted with translating for us as we walked Lake Tower

Kathy Short - got right on procuring the dividers for the community room
Bob Croston and Fred Crockton Jr - sanitizing the room and using the new equipment to do it

Diana Colon - The ROCK for all functions

Mark Plantholt - Assistance with walkthrough and organizing maintenance

Eduardo Marrero - picked up and delivered the dividers

CHRISTAL, LINDA, JESSE, Property Managers for other sites, GREAT team. They had a flow going of the lines in and out of the community room.

Jimmy Crawford - Came over for fire alarm assistance at short notice when Bob was sanitizing

Last but not least, the North Zone team and Maintenance Staff. Everyone pitched in and helped wherever they could. Trillium stated that the RHA clinic was the MOST organized they've been part of!!

We are currently preparing for the next vaccination clinic that we are trying to get scheduled for 3/25/21 at Lake Tower. The TEAM is on it!

We will have an educational clinic at Glenwood Gardens on Saturday, 3/27 put on by Common Ground Health staff.

Mr. Burr reported that staff continue to be involved in several community projects and report on them in their Board reports. This initiative proved to be a powerful opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of how inequity and racism affect our lives and community. It's imperative we continue to improve our community and ourselves in our commitment to implement antiracist practice. We will continue to hold meetings with staff to further RHA's commitment and Shawanna is looking into Dr. Archie from the City to provide staff training.

Mr. Burr reported that RHA participated in the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge. This initiative proved to be a powerful opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of how inequity and racism affect our lives and community. It's imperative we continue to improve our community and ourselves in our commitment to implement antiracist practice. We will continue to hold meetings with staff to further RHA's commitment, and Shawanna is looking into Dr. Archie from the City to provide staff training.

Mr. Burr reported that he is participating on the West Main Steering Committee as planning takes place on the redevelopment of the "Bull's Head" neighborhood. We will be creating an actionable vision for West Main St that reflects a revived multimodal, economic, and cultural corridor. This study will create a roadmap for making investments and changes to the neighborhood, street, and streetscape design. I'm also part of the North Inner Loop Planning project and will have more info on this in a separate report.

Mr. Burr reported on an update from NYSPHAD they continue to put on ED forums for ED's and staff to discuss various topics and conduct trainings and info sessions along with coordinating/participating in HUD sessions too. We are working on a virtual Spring conference to be held in late May/early June. More info to come on that as sessions and trainings are identified. I am on the By-Laws Committee and we have been working on a couple revisions. The Legislative Committee continues to work hard on advocating at the State level for funding for PHA's, especially upstate.

Mr. Burr reported **President Signs Into Law \$1.9 Trillion American Rescue Plan** Congress approved more than \$30 billion in additional housing and rent relief on March 10 as part of a \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan to provide additional support for the ongoing pandemic. A top priority of President Biden for his first 100 days in office, the American Rescue Plan (ARP) includes the first major expansion of voucher availability in years, targeting \$5 billion in one-time use vouchers to at-risk populations. It also provides an additional \$21.55 billion in emergency rental assistance. The President signed the bill on March 11. The package was passed using budget reconciliation, a procedural mechanism that allowed the legislation to be approved by a simple majority in the Senate, as opposed to the 60-vote threshold legislation typically must meet. It was passed largely along party lines. NAHRO members were critical to the inclusion of housing programs in the American Rescue Plan and met with lawmakers last week in support of housing and community development programs as part of NAHRO's Virtual Hill Day. NAHRO thanks its members for continuing to be a strong voice for housing. NAHRO's Legislator of the Year Sen. Sherrod Brown (DOhio) and former Legislator of the Year Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) were particularly integral in ensuring that housing resources were included in the bill. NAHRO thanks them and their staff for their dedication to keeping Americans housed throughout the pandemic. "The American Rescue Plan provides our nation with much-needed resources to help continue to weather the pandemic-induced economic storm. We note in particular the \$5 billion in new funding for emergency housing vouchers, which will allow housing agencies nationwide to work with local partners and landlords to provide shelter to homeless individuals, survivors of domestic violence, and those at high risk of homelessness,"

