

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**December 21, 2022  
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**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
December 21, 2022  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**December 21, 2022**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner, Vice Chair  
Kabutey Ocansey, Commissioner  
Henry Rubin, Commissioner  
Rosalie Remarais, Chairperson  
James Water, Jr. Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT**

Melissa Berrien  
Shawn Burr  
Sinclair Carrington  
Diana Colon  
Robert Croston  
Pierre Dorancy  
Cynthia Herriott  
Kimberly Huffman  
Joyce Kinsey  
Shawanna Lawrence  
Mariam Rodriguez –  
Machuca  
James Senger  
Evhen Tupis  
Harolda Wilcox

**OTHERS PRESENT**

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel  
Erin Foster, Tipping Point Communications

Commissioner Rosalie Remarais called the December Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:10 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 - None**
2. **Swearing in of the New Commissioner** – James Waters, Jr.

**3. Approval of Minutes: November 16, 2022, Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve the November 2022 Regular Board Meeting Minutes Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Waters abstained from voting. The motion passed four to one.

**4. Director's Report and Board Approval Requests**

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

Mr. Burr would like 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 long-lasting pandemic! They really continue to do a remarkable job day in and day out!

Mr. Burr thanked all the Commissioners who participate in our monthly committee meetings and support the work that we do. The Resident Relations Committee has really evolved, and I'm impressed! You all play a vital role in growing our organization!

Mr. Burr stated that RHA continues to monitor the pandemic conditions. The Executive Team monitors current conditions daily and meets weekly to review and discuss our processes. Currently, we are maintaining our existing protocols.

Mr. Burr stated that of our 117 Emergency Housing Vouchers by HUD as a result of the RESCUE Plan, 134 have been issued in accordance with the process we developed with the Continuum of Care. We have housed 96 applicants so far and 13 are searching for housing. The RHA team has done a great job implementing and continues to assist those looking for units. Still, no word on HUD reallocating unused vouchers.

Mr. Burr stated that our Community Choice Demonstration RHA Team is working very hard since the kick-off in October. We have canvassed 50 applicants 13 have responded with interest and 3 have completed the informational briefing. He is very proud of our dedicated team!

Mr. Burr shared that Trillium's COVID testing/Primary Care services for our residents continue with December's schedule moving along. Property managers have been reminded to notify residents each month of the schedule. We will be continuing our partnership and expanding services where we can. Melissa and Harolda are working together to facilitate COVID Booster clinics at our sites in partnership with the Health Dept and will update their reports.

Mr. Burr stated he is very proud of the staff continues to be involved in community projects and report on them in their Board reports. Partners Ending Homelessness, RMAPI Housing Working Group which will focus on our community's full housing system, Closing the Gaps Six City Cohort, Jordan Health Community Engagement Committee, Boy Scouts, City FEC Program Initiative, Connected Communities Housing Committee, Private Sector Rental Market Study Working Group, Eviction Response Team, and Benefits Cliff Project are a few that are in the works. He really appreciates their efforts in representing RHA on critical projects in our community and their extra efforts are commendable.

Mr. Burr share that RHA along with our development partner submitted our NYSHCR LIHTC funding applications for Fernwood, Parliament, and Fairfield Village.

Mr. Burr stated that our Strategic Goal Tracker has been completed and our plan is to update at least monthly and report on a quarterly basis with the first report in January 2023.

Mr. Burr stated that he is also participating in the "Peer Cities Challenge" on the Rochester team. Rochester was one of nine cities selected to participate and The Challenge connects cities through a series of meetings and resources to learn from each other what is working and not working relative to the housing needs of the respective communities in an effort to advance housing goals. We meet regularly and is great to hear what other Cities are doing. [Housing Solutions Lab Announces Peer Cities Network Selections – NYU Furman Center](#) Additional staff are joining me on the different cohorts.

Mr. Burr stated that RHA is also participating in discussions on how we can implement a "Public Housing – Public School Partnership" that addresses homelessness in school-age children and their families. Boston has implemented a successful model and we are looking at how that could work here in Rochester. The team continues to meet and strategize on how we can implement something like that in Rochester. Boston Housing Authority - Boston Housing Authority A follow-up meeting is still in the works as schedules have been very challenging.

Mr. Burr gave an NYSPHADA Update: The Legislative Committee continues to work hard on advocating at the State level for funding for PHA's, especially upstate. We continue to push for more ERAP funds for upstate PHA's as we all have significant arrears continues and RHA is lucky that the City and County did such a good job administering these funds. NYSPHADA has joined with NYSAFA on the ERAP funds advocacy.

Congress is back in session and has several must-accomplish goals that could impact housing and community development programs. Speak out in support of these critical programs and help NAHRO reach a goal of sending 2,000 letters by visiting [www.nahro.org/advocate](http://www.nahro.org/advocate). The 117th Congress has officially entered its "lame duck" session. Members returned to DC following the midterm elections to wrap up legislation before the new Congress begins in January. Appropriations bills are the highest priority. Congress must pass fiscal year 2023 appropriations bills or another continuing resolution (CR) before the current CR expires on Dec. 16.

