

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
September 27, 2023  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**September 27, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Rosalie Remarais, Chairperson  
Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner, Vice Chair  
Shanai T. Lee, Commissioner  
Kabutey Ocansey, Commissioner  
Henry Rubin, 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  
Evhen Tupis  
Harolda Wilcox

**OTHERS PRESENT**

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel  
Amy Blum, Tipping Point Communications

Commissioner Rosalie Remarais called the September 2023 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. **Approval of Minutes:**

**August 23, 2023, Annual and Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve the August 2023 Annual and Regular Board Meeting Minutes Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Ocansey, voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

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

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



Mr. Burr

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 continued hard work informing staff and planning and facilitating staff functions that build morale and brings us all together. Great work!!!

Mr. Burr shared our Community Choice Demonstration RHA Team continues to work diligently with families. We have made significant progress and I'm very proud of our dedicated team!

Mr. Burr wanted 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 stated Our RMAPI Steering Committee met on 9/21 and reviewed some of the progress made and actively participated in a group exercise to review key messages and talking points that the committee members will commit to present to their organizations and other. Stay tuned, as I will be sharing the finished "product" with you soon!

Mr. Burr share that the Development projects are moving forward with Federal St-SS construction/demo well under way! Parliament-Fairfield has a closing date of October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Public housing staff have been meeting 1:1 with the residents who are moving and addressing their needs. We will be submitting a 9% LIHTC application by the deadline in November for Fernwood Phase I. Glenwood is moving along with finalizing design and environmental testing. We with the residents and brought them up to speed. We'll meet again in November when we have a better sense of our timeline.

Mr. Burr share that Our Town Hall Meeting went very well, and Sr. Staff knocked it out of the park!! We've received very positive feedback.

Mr. Burr gave an update on NYSPHADA Update: The Legislative Committee continues to work hard on advocating at the State level for funding for PHA's. We have met with the Commissioner of HCR and her team and several state legislators on the importance of budget line items that support PHA's. We continue to push for more ERAP funds for upstate PHA's as we all have significant arrears, capital improvement and gap funding for upstate PHA's.

Mr. Burr gave an update on **HUD Verifies Allowing the Use of HQS for an Additional Year** on September 5, HUD sent an email to Executive Directors discussing the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate for the Housing Choice Voucher program (NSPIRE-V). The new NSPIRE-V protocol is currently scheduled to be implemented for the voucher program beginning on October 1, 2023. These standards will be applicable to all PHAs with voucher programs, including Moving to Work (MTW) agencies. The email discusses several key points about NSPIRE-V implementation. First, HUD still intends to publish an administrative notice to implement NSPIRE-V. The Department is still aiming to publish that notice before October 1, 2023. Second, the email states that the new notice will "announce additional time for PHAs to retain the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) as their inspection standard until October 1, 2024." This is the first time that HUD has confirmed in writing that PHAs will have the option to retain the use of HQS for an additional year. Third, agencies with "approvals for acceptability criteria variations will need [those] approvals reviewed by HUD." These criteria variations allow for the use of local standards in certain areas depending on geographic conditions, but only if they are more stringent than the NSPIRE-V standard. Finally, the email states that HUD has developed technical assistance materials, which can be accessed on HUD's NSPIRE website.

Mr. Burr gave an update on the **Government Shutdown?**

As Congress returns to DC, they have less than 10 working days before the beginning of the fiscal year on October 1 to approve a continuing resolution to keep the government funded. We all know that government shutdowns are costly and damaging – especially to the people we house and serve. HUD's and other agencies' staff would be furloughed and legally forbidden to work, federal offices and national parks would be closed, and more. While a government shutdown is still not definite, we are already coordinating with HUD and other stakeholders to keep you informed and prepared. NAHRO will send out Direct News emails with updates as they happen. The Policy team is also holding a shutdown preparation webinar on Thursday, September 21; see page 6 for more information. Unfortunately, most of us have been here before. It disturbs me greatly that we are again facing the possibility of being a few months away from being unable to serve folks for whom there is no margin of error: the families, seniors, veterans and children who are counting on us for critical housing assistance and services. The work we do is not optional, and we should not be standing at this precipice. Our advocacy has resulted in concrete gains, including increased HUD funding over the past several years and more

time to prepare for a cavalcade of regulatory changes. Hopefully it will help us convince Congress to avert a ruinous federal shutdown.

