

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
June 28, 2023  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**June 28, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Rosalie Remarais, Chairperson  
Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner, Vice Chair  
Shanai T. Lee, Commissioner  
Kabutey Ocansey, Commissioner  
Henry Rubin, Commissioner  
Willie Otis, Resident Commissioner  
James Water, Jr. Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT**

Melissa Berrien  
Shawn Burr  
Diana Colon  
Robert Croston  
Pierre Dorancy  
Julie Fox  
Cynthia Herriott  
Kimberly Huffman  
Joyce Kinsey  
Shawanna Lawrence  
Daniel Long  
Mariam Rodriguez –  
Machuca  
James Senger  
Harolda Wilcox

**OTHERS PRESENT**

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

Commissioner Rosalie Remarais called the May Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:06 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. **Approval of Minutes:**
  - a. **May 24, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the May 2023 Regular Board Meeting Minutes Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Otis, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Ocansey, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

**b. June 5, 2023, Special Board Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion to approve the June 2023 Special Board Meeting Minutes Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Otis, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Ocansey, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

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

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

Mr. Burr gave Kudos to the HR, Wellness Committee, and Diversity & Inclusion Committee teams for all their hard work informing staff and planning and facilitating staff functions that build morale and brings us all together. Great work!!!

Mr. Burr reported that the Community Choice Demonstration RHA Team is working diligently with families. We have made significant progress and I'm very proud of our dedicated team! NYS and Enterprise are also partnering on a similar program and have issued an RFP for funding. We are not eligible since we are participating in the HUD program.

Mr. Burr would like to continue to recognize the extra efforts of staff involved in community projects. 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, Guardian Ad Litem Program, Private Sector Rental Market Study Working Group, Eviction Response Team, Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning and Benefits Cliff Project are a few that are in the works. I really appreciate their efforts in representing RHA on critical projects in our community and their extra efforts are commendable.

Mr. Burr reported the RMAPI Summit 2023 on June 14th and thought that it was very well organized and well facilitated. RMAPI Summit 2023: UPWARD MOBILITY AND BEYOND Registration, Wed, Jun 14, 2023, at 8:30 AM | Eventbrite I was able to attend all morning and walked away with a very positive vibe as to what will be accomplished in the upcoming year.

Mr. Burr reported that Development projects are moving forward with the closing for Federal St-SS complete! This a reminder that our groundbreaking ceremony for our Federal St-Scattered Sites Project is tentatively set for 11:00 on Thursday, July 13<sup>th</sup> at the Federal St. location. Work has begun at some of the sites and construction meetings are every two weeks. Parliament-Fairfield will most likely have a closing date in September/October of this year, and we have held two resident meetings at each site. We were not funded for Fernwood Phase I and will resubmit for the next round when it's announced. Glenwood is moving along with finalizing a design and environmental testing. We will be putting together a presentation for residents shortly and meeting with them.

Mr. Burr stated our summer employee picnic will be on July 27<sup>th</sup> at Ontario Beach Park and our Senior Resident Summer Outing is going to be on August 4<sup>th</sup>, so save the dates!

Mr. Burr NYSPHADA Update: The Legislative Committee continues to work hard on advocating at the State level for funding for PHA's. We pushed for more ERAP funds for upstate PHA's as we all have significant arrears, and now that the budget has been approved, OTDA will need to implement. Those applications submitted by the deadline in January by our residents that weren't funded are supposed to be reviewed and funded. They have been slow to implement, but the Governor's office has been responsive to our questions.

### **HUD Publishes Guidance on Housing Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness**

On June 8, HUD issued Notice PIH 2023-13 titled "Guidance on housing individuals and families experiencing homelessness through the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Programs." The notice identifies strategies that PHAs can pursue to expand housing opportunities for individuals and families experiencing homelessness through the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs. The notice updates guidance related to reporting data and information; waiting list management and preferences; screening policies; program termination and eviction policies; and information regarding pairing reject-based vouchers (PBV) with CoC Supportive Services to create Permanent Supportive Housing.

