

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
June 26, 2019  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**STAFF PRESENT**

Shawn Burr  
Melissa Berrien  
Sinclair Carrington  
Mike Gallo  
Jacquetta Harris  
Sara Jaouen  
Rashondra Martin  
Linda Stango  
Evhen Tupis  
Janis White

**OTHERS PRESENT**

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel

Acting Board Chair, Tynise Edwards, called the June 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 that there was a quorum present.

**1. Open Forum – Public Comments**

Island Jones stated that she has lived at Luther Circle for approximately three years. She is not happy with her living situation. She lives in a two-bedroom unit and is under-housed, with three young children ranging in ages from one to eight and another due in August. Ms. Jones is aware that she may not meet the reasonable accommodation policy from HUD. However, she has two of the children sleeping in her room, and the fourth child will be as well. She received a note from her son's doctor stating that he is not to share a room with any of his siblings. Ms. Jones stated that the Director of Public Housing told her she could start looking for other housing, but there are other people on the waitlist, and she is aware of HUD rules.

Ms. Jones also discussed that the units are non-smoking but has witnessed her neighbor smoking. She complained that there is a smoke scent in her bathroom. The smoking in the units was reported to security, RHA staff, and the PH Director. Ms. Jones stated that she is following the rules, and the other tenants are not, which isn't fair to her.

Further, Ms. Jones said that when she moved to Luther Circle, there was an infestation of mice, and she wasn't pleased. RHA sent the exterminators, but she doesn't believe they did a good job. She stated that RHA should have the exterminator out annually, not only when there is an issue, as there are families and children that live at Luther Circle and it's not fair to live like that. Her unit has a roach and mouse problem, and she is not happy about this. She is afraid that roaches may crawl into her children's ears. She stated that her Property Manager witnessed her roach issues and said that she is under-housed. She read some guidelines online which state that tenants should live in a comfortable environment. She doesn't think that because she lives in Public Housing, her family should have to live under these conditions. Ms. Jones would like RHA to do what is necessary to get rid of the roach and mouse problem. She wants to talk to Mr. Burr to share her experiences with him. She doesn't think it's fair that she is being ignored. She is in a crisis. She appreciates the Board taking the time to listen to her.

**2. Approval of Minutes: May Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

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

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

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

Mr. Burr reported on the follow-up items from the previous month's Board meeting: The Laundry Rooms inquiry from Commissioner Patterson. He emailed the Board Members on June 14, 2019, with the updated timeline. The RHA staff training schedule from 2016-2019 was sent to RHA's General Counsel as requested. Commissioner Cummings was provided information regarding her inquiry about the YAMTEP on June 20, 2019, from Melissa Berrien. Mr. Burr and staff met with Connected Communities to discuss RHA's RAD Project. They brainstormed ways to pool resources in efforts to improve the Emma and Beechwood neighborhoods. Connected Communities is currently conducting a parcel by parcel assessment of vacant lots in the Beechwood neighborhood.

Mr. Burr, Sara Jaouen, and Mike Gallo met with two engineers from RGRTA to discuss increasing their transit service and interest in putting bus shelters on some of RHA properties. The engineers presented their plan involving University Tower and Lena Gantt sites, and the pros and cons were discussed. It looks feasible and would be a nice benefit for RHA residents, but logistics will need to be worked out. Mr. Burr will be reaching out to HUD to see what will need to be done concerning complying with the ACC.

Also, on Friday, 6/7, he met at City Hall with many City department representatives and presented our RAD project to get their feedback and input. There was great discussion which really reflected the improvements we've made in working together to accomplish common goals.

Mr. Burr attended a meeting hosted by RMAPI to discuss a housing map they've created. They discussed the barriers and solutions that people in our community face. It was a great discussion with several agencies represented along with the County and Continuum of Care. Mr. Burr was asked to join the RMAPI Housing Committee; he may invite other RHA staff.

RHA has been invited to submit a Request for Qualifications to the City for Development Partners of the Rochester Land Bank Corp. If selected, RHA would have the opportunity for the Land Bank to purchase properties it selects from the tax foreclosure list. RHA participated last year, which was the pilot, but none of the properties selected by RHA were available by auction time.

b. Board Action Requests

- i. Lexington Court-Boiler Room Bulk Purchases – The Contract was awarded to Ferguson Enterprises for \$98,777.00 – Capital Projects

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

- ii. Kennedy Tower-Steam Boiler Replacement – The Contract was awarded to EMCORE Services Betlam for \$128,321.00 – Capital Projects

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

- iii. Legal Services- Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) – The Contract was awarded to Reno & Cavanaugh, PLLC for \$300,000.00 – Capital Projects

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

- iv. Administration of RHA's Health Reimbursement Account, Flexible Spending Account, and Health Savings Account – The Contract renewal was awarded to Benefit Resource, Inc for \$10,615.00 – Human Resources

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

- v. Employee Assistance Program and Additional Training – The Contract renewal was awarded to ENI Balance Works for \$9,775.00 – Human Resources