**b. Board Action Requests**

- i. Chapter 13-III.C. Other Authorized reasons for Termination [24 CFR 966.4(1)(2) and (5)(iii)(B)] – Over income - Authorized the Executive Director to revise the RHA’s ACOP – Public Housing.

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

- ii. Extermination/pest control – Authorized the Executive Director to complete a 2<sup>nd</sup> renewal with Town & Country Pest Solutions in the amount of \$450,000.00 – Public Housing.

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

- iii. Jonathan Child Apt. Building Exterior Investigation – Authorized the Executive Director to award a contract to Vertical Access, LLC in the amount of \$30,933.00 – Capital Projects.

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

- iv. Communications and Public Image – Authorized the Executive Director to renew 3<sup>rd</sup> of 4 with Tipping Point Communications in the amount of \$50,000.00 – COCC.

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, , Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes and Commissioner Lee voted no. The motion passed five to one.

- v. Property and Liability Insurance Renewal –
- a. Property Insurance - Authorized the Executive Director to renew the insurance policy for the period of 10/01/2023 to 09/30/2024 with Housing Authority Insurance Group in the amount of \$683,342.00 – Public Housing.

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

- b. Liability Insurance - Authorized the Executive Director to renew the insurance policy for the period of 10/01/2023 to 09/30/2024 with Housing Authority Insurance Group in the amount of \$223,749.00 – Public Housing.

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

- vi. Snow Plowing Services North Zone and Central Zone – Authorized the Executive Director to renew 2<sup>nd</sup> of 4 with AA Blades in the amount of \$106,603.00 – Maintenance.

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

- vii. Snow Plowing Services South Zone, Scattered Sites and Administration Buildings – Authorized the Executive Director to renew 2<sup>nd</sup> of 4 with Washington in the amount of \$201,630.00 – Maintenance.

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

- viii. Software and Services – Authorized the Executive Director to engage in a 1-year renewable agreement with TMRI in the amount of \$269,993.41 – COCC.

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

- ix. Resolution 09.27.23-01 Rental Assistance Demonstration Parliament Fairfield Project

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

- x. Resolution 09.27.23-02 Approval of the Executive Director Contract

Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed six 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 July 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:**

**New Hires:**

Position- Maintenance Mechanic – (1) Maintenance Department started on September 5, 2023.

**Recruitment Strategies:**

Job Fair Roc the Block – September 27, 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.

**Training/ Learning Development:**

HR provided coaching sessions to two (3) managers/directors to continue developing their leadership skills.

**Sexual Harassment Training:**

We are committed to maintaining a safe and inclusive workplace culture. As part of our ongoing efforts in this regard, we will be requiring all employees to complete a Sexual Harassment Prevention Training this month.

**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.

- **2023 Colors of Success DEI Leadership Award** - I have been selected as a finalist for the 2023 Colors of Success DEI Leadership Award which is hosted by the Greater Rochester Chamber. The press release announcing the 2023 award finalists will be sent out on Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Compliance**

- **Fraud Investigations**
  - **Leasing Operations** Repayment Agreement payments total YTD as of August 2023, \$35,148.78 collected (with a total of \$2,301.00 collected in August 2023) A total of \$557,022.49 has been collected to date.
  - **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for vacated arrears and collection loss as of August 2023, with \$5,481.97 collected (with a total of \$812.00 collected in August 2023). A total of \$55,847.66 was collected to date.
  - **RAD Parkside** Repayment agreement totals YTD for vacated arrears and collection loss as of August 2023, with \$452.00 collected (with a total of \$452.00 collected in August 2023). A total of \$452.00 was collected to date.
- **Termination Hearings:**
  - **Leasing Operations** – 8 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 2 Upheld; 1 No Show, 0 Overturned, 0 Reinstated, 4 Adjourned, 2 Withdrawn; 0 Pending Hearing Decision.
  - **Public Housing** – 0 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 0 Upheld; 0 No Show, 0 Overturned, 0 Reinstated, 0 Adjourned; 0 Withdrawn.