### ***Updates for Reporting***

A major change to the previous guidance found in PIH Notice 2013-15, is that HUD revises the definition of “homeless” for the purposes of reporting in the Inventory Management System/Public Housing Information Center (IMS/PIC). The definition is defined into four categories with the first three based on section 103(a) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the fourth category based on section 103(b). The revision to the definition of “homeless” is specifically important in determining whether an individual or family was homeless at admission, which must be reported on Form HUD-50058. The Department notes the reason for this to be because they have found that in some instances PHAs do not report this field accurately. Notice PIH 2023-13 also outlines new guidance on how PHAs and CoCs can share data derived from IMS/PIC and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). It specifically mentions that CoCs can use HMIS capabilities, such as generating reports, assessing programs, and process intake and referral information in some CE systems to improve their overall approach in assisting those experiencing homelessness.

### ***Waiting List Management and Preferences***

To improve how wait lists are managed, PHAs may create partnerships with CoCs, specifically those who are within key leadership roles and service providers from within the CoC. Policies and procedures may also be altered to simplify the application process, work with partner organizations to gather necessary information, strengthening communication with applicants, and establish nondiscriminatory preferences for admissions policies. The guidance also allows for several other alterations that can further be found in the notice.

### ***Admission and Screening Policies***

Discretion is limited for policies that revolve around screening. PHAs are required to have policies that prohibit certain types of conduct according to federal law and HUD regulations. The notice states that it is mandatory to prohibit the admission of a household if an applicant/household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program or an applicant has ever been convicted for the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing. However, there are some exceptions in cases of drug offenses, specifically individuals who are found by the PHA to have successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program approved by the PHA or if the member who engaged in the criminal activity is no longer part of the household. It is important to note that PHAs are required to take approaches that are consistent with HUD regulations and are recommended to follow HUD’s best practices that seek to avoid fair housing liability when screening applicants or tenants. Some best practices consist of reducing the look-back period for criminal convictions, screening only for mandatory requirements, eliminating one-strike policies, limiting denials related to illegal drug use, giving tenants/applicants the opportunity to dispute information related to a criminal record, and avoiding the use of third-party screening companies.

***Program Termination and Eviction Policies***

The notice states that PHAs may not have admission/ termination policies that apply specifically to a certain population versus another unless there is legal authority to do so. Authorities have discretion in termination policies, but HUD notes that PHAs should take careful consideration while developing and enforcing termination policies as it can immediately lead to homelessness. In having discretion of termination policies, PHAS must be careful in adopting rules that require automatic termination any time a household member engages in criminal activity. This is because rule such as this may violate laws such as the Fair Housing Act and VAWA. Additionally, PHAs must comply with VAWA rules, which prohibits a tenant from being denied admission, evicted, or have their assistance terminated solely because of criminal activity relating to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, if they are the victim and a household member or guest engaged in the criminal activity. Both HCV and Public Housing programs may use the same considerations when making an admission or eviction decision. Therefore, PHAs must consider the seriousness of the offending action; the impact that eviction of the entire household would have on family members not involved in the criminal activity; and the extent to which the leaseholder has taken all steps to prevent or mitigate the criminal activity. The notice encourages PHAs to review their eviction and termination policies to reflect the guidance in the notice.

***Permanent Supportive Housing***

Under this guidance, HUD allows PHAs to use PBVs in units serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Projects that use PBVs are encouraged to offer supportive services even where no project cap exception is used. PBV projects that offer supportive services combine affordable housing assistance with voluntary supportive services. According to HUD, this combination is a form of permanent supportive housing. Additionally, owners or PHAs may enter into an MOU or other type of agreement with a CoC or service provider to implement supportive housing.

**b. Board Action Requests**

- i. Renovations to 158 Curtis Street - Authorized the Executive Director to award a contract to Fleetwood Construction Services in the amount of \$367,760.00 – Capital Project

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

- ii. 2023 – 2024 Agency Annual Plan – Authorized the Executive Director to submit the Plan to HUD by the deadline of July 14, 2023 – Public Housing

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

- iii. ACOP Chapter 10 Assistive Animal and Pet Policy – Authorized the Executive Director to revise RHA’s ACOP – Public Housing

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

- iv. Scattered Site Porch Replacement – P10 Rebid - Authorized the Executive Director to award the contract to O&T Drywall & Painting in the amount of \$144,242.28 – Capital Projects

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

- v. Scattered Site Porch Replacement – P11 Rebid - Authorized the Executive Director to award the contract to O&T Drywall & Painting in the amount of \$132,224.46 – Capital Projects

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

- vi. Spring and Fall Clean Up Sites Authority Wide - Authorized the Executive Director to award the contract to Washington Properties in the amount of \$132,815.00 – Maintenance.

