

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
July 22, 2020
675 WEST MAIN STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



MEMBERS PRESENT

Tynise Edwards, Chairperson
Rosalie Remarais, Vice-Chairperson
Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner
Joanne Larson, Commissioner
Hershel Patterson, Resident Commissioner
Hank Rubin, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT

Melissa Berrien
Shawn Burr
Sinclair Carrington
Diana Colon
Jacquetta Harris
Cynthia Herriott
Shawanna Lawrence
Mark Plantholt
Mariam Rodriguez-Machuca
Linda Stango
Amit Sud
Evhen Tupis

OTHERS PRESENT

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel
Josh Jensen, Tipping Point Communications

Commissioner Tynise Edwards called the July Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:04 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

There were no Public Comments.

2. Approval of Minutes: June 2020 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Remarais moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the June 2020 Regular Board Meeting. Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Edwards, and Commissioner Rubin voted yes. The motion passed.

3. Director's Report and Board Approval Requests

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

Mr. Burr recognized the Staff across the Authority who continue to go above and beyond to ensure our high quality of services are maintained and that our residents and participants needs are taken care of during this pandemic emergency we are experiencing. They have been doing a remarkable job! Directors are busy preparing plans for their departments to “Re-open,” and a committee has been formed.

Mr. Burr shared that Trillium’s COVID testing for our residents continues and has been very successful. We are scheduling a debriefing to discuss progress and next steps. We had very positive press stories about the testing services for our residents, and he hopes that you had a chance to see them via the links he shared.

Mr. Burr shared that we are moving forward with the NYS POP grant we were awarded and have selected a consultant to work with. A scope of work has been created and submitted to Enterprise for approval.

Mr. Burr shared that our “Reopening Committee” has been very busy developing plans for RHA to “reopen” in phases which is underway. We are evaluating the processes that are in place on a weekly basis within the current phase. The next phase will implement temperature checks as part of our daily screening process. Continued kudos to Shawanna for taking the lead on this and the countless hours she has put in, not only organizing the plans, but also attending webinars, meetings, and calls to gather best practices.

Mr. Burr reported we are reviewing Fiscal Year 2021 Budget proposals from the President and appropriation committees. NAHRO provides analysis on this every year, and it’s important that we are aware of what is being proposed and how the funding could affect our operations.

Mr. Burr reported that PIH Notices that HUD has issued covering the pandemic revised the funding eligibility period to be 3/27/20 – 12/31/20. NYSPHADA and others are still trying to get pre-3/27 COVID related costs covered with these funds. The RHA/BOC team has met once to discuss the eligible uses, has a second meeting scheduled. This is a great opportunity to get creative with this funding in providing much-needed resources for our residents and participants. Since the first meeting, we have implemented a landlord incentive program which I sent out information on, and we’ve procured face masks for residents and are working on distributing them. Other conversations and planning are in progress for meals, transportation, resident surveys, etc.

Mr. Burr reported that we met with RTS on 6/26 to discuss transportation issues and opportunities for our residents. It was a very productive meeting and the start of a continued partnership between our organizations. Thank you to Commissioner Rubin for initiating this. Our next meeting is scheduled for 7/23, and I will have more to report next month.

Mr. Burr reported that the NLIHC has been hosting weekly National Calls with some very impressive speakers that we've been participating in as a group. I thank you for your interest and want to make sure you would like to continue this process of sending out the information, and whoever can join in, let us know, and we can facilitate a group session. Thank you, Evhen and Diana, for all your work on this.

b. Board Action Requests

- i. Bay Zimmer Apartments Heating and Domestic Hot Water Boilers – Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to approve the purchase of the bulk equipment from Ferguson Enterprises for \$117,001.79 – Capital Projects

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

- ii. Bay Zimmer Apartments – Boiler equipment installation in three (3) buildings – Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract to Kennedy Mechanical, Inc. for \$76,725.00 – Capital Projects

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

- iii. Kennedy Tower Corridor and Resident Units Upgrades – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to increase the contingency amount from 10% to 20% to FW Construction for \$211,727.20 – Capital Projects

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

- iv. A/E Services for the Federal Street Development Project – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to approve LiRo Associates proposal to complete the necessary to submit to the NYS HCR application for competitive federal and state tax credits and other Federal, State, and local financing applications(City HOME, CPC, etc.) for \$59,850.00 – Capital Projects

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

- v. FY 2020 3rd Quarter Vacated Arrears Write Off – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to approve the write off of the FY 2020 3rd Quarter Vacated Arrears in the amount of \$28,889.94 – Finance

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

4. Executive Personnel Administrator's Report

Shawn Burr

The Human Resource Department continues to implement Strategic Plan Goal III of “Supporting RHA’s Employees to Enhance an Organizational Culture of Excellence” by continuing to provide training and continuing to create organizational culture excellence.