### **Operations**

- **Case Management**
  - Program Violation Referrals Outstanding – 1,449 (Previously 1,444)– 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.
  - There were several attempted break-ins to Glenwood Gardens. I am working with AP Security for them to pay special attention in that site.

6. **Finance**

**Kimberly Huffman**

There was no report present, due to the focus on completing the FY 23-24 Budget for RHA.

7. **Information Technology Report**

**Evhen Tupis**

**RFQ: Video Safety – Glenwood Gardens – 41 Kestrel St., Rochester NY**

**Background:** Trouble spots were identified by key stakeholders Jesse McCarthy, Bob Croston/Maintenance, and Daniel Long/Capital Projects and supported by impromptu interviews of various residents as we walked through the property. Multiple quotes were received, and evaluations are in-process.

- Recommendation and board approval is targeted for the October meeting of the Board of Commissioners.
- In general terms, responders believe that based on present supply-chain backlogs and the upcoming holidays, it is probable that the site can be operational by late December or early January.
- As a reminder: Glenwood is proceeding independently, outside of the scope of the more global video safety RFP because there is an immediate need for the service even though the site is scheduled for demolition and reconstruction in the future. Re-establishing video safety will be embedded in the future Glenwood reconstruction RFP.

**RFP: Video Safety System & Electronic Access Control**

- The RFP has been released. Three mandatory walkthroughs have been completed.
- RFP Timeline:

- Questions due on Friday, September 22
- Responses released by Tuesday, September 29
- Proposals due on Friday, October 20

**RFP: Tenmast Upgrade/Replacement**

Background: Tenmast WinTen2+ is the software used to manage RHA's business operations including Finance, Maintenance, Public Housing, Leasing Operations, and Family Self Sufficiency, though all departments access it for data processing purposes. RHA has reached the end of its 5-year agreements so an RFP for renewal/upgrade/replacement is in order.

- Proposals are due on Friday, September 26
- A "Department Leading Stakeholder" team has been formed to include two representatives from each department to assure there is advocacy for department-level interests throughout this process.
- Reminder: this is an enterprise-wide initiative that is not trivial. It will require active participation by both the Lead Stakeholders and members of their department. Senior Staff are members of the Lead Advocate team, by default.

**RFP: IT Master Services and Consulting**

Background: This RFP allows RHA to engage the services of an outside vendor to monitor the health of its critical infrastructure, keep it fully updated, fix unanticipated trouble, and be available to consult on highly technical issues as well as be available to quote-and-perform project-based assignments.

- Proposals have been received and are under evaluation now.
- Expect an action item on this in an upcoming Board of Commissioners' meeting.

**Awareness Only: Future Needed Items**

- Action: Full adoption of 2-factor authentication by all (a system & data security requirement)
- Action: Cell phone upgrades
- Action: Continued site-events to sign-up residents for the federal ACP Internet subsidy program
- RFP: IT Staffing Augmentation
- RFP: HA Program & Resource Management System Migration Consultant (targeting: Tenmast upgrade/replacement activity)
- RFP: Telecommunication Consultant (targeting: Telephone System Upgrade)
- RFP: Telephone System Upgrade
- RFP: Website Modernization/Upgrade
- RFP: Cybersecurity Audit
- RFP: Hybrid-meeting Technology for RHA meeting rooms
- RFP: Electronic Document Signing and Process Flow System

- RFP: Standardization of Networked Copier/Printers (upgrading old units) & Printing Service
- Authority-wide Wi-Fi (to support our “mobility/work from anywhere” initiative).