Additionally, tax programs are also a top priority before the end of the calendar year. Housing advocates must urge Congress to include the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program in any tax package, particularly through the addition of the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act (S 1136/ HR 2573) into any tax legislation. NAHRO has added two letters to the Advocacy Action Center, one focused on FY23 HUD appropriations and a second on the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. Help NAHRO support these programs by sending both letters several times throughout the lame-duck session, which is expected to run until the holidays.

**b. Board Action Requests**

- i. Holland Town House Window Refurbishment - Authorized the Executive Director to award to Commercial Window Repair Solutions in the amount of \$124,400.00 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Waters abstained from voting; The motion passed four to one.

- ii. Kennedy Tower Corridor and Resident Units upgrades - Authorized the Executive Director to approve the increase to the contingency from 30% to 40% to FW Construction Corp. not to exceed \$1,513,849.48 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Waters abstained from voting; The motion passed four to one.

- iii. Kennedy Tower Corridor and Resident Units upgrades change order #15 - Authorized the Executive Director to approve change order #15 for FW Construction Corp. in the amount of \$67,565.48 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Waters abstained from voting; The motion passed four to one.

- iv. Danforth Towers Façade Repairs - Authorized the Executive Director to approve the change order #5 for Lupini Construction, Inc. for the amount of \$78,823.79 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Waters abstained from voting; The motion passed four to one.

- v. University Tower Façade Repairs – A&E Firm - Authorized the Executive Director to award the contract to PLMA Architects, AIA in the amount of \$48,550.00 of \$195,684.00 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Waters abstained from voting; The motion passed four to one.

- vi. Human Resources and Payroll Information Processing System - Authorized the Executive Director to renew the contract with Automatic Data Processing, Inc. (ADP) in the amount of \$78,000.00 – Human Resources

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Waters abstained from voting; The motion passed four to one.

- vii. 2023 Worker’s Compensation Carrier - Authorized the Executive Director to award the contract to Redwood Fire and Casualty Insurance Company (Berkshire Hathaway) in the amount of \$366,000.00 – Human Resources

Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- viii. 2023 Employee Medical Insurance (Retirees <65 yrs.) - Authorized the Executive Director to renew the contract with Aetna Medicare in the amount of \$100,000.00 – Human Resources

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- ix. Atlantic Town Houses Site Upgrade General Contractor - Authorized the Executive Director to award the contract to DiPasquale Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$2,814,695.00 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- x. Security Services renewal - Authorized the Executive Director to renew the contract with AP Safety and Security Corp. in the amount of \$1,156,284.00 – Authority Wide

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- xi. Microsoft Office 365 - Authorized the Executive Director to engage un a 3-year purchase commitment of Microsoft 365 licenses with Dell Marketing, LP and Microsoft in the amount of \$248,642.58 – Authority Wide

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- xii. Renewal Insurance Auto

- a. Insurance Auto - Authorized the Executive Director to renew the insurance policy for the period of 01/01/2023 to 01/01/2024 with Preferred Mutual Insurance Company in the amount of \$67,406.00 – Public Housing

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- b. Insurance Umbrella - Authorized the Executive Director to renew the insurance policy for the period of 01/01/2023 to 01/01/2024 with Scottsdale Insurance in the amount of \$27,777.54 – Public Housing

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

**5. Human Resource Coordinator Report**

**Shawanna Lawrence**

The Human Resource Department is continuing to implement the Strategic Plan Goal III: "Support our Employees to Enhance an Organizational Culture of Excellence" Please see the update below:

**Recruitment Information**

Position – Junior Account – (1) Finance Department started on November 28, 2022.  
Position - Maintenance Laborer – (1) Maintenance Department started on December 12, 2022.

Position - Maintenance Mechanic – (2) Maintenance Department started on December 12, 2022.

Position - Housing Specialist – (2) Leasing Operations Department, started on December 12, 2022.

Position – Business Analyst – (1) Information Technology Department, started on December 12, 2022.

**New employee orientation - December 2022**

The welcoming of new employees is a collaborative effort that includes human resources (HR), the hiring department, and other staff. During the orientation process, we introduced our new hires to colleagues, and the organization, and went through our benefits packages, policies, and procedures.

**Wellness Initiatives- December 2022**

The Wellness Committee submitted its monthly newsletter to staff which focused on Safe Toys and Gifts Month and provided holiday tips.

**Open Enrollment**

The Open Enrollment has ended successfully.

Human Resources will have office hours by appointment where Employees can stop by to get questions answered and assistance with enrolling through the system. It is our goal to ensure everyone is well-prepared and informed of the benefits available.

**Events- December 2022**

**Holiday Luncheon** – The RHA Holiday Luncheon was held on December 16, 2022. I have attached pictures.

**6. Compliance, Inclusion, and Diversity Officer's Report      Cynthia Herriott**

**Inclusion**

- COVID Strategy – We continue to work with community partners to facilitate addressing resident needs around vaccinations, testing and education.
- Language Access Plan- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is working on a Language Access Plan to adopt new procedures and to work with community organizations and Language Access Liaisons to identify opportunities to enhance RHA services. The plan draft has been provided to the board and senior staff as an FYI. No action is necessary, but feedback is welcome.