NAHRO CEO Adrienne Todman said. "We are also thankful for the inclusion of \$21.55 billion in emergency housing and rental assistance, which will help more people who are facing housing insecurity." **Updated Emergency Rental Assistance Program:** The American Rescue Plan contains \$21.55 billion for emergency rental assistance that will be administered by the U.S. Department of Treasury. These funds expand the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) that was created in the fiscal year 2021 omnibus appropriations in December 2020. These funds will be distributed to states and local jurisdictions with at least 200,000 people. The grantee, tenant eligibility, and eligible uses remain very similar. A new eligibility group is established for high-need grantees. The \$21.55 billion in funding is broken down as follows: • \$18.712 billion for state and local emergency rental assistance; • \$305 million for Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa; • \$30 million for program administration by the Treasury; • \$3 million for program oversight by the Inspector General; and • \$2.5 billion for high-need grantee payments.

The high-need grantees funds are for state and local jurisdictions with very-low income (below 50% of Area Median income (AMI)) renters that are paying more than 50 percent of their income on rent or living in substandard or overcrowded conditions since February 2020. Eligible houses continue to be defined as a household with at least one member that is obligated to pay rent on a residential dwelling, qualifies for unemployment benefits or experiences a reduction in household income due to COVID-19, is at-risk or experiencing homelessness, and is a low-income (below 80% of AMI) family. **Emergency Housing Vouchers:** The American Rescue Plan allocates \$5 billion for FY 2021 that can be used for the following: 1. New emergency vouchers; 2. Renewals of emergency vouchers; 3. Administrative fees for emergency vouchers and other eligible expenses "to prevent, prepare, and respond to coronavirus to facilitate the leasing of the emergency vouchers,

such as security deposit assistance and other costs related to retention and support of participating owners” or; 4. Adjustments to the calendar year 2021 section 8 renewal funding allocation for PHAs that experience a higher per-unit-cost (PUC) or that “despite taking reasonable cost-savings measures, would . . . be required to terminate rental assistance for families” (i.e., PHAs that experience shortfall). **Eligibility:** Individuals that qualify for these emergency vouchers include people who are homeless, people who are at risk of homelessness, people who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or people who are recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family’s homelessness or have a high-risk of housing instability. **Allocation:** The Department will notify PHAs of the number of emergency vouchers they will be provided within 60 days of passage of the act. The vouchers will be allocated according to a formula that includes PHA capacity and ensures geographic diversity (including rural areas) among agencies with voucher programs. If a PHA fails to utilize the vouchers within a reasonable period of time, HUD may recapture and redistribute any unleased vouchers and associated administrative fees to other PHAs according to the formula. **Waivers:** Any provision of any statute or regulation (except those related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment) used to administer these funds shall be waived upon a finding that the waivers or alternative requirements are necessary to expedite the use of the funds. **Voucher Sunsetting:** After Sept. 30, 2023, a PHA may not reissue any emergency vouchers when a family’s assistance ends. **Technical Assistance and Other Costs:** The Department may not use more than \$20 million of the amounts made available for the costs of HUD administering and overseeing the program, including information technology, financial reporting, and other costs. The Department may not use more than \$10 million without competition to make new awards or increase prior awards to existing technical assistance providers to provide an immediate increase in capacity building and technical assistance to PHAs. **Implementation by Notice:** These provisions may be implemented by HUD by notice. **Emergency Assistance for Rural Housing:** The Act includes \$100 million for emergency assistance for rural housing through Sept. 20, 2022. The funds are available for grants in lieu of debt forgiveness or payments for eligible households for temporary adjustment of income losses for residents of housing financed or assisted under USDA Section 514, 515, or 516. **Homeless Assistance & Supportive Services Program:** The Act includes \$5 billion for homeless assistance and supportive services. Funding can be used to provide tenant based rental assistance; develop and support of affordable housing; provide support services to qualified individuals or families that are not already receiving supportive services; or acquire and develop noncongregate shelter units, all or a portion of which may be converted to permanent affordable housing, be used as emergency shelter, be converted to permanent housing or remain as noncongregate shelter units. Eligible families include those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or veterans and families that include veteran family members that meet the preceding criteria. Organizations that receive funding may use up to 15% for administrative costs and up to 5% for operating costs. **Housing Counseling:** The Act includes \$100 million for housing counseling. Funds should be targeted to minority and low-income populations facing housing instability or provided to housing counseling services in neighborhoods that have high concentrations of minority and low-income populations.