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

- vi. Labor and Employment Legal Matters – The Contract renewal was awarded to Harris Beach PLLC for \$80,000.00 – Human Resources

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

- vii. Short Term Disability, Long Term Disability, Basic Life and AD&D and Voluntary Life Insurance Provider – The Contract renewal was awarded to Lincoln Financial Group for \$118,517.00 – Human Resources

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

- viii. Worker’s Compensation Insurance Carrier – The Contract renewal was awarded to the New York State Insurance Fund (NYSIF) for \$600,000.00 – Human Resources

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

- ix. Worker’s Compensation Broker – The Contract renewal was awarded to One Group for \$15,000.00 – Human Resources

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

- x. The 2019-2020 Agency Annual Plan – Public Housing

Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Patterson seconded, the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. Commissioner Cummings voted no. The motion was passed.

**4. Executive Personnel Administrator's Report**

**Rashondra Martin**

Ms. Martin continues to implement Strategic Plan Goal III of supporting RHA's employees to enhance an organizational culture of excellence by continuing to provide training. Upcoming training – Benefit Bytes: Employee Assistance Program. This training is for Associates to learn about the benefits and services offered by EAP. New Horizon will conduct the Microsoft Excel training for the Housing Specialists and the Succession Planning Associates. Ms. Martin provided the quarterly demographic information.

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

**Shawn Burr**

Compliance, Inclusion, and Diversity continue to focus on these critical areas:

- Housing Court – A positive impact is seen from RHA's presence on this committee. The increased communication has resulted in preventing several evictions from taking place. In some instances, the property owner is violating regulations, and RHA works with the court system to address this. Judge Johnson expressed initial concern that property owners were not represented on the committee. She was reassured that RHA is on the committee and is one of the largest rental agencies in the area.
- Security Camera Project – A site walk-through at Lena Gantt, Hudson Ridge, and Glenwood Gardens took place with one potential camera vendor. There are special concerns with the Glenwood site due to the number of trees in the area impacting camera sight visibility. Special arrangements will need to be considered.
- Housing Guest Protocol – The matter of when a visitor is no longer considered a guest was examined. The IDED met with the Leasing Operations and Public Housing Directors. The goal was to utilize a consistent process to determine when a visitor was staying at a residence and was no longer considered a visitor. Ms. Herriot believes we are on solid ground with both departments' current processes.
  - Leasing Operations utilizes the New York State Real Property Law, which states a visitor is no longer a guest once the visit is over 30 days. This Law is also incorporated in RHA's Admin Plan.
  - Public Housing's lease states a visit is generally 14 days; however, residents can extend a visit if they seek authorization from Public Housing's staff. It is critical in the case of a building emergency that Authority staff knows, as accurately as possible, who are residing in RHA property.
- Tenants on Patrol – The Resident Commissioners have taken on this initiative and are currently working with Public Housing. They are planning a meeting to recruit participants.

- Leasing Operations Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSH) is currently under audit.
- The Finance Dept Audit has been completed. We will continue to work with Finance and Procurement to ensure that recommendations are implemented.

**6. Finance**

**Sinclair Carrington**

Sinclair Carrington reported on the actual vs. budget variance for year-to-date through May 2019. The COCC and Section 8 show a surplus based on their budgets. Public Housing's budget shows a deficit which should be corrected when HUD brings its funding current to us. Further, he reported the actual 2019 figures vs. the ones in the prior year through May 2018. The actual vs. budget shows that the Authority is in a strong financial position.

**7. Public Housing Report**

**Sara Jaouen**

Ms. Jaouen reported on the closing of the RHA's one and two-bedroom unit waiting lists on May 15, 2019. During the closing, her department has begun to purge all the waiting lists starting from January 2016 through December 31, 2018; there are 5,019 applicants. In May, RHA had 24 households move-out and 35 households move-in. There are 21 RHA units ready to be rented. Ms. Jaouen closed Commissioner Patterson's request to have the Tenants on Patrol (TOP) meeting at Danforth. Commissioner Cummings' seating replacement request at Hudson Ridge Tower was closed as well.

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

**Jacquetta Harris**

Director Harris reported on the United Way Day of Caring at Foodlink. Volunteers assisted with sorting, inspecting, assembling, and labeling non-perishable food.

Leasing Operations has a goal of increasing landlord participation for the Housing Choice Voucher Program by 10% by December of 2021. The increase will bring an additional 210 landlords into the program, creating a greater housing choice option for applicants and participants. In May 2019, RHA had 1,752 people on the waitlist. The Leasing Operations' utilization of the voucher goal is approximately 100%, while that of RHA is currently at 95.49%. Ms. Harris aims to increase its voucher utilization further. Director Harris has set a goal to issue 82 vouchers per month and absorb incoming portability vouchers.

The monthly inspection average is 960–1020. The total number of inspections in May 2019 was 1147; in April 2019, it was 1052. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) projects are being monitored monthly with 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 60 days. The local Continuum of Care (CoC) has released the ALAocal Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Ms. Harris is planning to submit ten renewal applications.