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

**4. Human Resource Coordinator Report**

**Shawanna Lawrence**

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

The HR department had a productive month in May 2023, focusing on critical activities such as recruitment and employee engagement. The department's efforts have resulted in the successful hiring of new employees and improved concentration on engagement.

**Recruitment Information:**

**Recruitment Strategies**

Rochester Works Virtual Job Fair- May 25, 2023

Talent Acquisition Conference- June 6, 2023

Increasing Brand Awareness on social media

Employee Referral Program–Ongoing

**Key Activities:**

1. The Wellness Committee submitted its monthly newsletter to staff.
2. The employee experience is extremely important, so we continue to strive on creating a positive and engaging work environment. Some of the strategies for improving the employee experience, including employee engagement initiatives, highlighting the benefits and perks we offer.

**Events June 2023:**

Ice Cream Social: Tuesday, June 20, 2023

**Opportunities:**

**Talent Retention:**

While we have successfully attracted new talent, we are also focused on retaining our employees.

HR conducted four (4) stay interviews with employees. The purpose is to understand employees' level of job satisfaction, identify potential issues or concerns, and address them to increase employee engagement and reduce turnover.

**Kudos Korner:**

**Congratulations To Our Kudos Korner Recipients!**

Uttara Chatterjee – She is an excellent and professional employee. Every time applicants or landlords who reach out to me to ask a question that I am not able to answer that is beyond my knowledge or specific processes beyond my scope of work, I always reply and copy in Owner Services on the email so that they can help that applicant or landlord out. Every single time, Uttara has responded promptly and professionally, and with kindness. Raul Hernandez- Goes above and beyond to help everyone with anything he can. He never says no to coworkers when asked to help with work-related issues. He has always been someone I can depend on when I need help learning something new. His willingness to help inspires others, and he witnessed that RHA has terrific staff working for them who care not only about our participants but also about coworkers. His knowledge of RHA policy and procedures is beyond amazing. Raul is friendly and happy, and that is contagious. He is always encouraging me and others to participate in RHA events. Kudos to Raul for all he does. Thank you for this opportunity of sharing this “kudos.”

**Conclusion:**

Human Resources will continue to focus on these critical areas and address challenges and opportunities to support the organization's goals and objectives.

**5. 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 is going to meet with the Rochester Police Department, Law NY, and Councilmember Patterson to further discuss this project.
- 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.

- Asian American and Pacific Islanders Heritage Month- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee acknowledged Asian American and Pacific Islanders Month through a series of informational emails and a Luau Celebration (pictures attached).

## **Compliance**

### ○ **Fraud Investigations**

- **Leasing Operations** Repayment Agreement payments total YTD as of May 2023, \$28,313.78 collected (with a total of \$13,265.78 collected in May 2023) A total of \$490,987.93 has been collected to date.
- **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for vacated arrears and collection loss as of May 2023, with \$2,334.00 collected (with a total of \$1,050.00 collected in May 2023). A total of \$47,449.31 was collected to date.

### ○ **Termination Hearings:**

- **Leasing Operations** – 11 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 3 Upheld; 1 No Show, 1 Overturned, 0 Reinstated, 4 Adjourned, 2 Withdrawn; 0 Pending Hearing Decision.
- **Public Housing** –2 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 2 Upheld; 1 No Show, 0 Overturned, 0 Reinstated, 0 Adjourned; 0 Withdrawn.

## **Operations**

### ○ **Case Management**

- Program Violation Referrals Outstanding – 1,440 (Previously 1,430)– 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.

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

- Both attend monthly board meetings.
- Board member recruitment for RHC is ongoing and staff are 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’s draft audit and budget have been provided to the board representatives.