8. **Public Housing Report**

Harolda Wilcox

**Public Housing Activities:**

- In the month of August, we had the last three Strong Families events. These were held at Bay Zimmer, Bronson Court, and Fairfield Luther Circle, with a good turnout.
- On August 15, 2023, we met with the residents at Glenwood Gardens to provide an update on the RAD project.
- The Public Housing Management Department held the first of many Customer Service hours at Danforth Tower East and West. The next location will be Kennedy Towers, the date to be determined. The residents were happy to be heard.
- The Town and Country Pest Solutions survey was sent out with a deadline date of return for September 1, 2023. The response was enormous and has been included in this report.
- The Security survey is going to be mailed out to residents next. I am asking the Resident Commissioners to get the word out of how important it is to have these surveys returned.

**Public Housing Matters:**

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

**RENT ARREARS**

- RHA Public Housing department Received \$2,086.00 in EPPI 2.0 monies for August 2023.
- As of August 2023, the total delinquent rent amount owed is \$596,306.65, which is an increase of 73,439.00 for the of August.
- Friendly reminder that RHA arrears are larger due to not taking partial payments from residents. This is due to the residents not paying their rent in full, which is not in accordance with RHA policies.
- RHA is sending all partial payments back to the resident with a letter of explanation as to why RHA is not accepting their payment.
- 46– 30-day notices were sent to the City Marshal in August.
- We are still collaborating with residents to address arrears in lieu of court proceedings. As of August, RHA has entered into ninety-six repayment agreements year to date.

As of August 31, 2023, the following is an update of the Public Housing zones repayment agreements:

- North – Five residents are currently in lease termination status and six residents are in delinquent status.
- South – Four residents are currently in lease termination status.
- Central – One resident is currently in lease termination status and four residents are in delinquent status.
- Scattered Sites – One resident in a lease termination.

**Parkside**

- 3 Vacant Units
- 2 Units Ready to Lease 0
- 2 Offer

**Parkside Arrears**

- \$ 70,069.31            outstanding rent
- \$ 14,780.75           0-30 days
- \$ 8,374.99            31-60 days
- \$ 4,824.58            61-90 days
- \$ 42,089.00           over 90 days (represents six tenants)

**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

**Staffing**

- 4 positions open – Housing Specialist
- 4 positions are open (waiting on civil service results)

**Application Processing Center: Waiting List Management:**

Housing Specialists are still making unit offers to applicants for the promo high-rise offers.

- APC will begin pulling from the studio waitlist to address the number of vacancies at DT and UT.
- As of August 2023, the Studio Wait List has been exhausted. The Studio Wait List is still open and applicants applying to this wait list will be immediately contacted to process their application.
- Next Studio Wait List Pull: 9/15/23 and 9/29/23.

**Current Department Operation Status:**

- Sheila Rivera is now establishing an intake caseload in addition to managing wait lists, prequals and unit offers. She will be expected to maintain a caseload of 25 applicants. Lisa Colon has been temporarily assigned to assist Scattered Sites with catching up on Annual Recerts. Her caseload for APC will be monitored to ensure that while assisting Scattered Site, she is processing intakes in a timely manner.

- No updates to report as of 9/5/23.

**Unit Offers:**

- The APC Manager and designated staff continue to extend 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 Screening and Intake Phase as of 8/25/23:

Currently being screened - 14 applications\*

- ❖ Studio - 10
- ❖ Regular 1-bdrm – 4
- ❖ High Rise 1-bdrm canvas - 0
- ❖ 2+ bedrooms – 0

Currently going through intake (w/Intake Specialists): 53 applications

- ❖ studio/1-bedroom – 44 applications
- ❖ 2+ bedrooms – 9 applications

**9. Maintenance Report**

**Robert Croston**

**1. Vacant Unit Report**

- The Maintenance Department continues to work on keeping up with the high number of vacant units. This is to prepare for the upcoming projects at Fairfield Village and Parliament Arms and the need to move residents out for renovation to those sites.