Mr. Burr reported on Senate Confirms Marcia Fudge as HUD Secretary

On March 10, the full Senate voted to confirm Marcia Fudge as the 18th Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The final vote was largely bipartisan, with 66 senators voting to approve her nomination. Vice President Kamala Harris officially swore in Secretary Fudge through a virtual ceremony on the same afternoon. Fudge will be the first woman to serve as HUD Secretary since Patricia R. Harris left the position in 1979. Secretary Fudge has represented the 11th Congressional District of Ohio since 2008. Prior to her work in Congress, she served as the first African American and first female mayor of Warrensville Heights, Ohio. Secretary Fudge has fought for quality education, food access, civil rights, and other issues throughout her years in public service. During her confirmation process, Secretary Fudge indicated that she is committed to addressing the nation's ongoing housing issues, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In support of the confirmation, NAHRO President Sunny Shaw stated, "On behalf of NAHRO's 20,000 members, I congratulate Secretary Marcia Fudge on her confirmation in the Senate to become the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. We are thrilled to have a Secretary with her experience and leadership skills as both a former Mayor and Member of Congress, and we look forward to working with her and with HUD to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing in vibrant communities all across America." NAHRO congratulates Secretary Fudge on her confirmation and looks forward to her leadership of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

b. Board Action Requests

- i. Audit Services– Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to award a two-year contract renewal to EFPR Group for \$35,350.00 - Finance

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Patterson seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Bascoe, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed four to zero.

- ii. RFP for Strategic Planning Services – Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to award the contract to Bronner Group, LLC for \$70,000.00 (one-time) – Capital Projects

Commissioner Patterson moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Bascoe, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed four to zero.

- iii. High-Rise Elevator Upgrades - Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract to Otis Elevator Company for \$110,880.00 (one-time) – Capital Projects

Commissioner Patterson moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Bascoe, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed four to zero.

4. Executive Personnel Administrator's Report

Shawanna Lawrence

The Human Resource Department continues to implement Strategic Plan Goal III of "Supporting RHA's Employees to Enhance an Organizational Culture of Excellence" by continuing to provide training and continuing to create organizational culture excellence.

Recruitment Information- March 2021

(1) Position- Maintenance Laborer – Maintenance Department started on 3/22/21

Past Events:

Employee Recognition: March 5, 2021

Employee Recognition Day was on Friday, March 5, 2021. Directors and Managers are committed to improving internal communication and further enhancing our culture of excellence. We celebrated the Associate's hard work and dedication to RHA, lunch was provided to each department.

Updates:

Human Resources Information System (ADP):

The Human Resources Department is working on streamlining our onboarding process by getting new hires up to speed before starting. A comprehensive onboarding process encompasses orientation and works training so that new hires forms can be filled out, signed, and stored online. New Hires will receive "Getting to Know You" e-mails from the Manger and team members that include custom questions and conversation starters.

Policies:

Human Resources is working on revising Board Policy # 345 Dress Code and the draft, and it will be presented at the next Finance Committee Meeting.

Demographic Information

I want to provide you with current demographic information for the Authority as of June 2020. The breakdown of the demographic information for Associates and Managers in the following categories are: (1) the age of Associates, (2) Associates over 40, (3) Associates Self-Reported Ethnicity, and (4) Associates by gender, (5) in additional we provided some additional analysis of managers. You will be provided with a folder labeled "Demographics."

5. Compliance, Inclusion, and Diversity Officer's Report

Shawn Burr

Inclusion

- Covid Strategy – We continue to work with community partners to facilitate addressing resident needs around testing and education. The COVID testing and primary care services are taking place at most of RHA's senior sites with Trillium's mobile unit. Trillium has now added telehealth services being available for residents and we are

working on adding to our MOU. A regular schedule has been established and posted at our sites. We have had discussions with URMC and Unity about medical, dental, behavior health, eye care services, and telehealth services for our residents. Discussions are ongoing to work out logistics and develop MOU agreements. The MOU with Trillium addendums has been completed and signed by me. We continue to notify staff and residents of vaccination opportunities.