- Guardian Ad Litem Program - C. Herriott is chairing the Monroe County Court Housing Court Subcommittee to implement a guardian protocol for participants with behavioral health issues. She met with Wade Norwood to discuss potential support from Common Ground Health.
- On-Site Mini Libraries- The Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee is in the early stages of developing the On-Site Mini Libraries – Reading Education Program for Public Housing residents. These books will promote diversity and inclusion as well as growth, literacy, and empowerment. A meeting took place on 8/9/22. Commissioners Cummings and Rubin are members.

### **Compliance**

#### **○ Fraud Investigations**

- **Leasing Operations:** Repayment Agreement payments total YTD as of November 2022, \$31,596.60 collected (with a total of \$3,699 collected in November 2022) A total of \$431,406.15 has been collected to date.
- **Public Housing** - Repayment agreement totals YTD for vacated arrears and collection loss as of November 2022, with \$11,980.16 collected (with a total of \$232.18 collected in November 2022). A total of 42,946.31 was collected to date.

#### **○ Termination Hearings**

- **Leasing Operations** – 31 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 4 Upheld; 0 No Show, 2 Overturned, 16 Reinstated, 7 Adjourned; 1 Withdrawn, 1 Pending a Decision
- **Public Housing** - 0 Participant Grievance Hearings Scheduled: 0 withdrawn; 0 upheld; 0 overturned, 0 reinstated & 0 adjourned.

### **Operations**

#### **○ Case Management –**

- Program Violation Referrals Outstanding – 1,473 (Previously 1,468)– which is a total to date since 2015. Due to staffing shortages, program violation referrals will be temporarily on hold. Compliance is working with HR to fill the positions.
- **Legal Case Management** – Compliance has worked with Finance to develop a database to monitor any open pending legal matters. Finance will ensure the information is kept up to date.

#### **○ Rochester Housing Charities (RHC) –** Commissioner Florine Cummings and Deputy Executive Director Cynthia Herriott serve as RHA’s ex-officio representatives on the RHC Board of Directors.

- Both attend monthly board meetings.
- Board member recruitment for RHC is ongoing, and staff is working on Board training.
- The DED will work with the ED to schedule a retreat with both the Rochester Housing Authority and Rochester Housing Charities once Board members are in place.
- RHC draft audit and budget has been provided to the board representatives.



- **Audit and Review** – The ED works closely with Legal Counsel to address areas in need of assessment within RHA. (*Executive Session for any requested reporting*)
  - Most Compliance Audits are temporarily on hold until vacant positions are filled. The DED has conducted several small-scale audits.
  
- **Public Safety** – Please see the Activity Chart for Public Safety.
  - RHA is working with residents to address the violence spikes that are occurring in the City of Rochester. Public Safety works with the Rochester Police Department to develop strategies to address crime trends.
  - On November 9, 2022, an elderly couple was assaulted by three teenagers at the Hudson Ridge Tower parking lot. The suspects were trying to steal the vehicle keys of the residents. We are working expeditiously to provide the video footage to RPD for further investigation.

7. **Finance**

Kimberly Huffman

Ms. Huffman stated that due to the closing of FY2022 there will be no report for December 2022.

8. **Information Technology Report**

Evhen Tupis

*Video Safety and Access Control (14 sites, expanded to 18)*

Summary: RHA's video safety system is antiquated, and lacks needed features. Our Access Control system is old and clumsy to maintain. We have been approved to pursue an RFP to replace both with modern systems.

Status: The walk-throughs for the four additional sites have concluded. The additional work has caused the timeline to slip into Q1/2023. The next step is to have a final presentation to RHA's Leading Stakeholders to secure their approval to proceed to RFP. Holiday schedules will likely push that into early January.

*Affordable Internet for Residents*

Summary: E.D. Burr directed RHA to find a way to help residents better afford Internet access when desired. IT is launching a campaign to both inform all residents of the Federal Subsidy program (reducing costs by \$30/month) and coach them through the application process with the help of Resident Services staff.

Status: The direct-mail postcard is with the printer and will be mailed as soon as they are complete. We are considering repeating the campaign again in the future, if affordable to do so.

*HCV/Section 8 Document Archive Scanning*

Summary: Paper records housed for Leasing Operations / Section 8 are being electronically scanned and directly attached to Tenmast WinTen2+ resident records. Additionally, IT has provided document scanning equipment to allow LO staff to directly scan new paper documents and upload them without delay.

Status: Targeted completion: December 31, 2022. **NOTE:** I am hopeful that the success of this initiative will serve to motivate similar activity for other paper records in the future.

*Upgrade Landlord Portal to newer, MRI "Assistance Connect / Owner" Portal*

Summary: RHA uses a poorly aging, unsupported, a legacy product called Landlord Portal. It is difficult to use and prone to errors, frustrating users. An upgrade is available and being pursued.

Status: Super Users have been identified and SU training is scheduled for December 21. A "launching campaign" will be discussed whose purpose is to inform landlords of the new system and onboard them smoothly.

*RochesterHousing.org Website Upgrade*

RHA's website is outdated both technically (the modules it was built upon are reaching end-of-life) and navigationally. An upgrade is available and is being pursued.

Status: Key stakeholder groups have been identified as: RHA Departments, RHA Associates, Residents/Participants, and Community Partners. Each will be interviewed to gather their inputs that will drive how the upgraded website will present itself. We are starting with the "RHA Departments" group but are targeting to reach out to all groups within 2023/Q1.