**2. Site Beautification**

- At Kennedy tower we have had a place picked out and are having a concrete pad poured near the garage to have the gazebo moved away from the road and closer to the interior of the site. We hope to have the pad installed and the Gazebo moved by the next board report.
- We also had some umbrella installed on the outside tables for shade in the back courtyard at the site.
- Maintenance has ordered the floor planking for the offices and Kitchen at 321 Lake Tower and have scheduled a contractor to install once it has arrived..

**3. Meeting with NYC Housing authority**

- I would like to thank all who showed up for the Town Hall Meeting last month here at RHA. It was nice to see and hear the other department updated the company on their progress and thanking their staff for all the hard work being done through some difficult times.

- We all had a good time playing some team building exercises and seeing other employees from different departments that we don't always get the chance to see. It turned out to be a good time had by all.
- The Maintenance department was well represented and as I said at the meeting. I want to thank all who work in maintenance for all the hard work they have put in over the last year to keep us moving forward and for years to come.

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

**Pierre Dorancy**

**Leasing Operations Matters:**

1. The Administrative Plan language changes have been approved. Staff have implemented the changes. Robocall was used to notify participants and landlords of the changes that affect them.
2. Currently, there are 1,000 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 83.72% utilization of vouchers and 95.87% utilization of funds. Leasing Operations Department has a Leasing Plan for 2023 to maximize HUD funding for Housing Assistance Payments. Staff continues to work overtime to issue vouchers and to maintain utilization.
4. The monthly inspection goal has been 780-960. The Inspection Unit conducted 887 inspections in August 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 nine (9) batches of letters of interest to qualifying families with recertifications from May 2023 through March 2024*

*were randomly selected and provided with program information. As of 09/11/2023, one hundred forty-nine (149) families have been enrolled in the program of which seventy-six (76) have been randomly selected for mobility services. Three applicant families from the HCV Waiting List have enrolled and one (1) was randomly assigned to receive services. CCD families have been searching for units throughout the Opportunity Areas and three (3) families have leased up in an Opportunity Areas. Two (2) CCD families moved into a non-Opportunity Areas; nine (9) families renewed their lease and did not move.*

### **HUD Emergency Housing Vouchers**

As of 09/11/2023, out of 117 EHV vouchers authorized:

- 157 moving papers have been issued,
  - 119 applicants have been housed.
  - 9 applicants are searching for housing.
  - 2 applicants have moving papers submitted to Contracts Unit.
- 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 agency's.

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 09/11/2023, out of 25 new Mainstream Vouchers authorized, 19 applicants have been housed and 5 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 184 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:

- Ms. Owens entered the FSS program on December 1st, 2015, with an employment goal. Ms. Owens sought and maintained employment with Walmart increasing her income by 147%. Ms. Owens is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive \$14,732.65 in escrow savings.
- Ms. Ojeda Burgos entered the FSS program on October 1st, 2017, with an employment goal. Ms. Ojeda Burgos sought and maintained employment with Rochester CSD and increased her income by 69%. Ms. Ojeda Burgos is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive an estimated \$8,997.68 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.
  - Next phase- the team is working on drafting “How Might We” statements incorporating the insights gathered from the interview process.
  - We are planning a prototyping session to review possible solutions and create a pilot around housing navigation.
  - Housing prototyping summit scheduled for 9/29.
  
- **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.
- The City of Rochester team is planning a site visit scheduled with the Living Cities team September 13-15.
- Informative meeting held with Living Cities, City of Rochester staff, RMAPI and RHA staff and board on 9/13.

- **Homeownership**

- Ms. Robinson closed on her home at 63 Mosley Road on July 5th.
- Mr. Greathouse closed on his home at 294 Brayton Road on July 26th.
- We have five families with anticipated closings and thirty-five families who have been approved for financing and are searching for homes.