**Audit and Review** – The DED 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 note the attached Activity Chart for Public Safety.

- Public Safety works with the Rochester Police Department to develop strategies to address crime trends.

**6. Finance**

**Kimberly Huffman**

Ms. Huffman reported the monthly Finance Report, the actual vs. budgeted figures, and variances for year-to-date through April 2023, for the COCC, Public Housing, and Section 8 income and expenses.

**7. Information Technology Report**

**Evhen Tupis**

*Affordable Internet for Residents*

- RHA partnered with Literacy Rochester to visit Hudson-Ridge Tower on 6/14 to assist residents who were reluctant or otherwise unsure about applying for the FCC's \$30/month ACP Internet subsidy. Learnings from this event will be applied to future events at other PH facilities. RHA IT provided laptops and Internet while Literacy Rochester provided trained volunteers.
- We are now working to see if we can run similar events in Wayne, Ontario, Orleans, and Livingston Counties to help our HCV/Section 8 participants.

*Public/Participant Self-serve Kiosks*

- Cost estimate has been delivered. Upon final review, an overlooked item was discovered and is being investigated. Outcome pending.

*Upgrade Landlord Portal to modern Owner Portal product*

- RHA's "Super Users" have a final pre-launch meeting scheduled for June 29th. Upon completion, they will be set to launch the upgraded system to Landlords/Owners.

*Video Safety and Access Control Upgrade/Modernization*

- Budgeting discussions have taken place. Finance and Capital Projects is in the process of properly balancing costs across appropriate budget accounts. Outcome pending. Significant RFP development is occurring in parallel.

*Telephone System Upgrade/Modernization*

- On hold at the request of E.D. Burr to assess budget as noted above.

*Tenmast Upgrade/Replacement*

- On hold at request of E.D. Burr to assess budget as noted above. Significant RFP development is occurring in parallel.

*RochesterHousing.org Website Upgrade/Modernization*

- Feedback from stakeholders has been received and is being. A pathway forward is targeted to be defined within 30 days.

*Cybersecurity Grant*

- We have applied for a grant to cover a cybersecurity audit. This will cover both auditing IT systems and scanning for both technical and human-factor vulnerabilities.
- Note: Board support is sought for full implementation of multi-factor/two-factor authentication, even for Board members themselves. It is expected to be a core requirement in securing relief should an incursion occur despite our best efforts.

**8. Public Housing Report**

**Harolda Wilcox**

**Public Housing Activities:**

- In the month of May, in conjunction with the Rochester Fire Department fire drills for the remaining high risers were held at Danforth Tower East and Danforth Tower West. There was a good turnout at these sites, but it could be better. The Public Housing Department is working to have the fire drills scheduled every six months. Immediately after the fire drill, the fire department presented an informational PowerPoint presentation to the residents providing them with fire safety information and answering fire safety questions or concerns from the residents.
- We held two RAD meetings with the residents of Federal Street to inform them of the project status and answered questions or concerns from the residents.
- On June 6, Public Housing collaborated with FSS we had our first Strong Family function at William Warfield. We had a cookout, ice cream from Lugia's, for the residents and their household, we also had a variety of games that the RHA staff members played games with the children that were present in the event. Residents also completed a survey to participate in a raffle for a movie night basket price.

**Public Housing Matters:**

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

**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 were 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 \$6,369.00 in EPPI 2.0 monies for May. 2023.
- As of May 2023, the total delinquent rent amount owed is \$322,752.88 which is a decrease of \$37,112.44 from April.
- 19– 30-day notices were served by the city Marshal in May.
- We are collaborating diligently with residents to address arrears in lieu of court proceedings. As of May 2023, RHA has entered into ninety-six 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.
- As of May 31st, PH zones have the following number of evictions in the process:
  - North – four residents and nine residents are in delinquent status.
  - South – Zero and three residents are in delinquent status.
  - Central – two and six residents are in delinquent status.
  - Scattered Sites – one and eight in delinquent status.

**Parkside**

- 5 Vacant Units
- 4 Units Ready to Lease
- 3 Offers have been issued and will be leased up soon.
- We have canvassed the PH waitlist and are responding to those interested to let them know that they have been placed on the Parkside waiting list.