*NEW: MRI ResidentCheck, an automated resident screening system*

Summary: Demands for IT services are greater than present staffing levels can support. A stop-gap agreement with Innovative Solutions will expire on September 30. An RFP for managed IT services to take us into the foreseeable future is being considered.

Status: The criteria for Pass/Fail has been communicated to MRI. Next step: Super Users will be scheduled to be trained, using the criteria they supplied.

*NEW: MRI RentPayment to accept Repayment Agreement payments*

Summary In a previous year, RHA subscribed to MRI's RentPayment, a service that allows residents to pay rent electronically. That system has been enhanced to allow those with Repayment Agreements to pay electronically, as well. This additional feature is being made available to RHA at no additional cost to us.

Status: The Finance department has provided MRI with onboarding information. Finance Super User training is scheduled for December 19th. Roll-out TBD from SU's based on the outcome of that training.

*NEW: Telephone Service Cost Reduction and Future Cost Avoidance*

Done Summary: RHA has moved basic telephone services from Windstream to Frontier. This is an interim milestone on the journey to full modernization of our telephone services. This has been a multi-year effort that is finally coming to completion. This audit, rightsizing, and consolidation has resulted in significant cost savings; RHA's September 2021 invoices totaled \$19,400 vs September 2022's was \$6,600 (a monthly savings of \$12,800, and a **yearly savings of \$153,600**. Call-out: I worked closely with Denton Clark of Mondavi Design (a telecommunication consulting firm), who provided *exceptional* service that was critical to overall success.

Detail: In 2019, RHA's telephone services were audited to find that records were poor and costs were not well understood. Two different telephone service providers were being used: Windstream and Frontier. Each had its own billing approach and line costs. Upon physical auditing, unused (but billed) lines were discovered as well.

We began by documenting and verifying every line that appeared on both invoices. This consumed a significant amount of time and effort.

The cost structure of both providers was evaluated, and Frontier was shown to be significantly less expensive. Lines were transferred from Windstream to Frontier. Windstream's closeout billing/invoicing was audited and found to be in error. We submitted authoritative documentation to allow them to correct their closeout overcharges. This resulted in **credits totaling \$29,579**. We no longer use Windstream.

**9. Public Housing Report**

**Harolda Wilcox**

**Public Housing Activities:**

- Fire safety meetings were withheld on all the high risers (HRT, LT, KT & UT).
- Rochester Housing Authority in partnership with Lily of the Valley provided 200 Thanksgiving dinners for the residents at DTE & DTW on Wednesday, November 23, 2022. Christal Webb, Evelyn Bishop & Harolda Wilcox delivered door-to-door in both towers
- Free COVID & Flu Vaccinations were provided by Alexander Pharmacy & Free food event was held for the residents at Lena Gantt Estates on Wednesday, November 30th, 2022.
- Holland Townhouses received a Thanksgiving turkey and all the fixings. This was in partnership with the Faith Church on the 19th of November.

**Public Housing Matters:**

The **TEAM** continues to do an **excellent** job of keeping things moving.

**COVID Matters:**

- Building Security – RHA visitor restrictions are still in place, with visitation hours from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm. Everyone is encouraged to social distance.
- Residents – Partnership with Foodlink is still providing food to those seniors in need.
- Community Rooms are currently open on the weekends. Protocols sent to Resident Council presidents. Notices sent to residents of optional mask-wearing.
- Offices continue to receive residents by appointment only. Residents will always need to wear facial coverings for scheduled appointments.

**RENT ARREARS**

- To avoid eviction and to assist residents in becoming current with rental arrears, the team will have the resident sign a repayment agreement along with applying for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).
- RHA Public Housing department Received \$3,388.00 in EPPI 2.0 monies for November 2022.
- As of November 2022, the total delinquent rent amount owed is \$389,588.68 which is a decrease of \$8,677.79 from November.
- 2 – 30-day notices were served by the City Marshal in September
- We are working diligently with residents to address arrears in lieu of court proceedings. As of Novem 2022, RHA has entered into 80 repayment agreements year to date.
- We are still encountering vacant units where the resident has skipped out. This affects both Public Housing arrears and vacancy rates.

**Parkside**

- 4 Vacant Units
- 3 Units Ready to Lease – (Correction- Applications were not sent to Leasing Operations)
- As of 9/15/2022 we have not received any responses to the canvas letters mailed on 8/29/2022. We will have to move those next on the list.

**Parkside Arrears**

- \$ 36,860.35 in outstanding rent
  - \$ 9,006.75 0-30 days
  - \$ 5,082.60 31-60 days
  - \$ 4,397.00 61-90 days
  - \$ 17,838.00 over 90 days (represents 9 tenants)

**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

- Kennedy Tower Rehabilitation – Completion of the fourth and fifth floors has resumed.
- The Property Management office continues to offer applicants several methods to view a unit, e.g., virtual, email & text pictures, and solo unit showings (staff will wait outside of the unit as the applicant walks through the unit).

**Application Processing Center:**

**Waiting List Management:**

As of 11/14/2022, high-rise canvas pull.