- Some monies are coming to the City to assist tenants who are behind in their rent. We will be notifying residents when the information becomes available on how to apply for the funds.
- Women's History Month - The Morale and Inclusion Committee recognized the National Women's History Month celebrating the contributions that Women made to history. There will be emails sent on a weekly basis to RHA Staff and Commissioners with different personalities' history and their contribution to history.
- Vaccination Clinic: Trillium will be on site at Glenwood on Friday, 4/16/2021 and we are working on coordinating vaccinations for 50-60 residents, but nothing confirmed yet.

Compliance

○ **Fraud Investigations**

- **Leasing Operations** Repayment agreement payment totals YTD as of February 2021, \$16,136 collected. (\$412,677.98 has been collected to-date)
- **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for Vacated Arrears and Collection Loss as of February 2021: \$1,418.15 collected. A total of \$43,839.58 collected to-date (since 2017)

○ **Termination Hearings**

- We have upgraded the process to be able to conduct hearings remotely.
- **Leasing Operations** – 10 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 5 upheld, 0 overturned, 3 reinstated, 2 adjourned & 0 withdrawn.
- **Public Housing** – 0 Participant Grievance Hearings Scheduled: 0 upheld; 0 overturned, 0 reinstated & 0 adjourned. Hearings are currently being scheduled for April.

● **Operations**

○ **Case Management** –

- Program Violation Referrals Outstanding – 1,139 – which is a total to date since 2015. We have a staff member working on addressing violations and getting them up to date. I have detailed information that can be shared in the executive session.

○ **Rochester Housing Charities – Commissioner Cummings serves as RHA's ex-officio representative on the RHC Board of Directors and the Board will be convening soon as a meeting is tentative for 3/24/21.**

- We continue to work on the RHC project and will continue to keep the Board updated.

○ **Audit and Review** – I will be working closely with Legal to address areas in need of assessment within RHA. *(Executive Session for any requested reporting)*

- Compliance has completed the 2021 Audit Schedule and began performing audits in the month of January (Leasing Operations Department on Admin Fees). I am currently reviewing the audit results and will present them in an executive session at the Board's request.
- Compliance began the Finance Audit in the month of March.

○ **Public Safety** – Please see the Activity Chart for Public Safety and the new revised reports. The targeted problem strategy appears to be having an impact.

Current Actions:

- **Conduct Violations** – We continue to mail violation letters to residents that do not comply with the restricted visitation protocol and other lease violations.
- **Security Camera Project** – I am working with IT and Procurement to restart the vendor process. An RFP may be needed for the RHA-wide project, but we are getting quotes for two sites that need to be addressed asap – Glenwood and HRT. After modification of the

- scope of work, quotes are due by 4/1/21. We have a lot of information gathered and an Authority-wide scope of work to proceed with.
- We re-established the additional Covid-19 security coverage. A COVID questionnaire has been developed and each visitor is required to complete and sign it before visiting a resident. Temperature checks are also implemented for visitors.

 - Glenwood has seen an increase in criminal activity as reported by residents. We are working on a perimeter access control project as reported in the Project Planning meetings. We assessed our lighting to see if improvements can be made. We did replace all the exterior lighting fixtures with LED type in 2019 and added two new fixtures several weeks ago. We will be replacing the fixtures next to the unit doors soon with LED types. The security camera project will assist in deterring criminal activity. I've had conversations with RPD and AP Security and we will continue to work together to address issues and improve communications. We are currently in a design phase and are going to the City Planning Department for review. Our property manager, Harolda Wilcox is working on scheduling a virtual meeting with residents.
 - Update: We began additional security at Glenwood Gardens which began on January 31, 2021, and will continue through April 3, 2021. We currently have 24/7 Road Patrol conduct tours of the site at least twice throughout each shift. Security is paying close attention to laundry rooms and walkthrough areas as they are hot spots for criminal activities. AP Security is monitoring the activity and is providing updates and feedback to me. There was a meeting to review the current situation with PH Management, County and City Representatives on 2/3/21. The perimeter access project is going to the City Planning dept for their review and comment. We mailed to our residents' informational materials RPD has provided us. We also sent an update on the projects we are working on at the site.