**Parkside Arrears**

- \$ 40,676.00 outstanding rent
- \$ 3,362.00 0-30 days
- \$ 2,670.00 31-60 days
- \$ 8,856.00 61-90 days

- \$ 25,788.00 over 90 days (represents 9 tenants)

### **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

- 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:**

Housing specialists are still making unit offers to applicants for the promo high-rise offers. Next wait lists pull: APC will suspend wait list pulls for the month of June.

- It has been determined that the number of one-bedroom applicants that are approved and in the ready drawer or are currently in the intake phase is sufficient to address the vacancy needs for the one-bedroom. Due to the upcoming RAD relocation for Luther Circle, vacant 2,3- and 4-bedroom units will be held for those families. Once after, the families have accepted their relocation units, APC will begin to offer the vacant units to new admission families.

#### **Current Department Operation Status:**

- Betty Colon and Patricia Cuvelier's assignments to APC have ended as of May 30, 2023
  - These staff members have done an excellent job assisting APC with processing applications. They have done such a fantastic job that APC has more approved 1-bedroom applicants than vacancies.

#### **Unit Offers:**

- APC Manager is extending offers to 'ready drawer' applicants to fill vacancies. We are now establishing an approved 1-bedroom waiting list (ready drawer) for applicants to fill upcoming 1-bedroom vacancies.
- Current applications in the Screening and Intake Phase as of 5/2/23

Currently being screened - 8 applications

\*Studio– 1

\*Regular 1 bedroom - 5

\*High Rise 1 – bedroom canvas 3

Currently going thru intake (w/Intake Specialist): 83 applications

\*studio/1-bedroom – 67 applications

\*2+ bedrooms – 2 applications

**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. Maintenance Chief, 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 – 36 residents have received a final relocation unit offer, per Relocation Plan. One of those residents has been identified as a Section 32 participant. Will need to discuss further the plan to relocate the family.

As of 5/30/2023 – no other updates

Bond St. – As of 5/2/2023, all families have been extended an offer. All accepted their offer except for two residents. The property Manager is currently addressing this issue.

As of 5/30/2023 – no other updates

**9. Maintenance Report**

**Robert Croston**

**1. Vacant Unit Report**

\* The Maintenance Department continues to work hard to keep up with the number of new vacancies. One of our highest numbers of vacant units in years.

**2. Site Beautification**

\* Maintenance has started outside work at the buildings and some of the sites as it is needed. We will be checking for any plants that need replacing and upgrading the mulch. To bring up the curb appeal at the sites.

\* Maintenance is moving forward to start upgrading the inside lobby of Hudson Ridge Tower. We will be looking at painting the lobby, upgrading the flooring near the vending machines, upgrading the guard station, and any other Public Housing concerns.

\* Maintenance is planning to bring to the board for their approval, new contracts over the next few months. These contacts will help the Maintenance Department keep up the curb appeal of the properties while helping to maintain the sites.

**3. Training for Maintenance staff**

- The Maintenance department has been reevaluating our in-house Resident Workers program. The idea is to distribute the Residents and Workers staff more evenly throughout RHA. This way Maintenance can provide services to more sites improving productivity. This will supplement the present

Maintenance staff while providing extra income to the residents who participate. We have been working with Public Housing and Finance to make sure the funds are available and believe we can move forward with changes to this program. This is not a new program here at RHA, but changes to improve the quality for all of its residents.

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

**Pierre Dorancy**

**Leasing Operations Matters:**

1. The Administrative Plan language changes have been approved. 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 1,406 active 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 83.84% utilization of vouchers and 93.73% utilization of funds. Leasing Operations Department has a Leasing Plan for 2023 to maximize HUD funding for Housing Assistance Payments. Staff continues working overtime to issue vouchers and to maintain utilization.
4. The monthly inspection goal has been 780-960. The Inspection Unit conducted 815 inspections in May 2023.