A. To address the number of high-rise vacancies, APC is conducting a high-rise canvas for applicants that are interested in residing in one of the high-rise communities (LT, UT, HRT, DTE, & DTW)

Scheduled High Rise Canvas Pull –

In incentive for applicants starting with this canvas pull. Move-in incentives will be given to the first 100 applicants that are housed at Lake Tower or Danforth Towers and that remain in good standing for one year)

**Online Applications:**

- As of 7/5/2022, the 1 bedroom wait list was opened. As of the date of this memo, the wait list has 472 applicants.

- Applicants

As of 11/30/2022 – No Updates

**Unit Offers:**

- APC Manager is extending offers to 'ready drawer' applicants to fill vacancies. This process is slower than desired because the manager has absorbed most of the responsibilities from the staff vacancy in APC, reduced staff hours, and the applicant's response time was extended as a response to COVID.
- Current applications in the Screening and Intake Phase as of 10/28/2022:
- Currently being screened - 3 applications
  - Studio/1 bedroom –2 applications
  - 2+ bedrooms - 1 application
- Currently going thru intake (w/Intake Specialist): 59 applications
  - studio/1-bedroom – 46 applications
  - 2+ bedrooms – 13 applications
- As of 9/20/2022 – Glenwood and DTW will resume having unit offers extended.

**Renovation Projects:**

- **Fed/Scattered Site** – From the **37 households** that will have their units demolished or renovated, we have **25 residents** that have accepted unit offers. Chief of Maintenance, Bob Croston has been notified of each accepted unit offer to follow up on to ensure units are ready for move-in. Many high-priority residents (those that have a project start date within the next 6 months) have been given a final offer.
  - As of 9/27/2022 – All residents, except for the Section 32 residents, have received a final relocation unit offer, per the Relocation Plan.
- **Bond St.** – From the **11 households** that are a part of this project, **3 families** have been extended offers with **2 residents** having accepted their unit offer.
  - As of 11/28/2022- no other updates.

**10. Maintenance Report**

**Robert Croston**

○ **Vacant Unit Report**

- The Maintenance Department continues to work hard to keep up with the number of new vacancies. Still one of our highest numbers of the vacant unit in years with many move-outs, residents skipping out, and more court dates opening for more evictions.

○ **Site Beautification**

- We will be working with Public Housing on updating the insides at some of our high raises by painting some of the lobbies and community room. We are also looking at updating the colors and flooring to bring a newer, cleaner look to the buildings. We will be having the lobby painted this month at 321 Lake Tower as part of our next phase of updates to the buildings.
- Maintenance will have a Gazebo installed at the site before the end of the year.
- We will be adding some grills to University Tower per the resident request weather permitting, and supply chain issues this year. If any issues arise, we will order them with the hopes of a spring install.

○ **Changes to the Work Order Report**

The Maintenance department is making changes to the work order report. We will begin breaking down the progress of work order categories. This is to better give the board of an idea of the status of work orders and any progress Maintenance is making in reducing the numbers. It is our hope to paint a clear picture of where we stand with open and closed work orders, show any progress or where more staff may be needed to address reducing the numbers.

We will be updating the look of the report to keep it simple and understandable to all and bring better accountability to the Maintenance department. Once we have what we feel is a good report to present, we will ask the board for input on what they think or if they would like any changes to make it comprehensible for all.

**11. Leasing Operations Report (Section 8)**

**Pierre Dorancy**

**Leasing Operations Matters:**

1. The Administrative Plan language changes have been approved. The staff is working on implementing the changes. Robocall has been used to notify participants and landlords of the changes that affect them.
2. Currently, there are 1,677 active applicants on the Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List.
3. Leasing Operations' voucher and funding utilization goals are between 95% to 98%. We are currently at 86.65% utilization of vouchers and 101.85% utilization of funds. Leasing Operations Department has a Leasing Plan for 2022 to fully maximize HUD funding for Housing Assistance Payments. From 1/1/2021 to 12/31/2021, we issued 687 HCV Vouchers. YTD 2022, we have issued 313 HCV vouchers. Staff continues working overtime to issue vouchers and maintain utilization.
4. The monthly inspection goal is 780-960. The Inspection Unit conducted 541 inspections for the month of November.

**HUD Community Choice Demonstration (formerly Mobility Demonstration)**

*As previously reported, RHA was one of nine (9) PHA's selected to join the HUD's HCV Mobility Demonstration Program. The program is now known as Community Choice Demonstration. Briefly, this is a 6-year demonstration program designed to increase participation for voucher families with children with better access to low-poverty neighborhoods and other areas of opportunity with high-performing schools and other strong community resources.*

As of the pilot start date on October 17, 2022, the managers involved in implementing the program have updated RHA's website with CCD information and sent out the first batch of interest letters. Fifty qualifying families with recertifications for May 2023 were randomly selected and provided program information. Interested families can reach out to a dedicated phone line and email address to communicate interest in participation. The CCD phone line is (585) 697-6210 and the email address is [communitychoice@rochesterhousing.org](mailto:communitychoice@rochesterhousing.org). As of 12/08/2022, out of the 50 active HCV participants who were canvassed, 13 indicated interest, and 3 completed the informational briefing with one (1) enrollment. The other two (2) are scheduled to be enrolled.