- **Housing Crisis Community Forum**

- Attended August 16th meeting at City Hall which focused on code violations. No RHA issues discussed.
- Met with Councilman Smith and RAHA on Monday August 28th with ED Burr and the Leasing Ops Assistant Director, Huertas. The discussion was primarily an overview of RHA programs.

**12. Resident Relations Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

**Community Rooms Resident Rental** – Community room insurance coverage confirmed, next step is to finalize the new procedure. Procedural draft is being recirculated to presidents for final comment.

**Resident Email Communications** – Resident Councils were informed of monthly cost associated with the creation of new emails. Awaiting their approval to move forward. he council president elected to use their personal emails for communications.

**Tenants on Patrol (TOP)** – Danforth Resident Council president Robert Davis presented a proposal for TOP volunteers to receive stipends. Executive Director Burr is reviewing the proposal.

**Resident Commissioner Election** – 2023 Election scheduled for 9/29/2023. Notices of the candidates were posted at Leasing operations, all public housing offices and on Facebook. Voting will take place at Leasing operations and public housing offices from 9am to 9pm.

**Executive Overview** – ED Burr relayed upcoming project information.

**Safety and Security** – Discussion regarding resident security and what to do regarding security concerns.

**Senior Activities**

- Senior Holiday Luncheon is tentively planned for December 14th.

**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 Financial 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) – 87 residents attended.
- 7/25 (Lexington)
- 8/8 (Bay Zimmer)
- 8/22 (Bronson Court/Capsule)
- 8/29 (Fairfield Village)
  
- Toy Giveaway- Registration flyers mailed to PH families with children ages 0-14 for the December toy giveaway due August 18th. Toy pickup scheduled for the week of December 18th.
  
- Curbside Market – Foodlink and 105.5 The Beat held a live remote at Harriet Tubman Estates on 9/16 to promote the curbside market and the opportunity for our residents to access healthy food on site.

**13. Planning Committee Report**

**Daniel R. Long**

- The Planning Committee meeting was held on 9/13/2023. There were no follow-up items from the previous meeting.
- There is 1 potential action item to move forward to the Board:
  1. Vertical Access – Building Condition Survey, Jonathan Child.
- We then discussed the status of our current projects by having staff give updates and review progress pictures:
  1. Unit's 43 & 60 Wm. Warfield Dr. Fire Restoration – is at 25% with abatement and demo completed and re-installations progressing.
  2. Atlantic Townhomes Site Upgrades – project is 75% complete and on schedule.
  3. Unit 910 University Tower Fire Restoration – project is at 25% with restoration work having begun.
  4. Bronson Court Phase II project is under contract and proceeding into construction.
  5. Holland Townhouses Window Refurbishment is at 95% and is progressing rapidly.
- We are wrapping up obtaining 2 other quotes for compliance in small contract purchasing for the PNA work on the CNI target sites and evaluation needs for that effort.
- 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 September 12th are: 501.20 is 100% Obligated and 60% Expended and 501.21 is 100% Obligated and 54% Expended and 501.22 is 67% Obligated and 4% 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. RHA has been attending site visits to review any site issues that come up on the Scattered sites to ensure timely response to our Contractor. The Federal site has been fully demolished, cleared and the contractor is preparing the site for foundation work.
- We continue to have our due-diligence meetings for Parliament / Fairfield as well as a 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 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:** Thank you to the staff for all your hard work every day.

**Commissioner Rubin:** Thank you to the staff and Shawn.

**Commissioner Ocansey:** Thank you.

**Commissioner Lee:** Thank you.

**Commissioner Waters:** Thank you.

**Commissioner Remarais:** We all are super proud of the work you're doing when you're giving your team and. I want to thank everyone for all your reports, and for coming to our meetings.

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 2:30 pm. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Remarais voted yes. The motion was passed, six to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 3:10 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Waters voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

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

**15. November Regular Board Meeting**

The November Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 27, 2023, at 12:00 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board, Executive Director