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

*As previously reported, RHA was one of nine (9) PHAs selected to join the HUD's HCV Mobility Demonstration Program. The program is now known as Community Choice Demonstration (CCD). 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 of October 17, 2022, the Managers implementing the program have updated the RHA website with CCD information. Interested families can reach out to a dedicated phone line and email address to communicate interest in participation. The CCD email address is [communitychoice@rochesterhousing.org](mailto:communitychoice@rochesterhousing.org) and the phone line is (585) 697-6210. The Leasing Operations staff have sent out seven (7) batches of interest to qualifying families with recertifications from May through November 2023 were randomly selected and provided with program information. As of 06/12/2023, one hundred twenty-three (123) families have been enrolled in the program of which sixty-three (63) have been randomly selected for mobility services. The first CCD families

searching for units within Opportunity Areas are conducting moves for this spring and summer. One family has leased up in an Opportunity Area with the HAP contract executed effective 04/03/2023. Another 2 families moved into a non-Opportunity Area.

### **HUD Emergency Housing Vouchers**

As of 06/12/2023, out of 117 EHV vouchers authorized:

- 145 moving papers have been issued,
- 111 applicants have been housed.
- 9 applicants are searching for housing.
- 4 applicants have submitted moving papers to RHA
- No additional referral has been requested from the COC.

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 06/12/2023, out of 25 new Mainstream Vouchers authorized, 13 applicants have been housed and 8 have submitted moving papers to RHA.**

### **Training**

The Leasing Operations team will continue to provide training for staff in Calendar Year 2023 in collaboration with the HR department. Topics include:

- Trainings on SEMAP, HOTMA and NSPIRE have been attended and scheduled.
- Rent Calculations & HCV Program Management.
- Effective Use of HUD's Two-Year Tool to maximize voucher utilization.
- Personal and Professional Development such as effective communication.

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

**Melissa Berrien**

### **Participant Highlights**



We have 185 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:

- Ms. Butler entered the FSS program on March 1st, 2018, with employment and credit restoration goals. Ms. Butler sought and maintained employment with Monroe County and increased her income by 333%. Ms. Butler is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive an estimated \$3,071.00 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.
  - 2022 Stats
    1. 93 clients
    2. 286 counseling sessions
    3. \$255,000 debt reduction
    4. \$111,000 increased savings
  - FEC awarded 150K to assist RHA families, of which 30 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 to the mayor 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.
  - Four additional grants were awarded in December.
  - FEC is requesting additional time to assist new homeowners as the original agreement ends February 2023
  - City Council approved the extension of the HO grant project through September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2023. Amendment to Executive Director and Mayor for Signature. A signed extension was received on 4/5/2023.
  - To date we have issued 13 homeownership grants.
- **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 list of budget priorities aligned with RMAPI's housing policy.
  - The team is reviewing RMAPI's state level housing policy to inform our local delegation at RMAPI's legislative breakfast.
  - RMAPI presented their Policy Agenda to a delegation of local state representatives on 2/10/2023. Policy Priorities:
    1. Raise Income
    2. Invest in Families
    3. Decriminalize Poverty
    4. Reform Housing
  - RMAPI Housing Navigation – RMAPI is surveying participants, landlords, and experts to examine the navigation of our local housing systems and ways to make it easier.
  - The project has moved to the next phase of ideation after completing interviews with 56 renters, landlords, and field experts.
- 
- **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, explore RHA/Landbank partnership.
    - City of Rochester Closing the Gaps and Buy the Block staff are tabling at the strong Families Public Housing Events.
- 
- **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.

- January FCAB meeting presentation with Dr. Harris – Studying how antioxidants levels effect cancer.
- March 2023 FCAB meeting - Dr. Capizo discussed pancreatic cancer and its incidence and mortality rates are higher in the 27-county area of NY that Wilmot serves in comparison to the rest of the state and national averages particularly amongst Black and Hispanic groups. To address this problem in our area, Wilmot researchers are preparing to submit a large grant to the National Cancer Institute to fund a research program that aims to test novel therapies in clinical trials in pancreatic cancer patients.
- May FCAB meeting – Dr. Kamen discussed the disparities in results of immune checkpoint inhibitor treatment study and recruitment efforts for African American patients. Dr Scales discussed “Metabolic vulnerabilities and therapy in Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC)”
  1. Elucidating metabolic pathways that may lead to new therapies for breast cancer.
  2. Spearheading new collaborations focused on other cancers.