**9. Family Self-Sufficiency Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

Ms. Bradford entered the FSS program on November 1, 2011, with employment and pre-homeownership goals. Although there were significant setbacks which caused some delay in obtaining her goals, Rochelle continued to press forward and obtained employment at St. Ann's. While working full time at St. Ann's Ms. Bradford also sought and achieved credentials in Addiction Counselor Training. Ms. Bradford closed on her home at 16 Henry Circle on 6/4/2019. Ms. Bradford is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive roughly \$19,348 in escrow savings.

Ms. Turner entered the FSS program on August 1, 2012, with an employment goal. Ms. Turner obtained employment at 5linx in 2014 and continues to maintain her employment. Unfortunate setbacks cause Ms. Turner to remove some goals, but her perseverance allowed her to add completion of a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the State University College at Brockport majoring in English. Her ambition is to be a teacher. Ms. Turner credits the program for pushing her in obtaining her degree, although it was not one of her initial goals. Ms. Turner is successful is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive \$5,145 in escrow savings.

The Resident Services Department is collaborating with the City of Rochester on the Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) Initiative, which aims to bring financial services to Rochester residents as a public service. The Resident Service Department submitted an RFQ on April 25, 2019 and had a follow-up meeting with FEC team to review application on 5/3/19. Next phase is the MOU with a projected implementation date of 9/2019.

The Resident Services Department hosted a Homeownership Fair on June 6th, 2019, 73 Participants/Residents came in to receive homeownership information from the following vendors: City of Rochester, Five Star Bank, Consumer Credit Counseling Services, ESL Fed Credit Union, Housing Council, The Home Store, Key Bank, M&T Bank, NACA, and Reliant Federal Credit Union.

Resident Services is planning the 2nd Annual Strong Family Extravaganza scheduled for June 29th from 11-3pm at Baden Park. This event coincides with HUD's National Strong Families initiative. Conifer, Celebrate City Living, Rochester Management, and Councilman Patterson are planning team members. Event Sponsors include Coalition for City Living, MVP, Rochester Management, United Healthcare, and Wegmans.

**10. Planning Committee Report**

**Shawn Burr**

Acting Executive Director, Shawn Burr, reported the status of Capital Projects' current projects. The staff presented the updates and reviewed the progress of the Lighting Incentive Project, the Elevator Door Replacement project, and Scattered Site Roof Replacement project. The Hudson Ridge Tower Window Weatherization is completed. Currently, in progress are Scattered Site roof replacement and the elevator upgrades at the high-rises. The Scattered Site porches are on schedule for Board approval.

At the Project Planning meeting, Mr. Burr updated the progress of our next “Change the Face of Public Housing” project at our Bond/Hamilton site. The proposed designs are available for Board member review. We also have another site selected on Edinburgh St. and will be moving forward with that.

The bids for Shirley Street single-family construction came back and were very high. RHA has been working to identify other options for constructing new homes for a reasonable price on our property on Eiffel Place and Shirley Street. These projects were out for bid, and the bids received were quite high. The staff has been looking into other options to construct these homes more reasonably. In addition to exploring other procurement methods, the staff is now going to engage the architect of record and/or a General Contractor to find ways to reduce the overall construction cost. If the cost is more reasonable, we will re-bid the project.

As RHA proceeds with the Section 32 homeownership plan, we have identified 7 Scattered Sites that the PNA firm will be performing physical needs assessments on soon. We will use those assessments to prepare them for successful homeownership. Melissa’s staff continues to work with the other residents who expressed interest to meet eligibility requirements.

RAD update - We continue to have regularly scheduled conference calls with our Transaction Manager and RAD consultant to discuss progress and next steps. Mr. Burr and staff met with Carol Wheeler and many department representatives from the City and brought them up to speed with our RAD applications and CHAPs. They provided great insight, and recommendations for us in moving the projects forward. The RFP responses for development partner are under review, and a legal services firm will assist us in the review and negotiation. We will be giving a presentation to the affected neighborhood organizations on July 16, 2019. Linda Stango is our project lead, and she continues to do a great job.

On Tuesday, June 18, 2019, RHA hosted a planning meeting with staff from various City departments to discuss the development of the Fernwood Ave property that RHA owns. The meeting went very well. The planning meetings will be a unique opportunity to develop types of housing that meets current and future needs in our community. There is a follow-up meeting in early August. Mr. Burr will be giving updates and more detail at next month’s Project Planning Meeting.

**11. Commissioner Comments**

No comments.

Acting Board Chair Edwards requested to go into Executive Session for a legal and personnel matter. Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Lee seconded, a motion to go into Executive Session at 2:10 PM. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Lee, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.



Acting Board Chair Edwards requested to end Executive Session; Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Lee seconded, the motion to end the Executive Session at 2:45 PM. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Lee, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

**12. July Regular Board Meeting**

The June Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, July 24, 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, and Commissioner Larson seconded, a motion to end the Board Meeting at 2:47 PM. Commissioner Cummings, 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