6. Finance

Sinclair Carrington

Mr. Carrington reported the monthly Finance Report, the actual vs. budgeted figures, and variances for year-to-date through January 2021 for the COCC, Public Housing, and Section 8 income and expenses.

Mr. Carrington also reported on the COVID-19 CARES Funding income and expenses for year-to-date through February 28, 2021, and also reported on the projected ways of spending the remaining \$3.1 million of the HCV Cares Funding.

7. Public Housing Report

Shawn Burr

Interim Public Housing Structure:

- While the Public Housing Director position is vacant, I will continue to oversee and coordinate the management of this department in coordination with property managers. We are still waiting on results of the Civil Service test.hiring

Public Housing Matters:

- Staff developed a draft Standard Operating Procedure for deceased residents that is currently under my review.

- Staff created a new Parking Violation Procedure which was implemented on January 29, 2021. Security continues to monitor any parking violations and they are being followed up through the Management Office.
- “Hearings” Standard Operating Procedure has been updated to include remote hearings and it has been implemented beginning of March. There are several open positions in Public Housing currently. Due to the number of vacancies and the length of the vacancies it continues to take a toll on the current employees. Open staff positions listed below:
 - Public Housing Director: 8/14/2020
 - Central Zone: One Clerk: LT vacated on 3/1/18
 - South Zone: One Housing Specialist vacated on 10/30/2020
 - Scattered Sites: One Housing Specialist: vacated 10/07/20, One Clerk: vacated 07/01/20, BMS: vacated 04/15/2019
 - APC: Two Housing Specialists – vacated on 2/7/20 and 7/31/20

We continue to work with HR to fill positions. Meanwhile, staff are doing an amazing job keeping things moving.

COVID Matters:

- Building Security – RHA properties continue with the protocol of restricted visitation to minimize the COVID virus impact. COVID questionnaires have been put in place for each essential visitor to fill out and sign. Guards are also performing temperature checks. Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other notices have been posted. The RHA Reopen Committee has developed plans to re-open community rooms, common spaces, and revised visitation and it looks like we may be able to slowly open things up beginning in April. Until that time, all visitor restrictions and the closure of community rooms remain in effect. Resident notices have been delivered, reminding of current restrictions and safe practices and informing of Re-opening only when it is safe to do so, along with information on vaccination.
 - Residents – Family Self Sufficiency in partnership with Lifespan, Foodlink, United Way, and our Resident Council members are delivering food to those seniors in need.
 - Disinfection of the main lobby areas, elevators, door handles is still being done twice daily.
 - Community rooms have been secured.
 - Essential visitor procedure is in place with security and staff increasing presence at the sites to control entry. The essential visitors to enter must be listed, complete the screening form, and perform a temperature check.
- Some staff has reported an increase in income loss notices due to the pandemic. The waiver process is being utilized to assist residents with recertification. Staff continues to assist and send balance reminder notices to residents. I am working closely with management and legal to develop a temporary process for serving 14-Day Notices when the court reopens.
- Evictions are still on hold. We met last week again to ensure we are up to date on the local court situation. We have a plan for restarting this process once we can secure court dates. Property Managers are currently mailing out the Covid-19 New York State Declaration Notice along with a Temporary Moratorium Letter on Eviction Filing informing residents on the current status of eviction filing through the court systems. The forms will be sent in English and Spanish. There is an evicction prevention program that the City and County will be rolling out to assist tenants who are behind in their rent. RHA will be eligible to apply.
- As of 2/1/21, there were over 200 residents who were 60+ days late paying rent with several owing more than \$6,000 each. The total delinquent rent owed is \$350,000+. We have sent notice after notice, with the latest one refernceing the Governor’s order and included the affidavit form tenants must use if their income has been affected by COVID. Staff continue to

work with each resident and have set up many repayment agreements. This continues to be a problem that we are seriously addressing.