#### **Homeownership**

- Ms. Bess closed on her home at 15 Wolcott Ave on April 12th.
- We have four families with anticipated closings and thirty-five families who have been approved for financing and are searching for homes.

## **12. Resident Relations Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

**Community Rooms Resident Rental** – Harolda presented the president with a draft policy for private community room events. Resident review and feedback requested. The policy is still under review. Finance working to ensure insurance requirements are in order.

**Resident Email Communications** - Resident Councils’ emails have been created. Lynette (RS) is working with Anna (IT) to retrain residents. Training will be rescheduled when IT resolves the email address issue.

**Tenants on Patrol (TOP)** – Tipping point working with Commissioner Cummings to do a TOP Social Media Feature/recognition.

#### **Senior Activities**

- Commissioner Cummings has formed a committee of presidents and RHA staff to move the OK Card program forward. Lake and Hudson Ridge Towers have residents who have signed up for the program. Lake Tower training is scheduled for June 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Senior summer outing planning has commenced the event will be held on August 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Family Activities –**

- Strong Families Event –RHA is having strong family events at 7 of our Public Housing apartment complexes throughout the summer. We are partnering with Rochester Empowerment Center, Anthony Jordan, CASH, City of Rochester Homeownership program and Rec on The Move. We are creating a community fair atmosphere where residents are engaged and empowered.
  - 6/6 (Harriet Tubman) – 140 residents attended.
  - 6/20 (Seneca Manor) – 105 residents attended.
  - 7/11 (Holland Townhouses/Atlantic)
  - 7/25 (Lexington)
  - 8/8 (Bay Zimmer)
  - 8/22 (Bronson Court/Capsule)
  - 8/29 (Fairfield Village)
- Summer Meals – We are partnering with Foodlink and our resident volunteers to bring a summer lunch program to Harriet Tubman Estates and Seneca Manor Townhouses. The meals are distributed Monday through Friday with Tubman from 7/5-9/1 and Seneca Manor from 7/10-9/1.

**Presenter – Tracy Miller, Church of Love food Pantry** – Ms. Miller presented the Church of Love’s food pantry which primarily serves zip codes 08, 11, and 19, but will never turn any family in need of food away. Church of Love is looking to inform Kennedy Tower residents about the Food Pantry but will also be doing outreach at Bronson Court and Capsule.

**13. Planning Committee Report**

**Shawn Burr**

- The Planning Committee meeting was held on 6/14/2023. There were no follow-up items from the previous meeting.
- There were 4 action items to move forward to the Board:
  1. Scattered Porches P-9 and P-10 (JF)
  2. 158 Curtis Street Reconstruction (JS)
  3. Hazard Mitigation Grant – Holland Townhouses (HZ)

- We then discussed the status of our current projects by having staff give updates and review progress pictures:
  1. Kennedy Tower Hallway Rehabilitation – the project is now complete and is in the process of appliance ordering and installation.
  2. Danforth Towers East & West Façade Repair – the project is at substantial completion and is wrapping up some last-minute changes.
  3. Bronson Ct. Roofing – project is 62% complete.
  4. Unit’s 43 & 60 Wm. Warfield Dr. Fire Restoration – is at 15% with abatement and demo nearing completion.
  5. Atlantic Townhomes Site Upgrades – the project is 35% complete and on schedule.
  6. Unit 910 University Tower Fire Restoration – the project is at 5% with abatement and demo underway.
  7. Lexington Court Window Refurbishment is complete.
  8. Holland Townhouses Window Refurbishment is at 20% and is progressing rapidly.
  