**HUD Emergency Housing Vouchers**

As of 12/08/2022, out of 117 EHV vouchers authorized:

- 134 moving papers have been issued.
- 96 applicants have been housed.
- 13 applicants are searching for housing.
- 2 applicants have submitted moving papers

RHA continues to collaborate with the local CoC and consult with other housing authorities and has statistics on the status of EHV lease-ups. These reviews indicate that RHA is working at a similar pace as other public housing agencies.

The policies of the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program were approved by the Board on 9/22/21 and are reflected in the RHA HCV Administrative Plan.

**Additional Mainstream Voucher Awards**

RHA has been awarded 25 additional Mainstream Vouchers to assist households that include a non-elderly person(s) with disabilities to lease up affordable units. This award includes extraordinary administrative funding to support administrative costs, including activities to support housing search and lease up of eligible applicants. Fees can also be used for costs related to the retention, recruitment, and support of participating owners in the form of security deposits, signing bonuses, vacancy payments, and damage mitigation.

As of 12/08/2022, out of 25 Mainstream Vouchers authorized, 5 applicants have been housed.

### **Training**

The Leasing Operations team will be developing a training schedule for Calendar Year 2022 in coordination with the HR department.

Topics include:

- SEMAP
- Rent Calculations & HCV Program Management,
- Effective Use of HUD's Two-Year Tool to maximize voucher utilization,
- Reasonable Accommodations,
- Personal and Professional Development, such as effective communication.

## **12. Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

### **Participant Highlights**

We have 238 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:

- Ms. McGuire entered the FSS program on December 1st, 2015, with employment, credit restoration, and obtaining a driver's license goals. Ms. McGuire sought and maintained employment with Goodwill of Rochester, obtained her driver's license, and increased her credit score by 100 points. In addition, Ms. McGuire obtained her Bachelor of Science degree. Ms. McGuire is a successful graduate and is entitled to receive an estimated \$16,529.08 in escrow savings..

### **Section 3**

- Monthly Report – no updates

### **Agency Collaborations**

- Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) offers free financial counseling which focuses on increasing savings, reducing debt, and increasing access to safe and affordable banking products.
  - 2021 Stats
    1. 124 clients
    2. 341 counseling sessions
    3. \$83,143 debt reduction
    4. \$104,457 increased savings
  - FEC awarded 150K to assist RHA families, of which 50 new homeowners are eligible for a 1k grant.
  - Project approved by City Council at February council meeting. The agreement was signed by Executive Director and for signature on 3/4/22
  - Executed Agreement received on 3/25/2022, Meeting to discuss payment issuance with Finance on 4/25/22
  - Homeowner grants awarded to six participants
  - 2 additional grants pending
- Action for a Better Community (ABC) – Benefits Cliff Project - We are participating in 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.
  - Calculator development and Pilot agency selection underway
  - Met with ABC to discuss the first look at the calculator and pilot details



- 10 families participated in the Benefits Cliff Pilot. Each Family tested the calculator and completed a brief survey related to their experience in using the calculator. Each participant received a \$ 35 gift card for participating in the survey.
- RMAPI Housing Subcommittee Cochair – Collaborative initiative focused on making housing more accessible, affordable, and equitable in our community.
  - Mission - Increase housing equity and access, improve housing stability, and close the wealth gap in Monroe County
  - Areas of focus: Housing Navigation, Displacement/Transiency, reviewing the list of budget priorities aligned with RMAPI's housing policy.
- Closing the Gaps 6 city cohort (Albuquerque, NM; Austin, TX; Memphis, TN; Minneapolis, MN; Rochester, NY; and St. Paul, MN) is a one-year initiative that brings together leaders from cities across the country who are committed to imagining what an anti-racist society might look like and playing an important role in building it through the transformation of government policies, practices, and operations.
  - CTG provides up to \$167,000 per cohort city to execute on your homeownership strategy and up to \$100,000 per cohort city to execute on your business, starts, and growth strategy.
  - Mayor Evans has signed off on the proposed plan. We are awaiting an award letter from Living Cities to present it to the city council. Closing the gaps seeks to improve homeownership and entrepreneurial outcomes for people of color. The proposed plan would add outreach dollars and incentives for young families to pursue homeownership.
  - Next steps: Create collaborative outreach materials, meet with Head Start staff, and explore RHA/Landbank partnership.
- Jordan Health Community Engagement Committee - Understanding how we as community organizations can better serve one another and our community in hopes of linking various community organizations churches, service centers, recreation centers, and neighborhood organizations) and them having a stronger, visible presence in the community.
  - Next Steps: Jordan Health Roadshow
- Wilmot Cancer Institute Faith in Community Advisory Board (FCAB) will exist to strengthen the relationship between faith-based organizations, the communities they serve, and the Wilmot Cancer Institute to address cancer health disparities that disproportionality impact specific groups.
  - September FCAB meeting discussed two research opportunities and an upcoming retreat. The retreat is scheduled for 10/7/2022.
  - Dr. Nikesha Gilmore to present the study at the December Resident Relations meeting.
- Boys Scouts of America – RHA is partnering with the boy scouts to bring scouting to RHA Public Housing family sites.
  - Planning meeting for continued outreach TBD
- RHA has been invited to participate in the Mayor's Financial Empowerment Advisory Group – Inaugural meeting on 9/8/22
  - Met with the Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) team on 10/18/2022 to discuss the vision statement, future expectations of OFE, current gaps in creating financially empowered residents, and survey questions for focus groups.