- The Property Management office continues to offer applicants several methods to view a unit e.g. virtual, email & text pictures, solo unit showings (staff will wait outside of the unit as the applicant walks through the unit). This will meet our COVID reopening requirements.
- We have re-established the additional Covid-19 security coverage.
- HUD has granted RHA an extension to submit the Agency Plan. The 45-day Public Comment period ended and the public hearing was held on 2/26/21 with no public comments submitted. City staff are reviewing the Plan and will obtain the Mayor's signature. After Mayor Warren signs the Plan, we will present it to the Board for approval before submitting to HUD. Meanwhile, this year's update is in progress, but behind schedule.
- We advertised the Rochester Mass Vaccination via robocall and flyers at each site and continue to communicate vaccination opportunities to residents, participants, and staff. We have several info sessions scheduled on Saturday, 3/6 at Lake Tower with CommonGround Health staff for residents.
- Trillium has 110 vaccines available for our residents. They will be performing a clinic at Hudson Ridge Tower on March 4th. Staff did an amazing job getting 110+ residents scheduled and transportation provided!!

Security Matters:

- Glenwood Gardens Security Issue: We began additional security at Glenwood Gardens which began on January 31, 2021, and will continue through April 3, 2021 when we will reassess its effectiveness. We will have 24/7 Road Patrol conduct tours of the site at least twice throughout each shift. AP Security will monitor the activity and provide updates and feedback to me. We sent a Security Letter updating residents on upcoming security projects plus additional security tips (provided by RPD) to residents. Harolda Wilcox, Property Manager, sent a letter and information from RPD to all the residents, bringing them up to date with what we're working on. We have made some site lighting improvements and are purchasing LED fixtures for the entry doors to each unit.

Online Applications:

- The Online application process is working well.
- To address the high number of high-rise vacancies, APC continues to canvas the 1 bedroom waiting list. Based on the low responses to past canvases, we have increased the number of applicants we are canvassing to 200 per month.
 - Currently being screened- 44 applications
 - Currently going through the intake process (with the Intake Specialist) – 37 applications
- APC is currently operating with 50% staffing. We made offers to two candidates and both candidates declined.
- To address the on-going issue of extending deadlines for applicants not having access to a copier to make copies of the required eligibility and intake paperwork, APC purchased and had delivered on 3/1/21, a Toshiba copier that will be located in the APC lobby area.

8. Maintenance Report

Mark Plantholt

- **Vacant Unit Report**
 - The completed units are on the report.
- **Staffing**

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

- Have filled one Laborer slot and waiting for news on the Scattered Sites BMS, and candidate for a Mechanic position. Continue to work short staff, Sinclair is analyzing the budget to determine how many more positions could be filled.
- **COVID Sanitizing**
 - The sanitizing equipment and solutions were received. Bob Croston is heading up the program. Training and practicing using the equipment has started and the roll-out trial at Lake Tower should be in mid-March. Will post informational flyers about the new process for the tenants ahead of the trial start.
 - The Section 3 and MWBE contractors will be extended into March 2021. These will be coordinated with the start-up of the Purus system.
- **Contracts/Request for Proposals**
 - 2021 Turf Mowing and Landscaping Services - RFP was posted on the RHA website on 2/22/2021 and responses are due back on 3/17/2021. Will present the results of the bid at the April Public Housing and Board meetings for review.
 - 2021 Compactor Replacement Project – This is the replacement of the four (4) original tower compactors and dumpsters. Four contractors picked up the bid, only one responded and three did not. Will present the result of the bid at the April Public Housing and Board meetings for review.
- **Work Order Review**
 - Maintenance continues doing only emergency and safety related Work Orders.
 - Dispatch is questioning all callers about COVID symptoms in the household before assigning the work order.
 - Open Work Orders as of 3/3/2021 - Total open work orders – 1,252.

9. Leasing Operations Report (Section 8)

Jacquetta Harris

Director Harris, Leasing Operations Department, shared utilization and funding information with the Board of Commissioners.