- We continue to work with our consultant team of D+B/Calogero on summarizing and categorizing the RAD Physical Conditions Assessments and Environmental testing on most all our PH properties. This will take some time and we will be including public housing, maintenance, and finance in the process. The consultant will be providing a proposal for the remaining PH sites in the next week or so.
- There are currently four 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 continue to work on percentages of possible funds allocated/obligated.
- As we move forward with our development projects, there will be regular reporting on status of MWBE goals. We have a neutral third party that will be monitoring and ensuring compliance.
- The status of our current CFP Budgets as of June 14th are: 501.20 is 63% Obligated and 42% Expended and 501.21 is 100% Obligated and 47% Expended. With the latest projects and upcoming bid openings, we expect to meet all 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 on our development projects starting with our RAD project at Federal St/Scattered Sites as we move forward from permitting into abatement and construction. An official groundbreaking is scheduled for July 13th pending confirmation of all attending.
- We continue to have our due-diligence meetings for Parliament / Fairfield as well as Fernwood Development.
- Our other development projects in various stages were discussed with funding applications submitted and more being submitted prior to submission deadlines.

- Updates were given on our Change the Face of Public Housing projects with one going out to bid soon.
- Updates were then given on our pipeline of capital projects in the planning and design stages.
- Updates were also given on the Hazard Related Grant and Section 32 progress.
- The rest of our project pipeline was presented, and the meeting was adjourned.

**14. Commissioner Comments**

**Commissioner Cummings:** Again, for kudos to the staff, for all they're doing and I'm sure they're going to be doing more. And I'm so sorry again to hear happened in the parking lots. There is a question I want to ask at the conference and. It was not as good as the one we were had in Florida. I have a question. I went to a session called succession. We have a plan in place right now for succession. (The answer was yes.)

**Commissioner Rubin:** Now that the board is fully stocked. I'm it's nice to see him, yeah. And I think our priority needs to be to make sure our staff is fully built. And uh. It's very strong earnings the. Your agency or intergovernmental committee? I am never, sure what our name is. Shawn and I have been working on this meeting and should probably make sure we're on and perhaps the next agenda for the forward we can catch everybody up on what's going on.

**Commissioner Otis:** no comment.

**Commissioner Waters:** Thanks. So, want to thank you all for sending me to Denver. You know you have to come back with a PowerPoint presentation that I got a lot of notes, but it was a lot there. But you have to. So, so I guess my question to you Shawn, and said so recommendations for conferences that we go to stuff like this, do we come back to you also like those five suppression devices that we talked about on like they have this they had a presentation on safety and security. It was I mean this thing was made now for me it seemed like it was kind of expensive but how they said the crime rate went down this thing they had that looks better Mississippi and then you got those big things that. RPD set up with the big lights and this huge, it looked like a big spotlight, this camera, I don't know what that did. It looked like something out of RoboCop. But what I saw at this presentation was much different and they were actually talking about how the crime rate went down in Chicago and how it went down in New York City. Yeah, Chicago when he went down like 35% because of this one unit that you had in one of our high rises. So, so I'm going to so do I give that information back to you all for possible consideration? That was the only commissioner talking online. So, I want to, thank you all for that and I'm looking forward to the next conference. I thought it was good with Cynthia, but it was my first outside of the cold rooms. But it was a good presentation.

**Commissioner Ocansey:** I want to thank the staff for your diligence and your work on this report. I know they're never easy and propose together. I am pulling it together. My main thought here is I wanted to give you work. Mr. Bullard. I looking to the groundbreaking next month, right, because this is, you know, we signed, we signed off last month, but. The significance of this, it says the direction that we're going for this. And just it's the first step because there's a vision now for others that will come through. But I really want to mention I want to go on record to say that

and Todd, for your work to get it, get us there, this is, it's significant and to be part of this. To be to be part of this group, to sign off on that. I think it is just I, it's you give us a round of applause before I want to get around that.

**Commissioner Lee:** no comment.

**Commissioner Remarais:** Piggyback on what everyone else said, thank you to the staff, our executive team. You know, without you guys, we wouldn't be here. Um. Well, we are a full board now and we just couldn't be, you know, happy, happier to represent, you know, RHA. OH, I know I brag about it when I'm out in the community.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to go into Executive Session for a legal and personnel matter. Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded a motion to go into Executive Session at 2:00 pm. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Otis, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Remarais voted yes. The motion was passed, seven to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Waters seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 3:12 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Otis, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed seven to zero.

**15. July Regular Board Meeting**

The July Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, July 26, 2023**, at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board,  
Executive Director