- Met with the Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) team on 12/2/2022 to discuss past actions, and determine measures of success and measures for impact on beneficiaries.
- Girl Scouts – Girls Scouts is seeking to partner with RHA to pilot a scouting program at Harriet Tubman

**Homeownership**

- Ms. Walker closed on her home at 44 Rockview Terrace on November 16th.
- Ms. Cotto closed on her at home at 1022 Clarkson Parma Townline Road on November 15th.
- We have four families with anticipated closings and twenty-eight families who have been approved for financing and are searching for homes.

**13. Resident Relations Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

**Resident Council Training** – All resident council officers are required to attend training prior to the start of the 2023 Resident Council Office term. All officers will be trained on conducting meetings, making meetings inclusive, use of Tenant Participation funds, and best practices for creating and maintaining resident accounts. Meetings are scheduled for 12/9 and 12/19.

**Resident Surveys** – Harolda presented a draft survey card for resident feedback which included a QR code that allows mobile access to the survey as well as the physical version which can be dropped off at the management offices.

**Internet Affordability Project** – Evhen distributed the flyer for the forthcoming affordable internet mailer and gave a brief explanation regarding resources available to assist residents in applying.

**Wilmot Cancer Institute Faith in Community Action Board** – Dr. Nikesha Gilmore, Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery, Division of Supportive Care in Cancer, Geriatric Oncology presented the Patient-centered Communication to Build Trust (PACT) study. The study is a noninvasive study seeking information on the communication between African Americans and their oncologist to create better outcomes for black patients with cancer who have the highest rates of cancer morbidity and mortality. Dr. Gilmore is desiring to partner with the councils in spreading awareness of the study and getting residents to participate.

**Senior Activities**

- Senior Holiday Luncheon scheduled for December 15th from 11am - 2:30pm at the Harro East Ballroom.
  - 155 residents registered.
- Commissioner Cummings and the Senior Choir performed on December 6th at Hudson Ridge Tower. Their next performance will be the Holiday Luncheon. Volunteer Choir Director - Tileesia Sandlin.
- FVRx – Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program - Cornell Cooperative – 6-week nutrition Class – Program to begin in April 2023.

**Family Activities –**

- Toy giveaway in partnership with the Pirate Toy Fund. Toys are being distributed from December 5th – December 23rd.
- 33 Families (79 children) registered.

**14. Planning Committee Report**

**Shawn Burr**

- The Planning Committee meeting was held on 12/7/2022. There was one follow-up item from the previous meeting that is in progress.
- There were five action items presented, discussed, and agreed to move forward to the Board for approval.
- We then discussed the status of our current projects by having staff give updates and review progress pictures:
  1. Scattered Site Roof Replacement R-19 - project 98% complete.
  2. Scattered Site Parking Lot Project – project was completed on schedule.
  3. Kennedy Tower Hallway Rehabilitation – the project is 98% complete and behind schedule due to COVID and material delays.
  4. Danforth Towers East & West Façade Repair – project is 82% complete and on hold until spring when weather is conducive to finish the work.
  5. Bronson Court Furnace & Water Heater Installations – Project is on schedule and 97% complete.
  6. Bronson Court Roof Replacement – Project is getting started
- We are working with our consultant team of D+B/Calogero on summarizing and categorizing the RAD Physical Conditions Assessments and Environmental testing on most all of our PH properties. The NYSPOP grant funds have been expended and we are under separate contract with D&B to complete the work.
- There are currently two projects out to bid and we have additional projects to be submitted to Procurement.
- Our MWBE & Section 3 Contracts report was presented and will continue to be updated each month and we are working to include percentages of possible funds allocated/obligated.
- The status of our current CFP Budgets as of June 30th are: 501.19 is 100% obligated and 98% expended, 501.20 is 34% Obligated and 34% Expended and 501.21 is 49% Obligated and 9% Expended. We expect to meet all our deadlines.
- We then discussed our A/E status report, and no issues were present.
- The status of our current CFP Budgets as of June 30th are: 501.19 is 100% obligated and 96% expended, 501.20 is 34% Obligated and 33% Expended and 501.21 is 44% Obligated and 4% Expended. RHF Funds grants are fully obligated and expended. We are meeting our deadlines.
- We then discussed our A/E status report, and no issues were present.

**Project Planning**

- Our Project Planning meeting followed the Committee meeting, and updates were given by our development partner, Edgemere Development on our development projects starting with our RAD project at Federal St/Scattered Sites. Moving the project forward in coordination with NYS HCR, NYS OTDA, HUD, and the City of Roch. With closing calls every Friday. We are communicating regularly with HUD on the RAD conversion “glitch” and hopefully are getting closer to getting it

resolved. Director Molinaro-Thompson has been communicating with the director of REAC and NYS HCR on navigating through the process to correct the issue. It has delayed the closing, but this communication has helped with HCR. We continue to work with the City on the coordination between agencies as the project moves forward. Todd Bullard is also involved now from here on out with preparing necessary resolutions and representing RHA through the closing process with closing team meetings every week.

