

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**April 24, 2019
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**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
April 24, 2019
675 WEST MAIN STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



MEMBERS PRESENT

Tynise Edwards, Acting Chair
Calvin Lee, Commissioner
Joanne Larson, Commissioner
Rosalie Remarais, Commissioner
Florine Cummings, Commissioner
Hershel Patterson, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT

Shawn Burr
Melissa Berrien
Danielle Buczek
Sinclair Carrington
Mike Gallo
Jacquetta Harris
Sara Jaouen
Rashondra Martin
Willie Pass
Linda Stango
Evhen Tupis
James Waters
Christal Webb
Janis White
Marisha Wilder

OTHERS PRESENT

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel
Jamie Frumusa, Tipping Point

Acting Board Chair Tynise Edwards called the April Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:00 PM. She noted for the record that notice of this meeting was posted as required by law and there is a quorum present.

1. Open Forum – Public Comments

No Report

2. Approval of Minutes: March Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Lee moved, and Commissioner Larson seconded the motion to approve the minutes of March 2019 Regular Board Meeting. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Larson, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. Commissioner Remarais Abstained. The motion was passed.

3. Director's Report and Board Approval Requests

a. Acting Executive Director, Shawn Burr presented his Director's report on the following topics: Mr. Burr reported on his participation with the City of Rochester (CoR) in presenting at their Landlord and Small Development Summit that was held on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, at the Riverside Convention Center. There were over 400 people that attended this event. The City's annual Celebrate City Living Expo was held April 13, 2019, at the Sibley Building. RHA sponsored a table and staff were there and provided information on programs and services. He thanked Melissa Berrien, Shanna Cranmer, Ruth Brooks-Ward, and Paul Lindsay for their efforts and participation. The Agency Annual Plan is out for the 45-day public comment period ending on May 14, 2019. A public hearing will be scheduled on May 15, 2019, at 675 West Main Street. He then commented on the President's proposed budget which, cuts a lot of funding to HUD and eliminates some HUD programs. NAHRO strongly opposes the President's proposed budget cuts; this can be viewed in the NAHRO Monitor.

b. Board Action Requests

- i. State Contract for Cell Phones – The Contract was awarded to Verizon for \$50,000.00 – Finance

Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

- ii. Vote to Amend April Board Action Requests with Shawn Burr's Title as Interim Executive Director to Acting Executive Director – Legal

Commissioner Lee moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

- iii. Vacated Arrears – The amount is for \$72,705.48 – Finance

Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Remarais seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

- iv. Danforth Towers Fire Alarm System Upgrades. – The Contract was awarded to Northeastern Electrical Company for \$534,600.00 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Lee moved, and Commissioner Patterson seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

- v. Consultant to Perform Capital Needs Assessments – The Contract was awarded to AEI Consultants for \$50,000.00/One year – Capital Projects

Commissioner Lee moved, and Commissioner Patterson seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

- vi. Consultant to Perform Capital Needs Assessments – The Contract was awarded to Dominion Due Diligence Group for \$50,000.00/One year – Capital Projects

Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

- vii. 2019 Lawn Care Maintenance Contract – The Contract was awarded to AA Blades for \$50,600 - Maintenance

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Remarais seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

- viii. Request to Close Public Housing One and Two Bedroom Units Waiting Lists- Legal

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Larson seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

4. Executive Personnel Administrator's Report

Rashondra Martin

Ms. Martin is continuing to achieve Goal III of supporting RHA's employees to enhance an organizational culture of excellence by continuing to provide training. Recent training: Fundamentals of Supervision - Managers, this training provided an overview of basic leadership skills for new managers, as well as experienced managers to refresh their

skills. This training discussed honing communication skills to make expectations clear, motivated employees, provide quality feedback, and hold everyone accountable. Some upcoming training, Customer Care – Associates, this training will focus on associates developing skills for superior customer service, it will build on the Customer Care Campaign that was started last year. This training will continue to build on the notion of our customer as being at the center of everything we do in our organization. Building Influence in the Workplace - Managers; we will address 7 ways to build influence in the workplace:

- Build Trust with Your Co-Workers- Influence is most often and most easily carried through trust.
- Cultivate Reliability Through Consistency.
- Be Assertive, Not Aggressive- Being assertive is the only way to get your ideas noticed.
- Be Flexible- Flexibility is also important. While this may seem like it conflicts with the need to be assertive-- being too stringent or adamant in your beliefs will work against you.
- Be Personal- A little personality goes a long way, especially when you're trying to build influence in the workplace.
- Focus on Actions Rather Than Argument- you need to speak through your actions
- Listen to Others- Influence is a two-way street.

Goal IV: Improve Internal and External Communication; Administrative Professional's Day, RHA celebrated Administrative Professional's Day Wednesday, April 24, 2019. This was a celebration for all the hard work of the support staff. Breakfast was served in their honor, where managers served our staff. This celebration highlights our continued commitment to improving internal communications of recognizing that our support staff is the cornerstone to further enhancing our culture of excellence.

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

Ms. Herriott reported on the following:

- **Hotline Update** – The CDI Officer has negotiated a new agreement with RHA's Hotline Service, InTouch. Our service will continue.
- **Termination Hearings/Due Process** – Compliance met with several attorneys from LawNY at their request. They often defend tenants that have been referred by RHA for termination. They expressed concern at the level of oversight of the termination process, something they have not seen in the past. The CDI Officer outlined to them that last year out of over 100 hearings, 26 were upheld. It was reiterated that Compliance would err on the side of the Participant when there is not a preponderance of the evidence. It was also reiterated that if there is evidence of

fraud, Compliance will not hesitate to terminate someone from the program. The meeting ended on a positive tone.