Leasing Operations Matters:

1. Staff developed a draft proposal for Administrative Plan language changes. The proposed changes are under internal review. Once edits are captured a copy will be provided to the Board for review. At the same time, we will post the proposed changes for 45-day public comment period, following that a virtual public hearing will be held.
2. Currently, we have 3,458 applicants on the Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List.
3. Leasing Operations' voucher and funding utilization goal is between 95% to 98%. We are currently at 92.56% utilization of vouchers and 97.6% utilization of funds. Leasing Operations Department has a Leasing Plan for 2021 to fully maximize HUD funding for Housing Assistance Payments. To best optimize our Housing Choice Vouchers our plan is to issue 600-750 HCV from the Waiting List by 9/30/2021. Housing Specialist vacancies in our Eligibility Unit is an obstacle that we addressed to ensure that we meet our voucher issuance goal. Staff are working overtime and we are using a remote 3rd party vendor to issue 200 vouchers within the next 60 days. The vendor will perform the main task of interviewing HCV applicants, collect documents, and determine eligibility, RHA will issue the voucher.
4. The monthly inspection goal is 780-960. The Inspection Unit conducted 731 inspections for February. February had 16 work days instead of our regular 20 work days, therefore we are slightly under the monthly goal.
5. Permanent Supportive Housing projects are being monitored monthly for financials and project participation. All projects that are projecting a funding deficit, by the end of the grant period, have an action plan to address the deficit. *** In preparation for the soon and

upcoming release of HUD's Continuum of Care Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), Partners Ending Homelessness announced (on 3/5/2021) the beginning of the local ranking criteria and local application process for new and renewal projects (we have eight projects) .

10. Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Report

Melissa Berrien

Participant Highlights

We have 241 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:

- Ms. Orum entered the FSS program on October 1, 2019, with employment, credit restoration, homeownership, and licensing goals. Mr. Orum lost her employment due to the pandemic but was able to secure new employment with The Center for Youth in August of 2020. Ms. Orum also completed her Doula certification in September of 2020 and closed on her home on January 5th, 2021. Ms. Orum is a successful graduate of the FSS Program and entitled to receive \$464.00 in escrow savings.

Section 3

- Monthly Report (see attached)
- We currently have 19 businesses on the RHA Section 3 Registry
- We continue to work on a plan for implementation of the new Section 3 Rule

Agency Collaborations

- Shawn and I participated in Action for a Better Community Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) Child Care Resource Fair on Saturday, March 6, 2021. The virtual fair featured various childcare resources available in MonroeCounty.
- Eviction Prevention Study - RHA is collaborating with the City of Rochester, FEC and Harvard University to evaluate the impact of FEC programming on eviction outcomes for RHA residents and the effectiveness of different Marketing tools.
 - 1200 PH Participants selected for study based on late payment history from August 2020 - November 2020
 - 3 control groups, 400 participants per group
 - 3 treatments
 1. Person to person
 2. Gift card mailer
 3. No approach
- Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) offers free financial counseling which focuses on increasing savings, reducing debt, and increasing access to safe and affordable banking products.
- Action for a Better Community (ABC) – Benefits Cliff Project - We are participating on a community wide initiative led by ABC to create a tool that will help individuals receiving public assistance to understand and mitigate benefit cliffs and their impacts
- We are in talks with URMC and Unity Health systems to create a partnership that will increase access to healthcare for residents and participants
- • Afterschool Program Initiative - Collaborative initiative with ROC the Future (RTF), Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA) and the Community Foundation to implementing after- school engagement opportunities for

residents.

Homeownership

- Ms. Slingerland closed on her home at 6083 Chili Riga Road on January 25, 2021.
- We have 5 families with anticipated closings and 15 families who have been approved for financing and are searching for homes.