- Our next RAD project presented by the Edgemere team was Parliament/Luther (Fairfield Village). Design plans for renovation and redevelopment are being finalized by our A/E and environmental firms who are working with the City Zoning department on providing required and requested information and answering questions as they arise. Weekly meetings continue with the development team. Resident meetings have been held and more will be scheduled in the upcoming months.
- Edgemere then presented updates on our Fernwood development project. It will be a two-phased project with the four-story multifamily building as the first phase and the single-family new builds as the second phase. We submitted our 9% LIHTC application. We also have begun work on the second phase
- Glenwood will now be a stand-alone RAD conversion project and we have been meeting to rework the design to include the whole site. We will continue with regular updates to the residents.
- Lexington Court Interior and Common Area Upgrades Planning Phase)
  - Bid-ready construction documents are near complete for the (1) common area bid pack and (2) Unit upgrades bid pack. The window refurbishment portion of the project is currently out for public bid
- Bronson Court Site Upgrades
  - RHA has hired HUNT Architects & Engineers to design improvements to this site's building exteriors and landscape. The replacement of all old roofing will be Phase I for this project and is underway with the furnaces and water heaters being replaced too. Phase II will include new siding, porches for the front of the units and smaller decks for the rear, and construction documents are in progress. Phase III will incorporate landscaping with a gazebo, picnic tables, centralized grills, and light poles in each of the two courtyards.
- Glenwood Gardens Perimeter Access Control (Design Phase)
  - RHA is working with the city on a design change to eliminate the emergency vehicle turnarounds in exchange for an easement agreement that would allow the use of RHA property for emergency vehicle turnarounds. A teams meeting took place on 10-26-2022 with the project engineer and the City of Rochester Stakeholders where RHA's proposed emergency vehicle turnaround design was discussed. RHA is waiting for a final decision to be made by the city.
- Change the Face of Public Housing project at Bond/Hamilton is moving along with the SAC application process for the demolition phase nearing completion. We received our permit from the City to work in the right of way, which is critical for the project. Edge architecture is finishing the plans and we will be submitting them to the City for review. We continue to work with the residents to determine relocation needs for each ahead of time and finalize the resident relocation plan.
- The next steps for our Change the Face of Public Housing project at Edinburgh Street are the SAC application for demolition and the final plans and specifications

for bidding which are nearing completion. We are asking one of our A/E firms to complete the SAC application due to our heavy workload.

- We discussed the Holland Townhouse Site Improvement Project; The project Engineer redesigned the parking layout to accommodate five (5) enclosed dumpster areas needed since RHA switched from trash totes to dumpsters at this site. A draft design was presented to the city on 10-31-2022 for input before final documents are created. We received some comments on 11-17-2022 and are waiting for approval to move forward.
- Our seven Section 32 homeownership homes SAC application will be completed soon, but we did have a few drop off as their situations have changed. We have received the letter of support from the Mayor and we are compiling all required documents to submit to SAC. Melissa's team continues to work with each resident to determine eligibility and a path forward for them. The
- plan is to create a pipeline of residents and units and work with our HUD Field office and SAC to determine best path forward for submitting applications to them.
- RHA's mold remediation grant under the Housing-Related Hazards Capital Fund Program in the amount of \$896,649 is moving forward, and the priority sites are Holland Townhouses and Bay-Zimmer to start, with replacement of gutters, downspouts and storm drains and necessary site work. We are engaging a design professional to prepare plans and specifications.
- We then reviewed the projects in the CFP Project Pipeline, which are all in various stages of planning and design.

**15. Commissioner Comments**

**Commissioner Cummings:** I hope everybody has a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. I really want to give kudos to this team and all that was involved in the residence.

Christmas Luncheon everyone enjoyed themselves, and the food was good. It was a good event. The choir sounded good, and I just like to thank Melissa and her team and all staff that participate.

Party. I really did enjoy myself. I left that early because the staff didn't need to have a commissioner looking over their shoulders, but it was really, good. I hope everybody enjoyed the party. The good thing was on Friday.

**Commissioner Rubin:** I continue to be impressed with the staff. Thank you very much.

**Commissioner Waters:** I just wanted to say to the staff a happy holiday season and blessings to the staff and their families.

**Commissioner Ocansey:** A happy holiday and a happy new year to everybody.

**Commissioner Remarais:** as always, thankful to the staff for what they do for RHA.

Say happy holidays. We're looking forward to a great 2023.

I'm sorry I missed a residence Christmas party with that training for work, but I try to go to as many events as I can, but I really want to stay as close.

I'm thankful and I'm proud to be on the board I just can't wait for 2023 so we can have a better year than 2022

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to go into Executive Session for a legal and personnel matter. Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded a motion to go into Executive Session at 2:45 pm. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Remarais voted yes. The motion was passed, five to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 3:08 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Cummings, commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Rubin voted yes. The motion was passed five to zero.

**16. January Regular Board Meeting**

The January Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 25, 2023**, at 12:00 pm.

There were no further items to come before the Board, a vote to end the September Regular Meeting Business was taken, Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded a motion to end the Board Meeting at 3:10 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner James, and Commissioner Rubin voted yes. The motion was passed five to zero.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board,  
Executive Director