- **Federal HUD Office of the Inspector General Requests (OIG)** – The OIG’s office has a mandate from the U.S. Senate to examine HUD participant rolls for anyone with a criminal warrant for their arrest. They contact the Compliance Officer with a request to try and locate the participant and work with local authorities to have the warrant served, and the participant terminated from the program. Compliance works with the OIG to address this.
- **Audit and Review** – CDI continues to work closely with Legal to address areas in need of assessment within RHA:
 - The Family Self Sufficiency Program audit is complete. Compliance will follow up with M. Berrien to ensure that she has followed through with the audit result recommendations.
 - NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance site visit – Compliance served as the point of contact. Compliance continues to work with the Public Housing Director to ensure corrections are made. The final report from NYS is still pending. They’ve advised that we should receive it shortly.
 - The Permanent Supportive Program (PSH) Program out of Leasing Operations is currently being audited.
 - The Finance Dept Audit has commenced. This includes Procurement.

6. Finance

Sinclair Carrington

Mr. Carrington reported on the Actual vs. Budget for year-to-date through February 2019. All the components of the Authority; COCC, Section 8, and Public Housing are all showing a surplus based on budgets. He also reported on Actual 2019 figures vs. Prior year through February (2018). It shows that the Authority is in a stronger financial position compared to the prior year.

7. Public Housing Report

Sara Jaouen

Ms. Jaouen reported on the Applications Processing Center (APC) success; that department continues to streamline its processes to achieve a department goal to screen, conduct intakes, and determine applicants’ eligibility and suitability within 60 days. Currently, RHA Public Housing’s 1- and 2-bedroom waitlists have an estimated wait time of 28 months. Per the ACOP Section 4-II.C, The Public Housing Authority (PHA) is permitted to close the waiting list, in whole or in part, if it has an adequate pool of families to fully lease units in all its developments. The estimated time for closing the 1 bedroom approximately November/December 2019. The 2 bedrooms there isn’t an estimated time frame determined. She reported RHA had 20 households move out and 27 households move into our units. The vacancy rate is moving in the right direction.

8. Leasing Operations Report (Section 8)

Jacquetta Harris

Director Harris reported, as of April 17, 2019, there are currently 1,752 people on the waitlist. Leasing Operation utilization of voucher goal is around 98%; RHA is currently at 94.12%. Effective April 1, 2019, approximately 157 vouchers will transition to Permanent Support Housing program participants, which will increase RHA's voucher utilization rate closer to the goal for 98%.

The monthly inspection average is 960-1020; the total inspection for March 2019, was 908, the month prior was 854. Permanent Supportive Housing projects are being monitored monthly for financials and project participation. All projects that are projecting a deficit by the end of the grant period have an action plan that will demonstrate a reduction within the next 30 days.

9. Family Self-Sufficiency Report

Melissa Berrien

FSS Supervisor Melissa Berrien reported that 223 participants are currently enrolled in the FSS program. There are now 24 businesses on the RHA Section 3 Registry.

Ms. Madera-Torres entered the FSS Program on April 1, 2017, with three goals that consisted of credit restoration, obtaining employment, and homeownership. Ms. Torres became employed full-time in November 2017 and has maintained full-time employment to date. In addition to obtaining her goal of employment, Ms. Torres also increased her credit score, reducing her credit card debt. On January 4, 2019, Ms. Torres proudly achieved her goal of homeownership; she is a successful graduate of the FSS Program.

The Senior Service Coordinator assisted 100 Public Housing residents in literacy, well-being check-ins, advocacy assistance, and was referred for housekeeping issues.

10. Planning Committee Report

Shawn Burr

Acting Executive Director, Shawn Burr introduced RHA's newest Board Member Rosalie Remarais at the Planning meeting. Updates were presented to the Committee on the current projects; Lexington Court Site Improvement, Lena Gantt Roofing and Siding Replacement, Seneca Manor Townhouses Lighting Upgrades, and Scattered Site Porch Replacements. The status of these projects were presented by staff who provided updates and reviewed progress pictures. This is new for his department; this gives staff a chance to present and answer questions regarding the projects they are managing. It also provides the Committee an opportunity to see more detailed progress of the projects they approve. At the Project Planning Meeting, Edge Architecture gave a presentation on the three designs they developed for our next "Changing the Face of Public Housing" project at our Bond/Hamilton site. Shirley Street bids were higher than expected and staff is evaluating other options. RHA is proceeding with the Section 32 homeownership plan; four scattered sites have been identified.

11. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Edwards would like to thank RHA's Staff for their hard work; she thanked Shawn Burr for stepping up as Acting Executive Director, and Cynthia Herriott stepping up as the Interim Deputy Executive Director.

Acting Board Chair Edwards requested to go into Executive Session for a legal and personnel matter; Commissioner Larson moved, Commissioner Cummings seconded to go into Executive Session for a Legal matter at 1:30 PM. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Lee, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

12. May Regular Board Meeting

The April Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 22, 2019**, at 12:00 PM in the Board Room (Room #121) at 675 West Main Street.

There being no further Regular Meeting Business to come before the Board, Commissioner Lee moved, Commissioner Larson seconded to end the Board Meeting at 1:45 PM. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Lee, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Burr
Secretary to the RHA Board
Acting Executive Director