11. Planning Committee Report

Shawn Burr

- The Planning Committee meeting was held on 3/10/2021 There was one follow up item from the previous meeting, which is complete.
- We did not have any action items for this meeting but did present two at the Finance Committee meeting.
- The meeting began with a presentation by our A/E firm, Edge Architecture, on the Bond St “Change the Face of Public Housing” redevelopment project. The input from the Committee, staff, residents, and neighborhood has all been incorporated in the revised plans.
- We continue to work with our internal team and the consultant team of D+B/Calogero on a preservation plan for a portion of the RHA Public Housing portfolio, as part of the New York State Preservation Opportunity Program (NYPOP) grant. We are also hiring a consultant, Bureau Veritas, through D&B/Calogero to provide NEPA reviews and RAD Physical Conditions Assessments on the identified PH properties. RHA has been working with the firm to coordinate the PNA inspections which are being scheduled during the week of April 6th. Residents have been notified and we are working one on one with those that have contacted us with concerns. We will not be going into any unit where the resident doesn’t want us to. The fees for all of this work are covered by the grant. A follow up meeting with the City is scheduled on 3/22/21 to update on the progress.
- We continue to see a rise in costs across the board associated with the pandemic. Material lead times have increased, material costs have gone up, and contractor overhead costs have also increased. We have not seen a downward trend as of yet but are still hopeful. As you know, contractors must have COVID-19 safety plans and procedures as part of the bid response which is reflected in higher bid amounts. Other PHA’s I’ve spoken with are experiencing the same.
- We discussed the status of our current projects by having staff give updates and review progress pictures:
 1. RHA Office Site Upgrades – project is 100% complete and staff have given positive comments.
 2. Kennedy Tower Hallway and unit Rehab – 35% of the work has been completed. The residents are very happy with the new units.
 3. Waring Road Fire Restoration project is on schedule and 20% complete.
 4. Lake Tower Façade Repair – 30% of the work is completed and is on schedule and will pick back up in the spring.
 5. Bronson Court Fire Restoration Project – project is underway and 10% complete.
 6. Bay/Zimmer Boiler Replacement – project is complete.

Staff is ensuring that contractors are following the NYS COVID-19 Safety Guidelines that have been put in place.

- We currently have one project out to bid, others will be going out shortly.
- Our MWBE & Section 3 Contracts report was presented and will continue to be updated each month.
- The status of our current CFP Budgets as of February 28th are: 501.18 budget is 100% obligated and 87% Expended, and 501.19 is 58% obligated and 28% expended. RHF Funds grants as of January 31st are: 502.13 is 56% obligated and 56% expended, and 502.14 is 0% obligated and 0% expended.
- We then discussed our A/E status report.

Project Planning

- Our Project Planning meeting followed the Committee meeting. We began with updates on our development projects starting with our RAD project at Federal St/Scattered Sites. We continue to work with the architect and developer partner to move the Federal St project forward, and each are performing assigned tasks. We resubmitted the NYS HCR application on 1/13/2021 for LIHTC funding on time, the application is stronger as we have received additional approvals and additional support letters since the last submittal. We received approval of HOME funds and a ESSHI Grant we applied for, for this project.
- Our next RAD project will be Parliament/Luther and we are working with our development team. We held a virtual resident meeting for each site and good questions were asked and answered. PCNA's are being scheduled and we are working with the residents to conduct safe inspections.
- We were granted a HOME interest only loan of \$250,000 and a PILOT agreement.
- We have submitted a proposal in response to the City for the Affordable Housing Development RFP. We haven't received a response yet.
- Our Change the Face of Public Housing project at Bond/Hamilton A/E firm has developed alternative layouts. The revised plans were presented by the architect and staff
- We also discussed our Change the Face of Public Housing project at Edinburgh Street. Updated elevations are being prepared. We will be scheduling a follow up meeting with the neighborhood association.
- We then discussed the Holland Townhouse Site Improvement Project; the Traffic Control Board approved the plan. It will be presented at a City Council meeting in March for approval. We did get approval from Council on 3/17 and we will be putting the project out to bid shortly.
- Our eight Section 32 homeownership homes have now turned back to seven we are hoping to complete our SAC application soon. Property appraisals are being coordinated and we will submit that to the Special Applications Center as once it's complete. Melissa is working on sending another survey out to PH residents in single family homes to see who is interested in purchasing. The plan is to create a pipeline of residents and units.
- We then reviewed the projects in the CFP Project Pipeline which are all in various stages of planning and design.

12. Commissioner Comments

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to go into Executive Session for a legal and personnel matter. Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Patterson seconded a motion to go into Executive Session at 1:30 pm. Commissioner Patterson,

Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Remarais voted yes. The motion was passed three to zero.

Board Chair Reremais requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Bascoe seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 2:17 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Bascoe, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Patterson voted yes. The motion was passed four to zero.

13. April Regular Board Meeting-

The April Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 28, 2020**, at 12:00 pm via Skype and the RHAtv on YouTube.

There being no further Regular Meeting Business to come before the Board, Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Patterson seconded a motion to end the Board Meeting at 2:18 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Patterson, and Commissioner Bascoe voted yes. The motion was passed four to zero.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,
Secretary to the RHA Board Deputy
Executive Director