Recent Trainings July 2020:

Mental Health and Wellness 101 in the Workplace by MVP.

Upcoming Training – July 2020:

WOW Customer Service Training by ENI

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

Cynthia Herriott

Inclusion

o Security Camera Project – This project is on hold while another vendor is selected. With the New York Pandemic Pause, it will be a little while before businesses are in full operation. Currently, I am working with Procurement to restart the vendor process.

o Senior Strategy – I am working with Lifespan and a medical provider to monitor older residents during the pandemic to check on their well-being. Commissioners Rubin and Cummings are assisting with this Initiative. Melissa Berrien is the staff to assist on this.

o Student Homework Academy – This committee has met several times. The Pandemic impact on schools makes our work even more critical. Simeon Bannioster from the Rochester Area Community Foundation have kept in touch. He has asked to join the committee and work with us on this. It’s his belief that Rochester Housing Authority is a key partner in addressing this need.

o COVID Strategy – We have been working with the Monroe County Community Strategy Officer to facilitate addressing resident needs around testing and education. The testing is currently taking place at most of RHA’s Westside properties.

o Resident Needs – Working with the Board of Commissioners to address food shortages, healthy meals and academic support. We are developing: 1. Nutritional resources, 2. Nutritional education, 3. Access to food.

o Father’s Day - The Morale and Inclusion Committee recognized Father’s Day.

o Juneteenth – The Morale and Inclusion Committee recognized Juneteenth.

Compliance

o **Fraud Investigations**

- **Leasing Operations** Repayment agreement payment totals YTD as of June 2020, \$36,215.32 collected. (\$365,097.00 has been collected to-date)

- **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for Vacated Arrears and Collection Loss as of June 2020: \$9,118.21 collected. A total of \$36,300.88 collected to-date (since 2017)

o **Termination Hearings**

- Hearings are on hold due to the Pandemic at the direction of state and federal officials. They have directed that no evictions take place.

Operations

o **Case Management** –

- Program Violation Referrals Outstanding – 1,043 – We have recently filled this position and have a staff member working on addressing violations and getting them up to date.

o **Rochester Housing Charities** – Commissioner Cummings and I serve as RHA’s ex-

officio representative on the RHC Board of Directors

- I am currently working with RHC to confirm what current debts RHC owes to RHA and ensure they are recorded in the RHC budget.

o **Audit and Review** – CDI continues to work closely with Legal to address areas in need

of assessment within RHA. (*Executive Session for any requested reporting*)

- Compliance is planning the 2020 Audit Schedule – this has been delayed by the Pandemic.

o **Public Safety** – Please see the Activity Chart for Public Safety. Targeted problem strategy appears to be having an impact.

• **Current Actions:**

- Public Housing Applications – A recommendation was presented to the board to approve making to offers for housing as opposed to 3. Per our Waiver Process, this will go into effect and be presented to the board to approve at the meeting for next month. The goal is to expedite getting people housed.
- We have increased security coverage in towers buildings during peak hours to discourage residents violating social distancing restrictions in lobby areas.
- Violation letters have been mailed to tenants that didn't comply with the restricted visitation protocol. I sign letters personally as a special Covid-19 strategy response. This appears to be having an impact as I have not had to send repeat letters and this week, I have not received violations.
- A Resident in unit 1319 Hudson Ridge Tower was setting off fireworks from balcony – a violation letter has been to the resident.
- University Tower – Brandon Bradley was located at Apt. # 511 and arrested by the Rochester Police Department for a shooting incident that did not take place on RHA property.

6. Finance

Sinclair Carrington

Mr. Carrington reported that the actual vs. budget figures and variances for year-to-date through May 2020 for the COCC, Public Housing, and Section 8 income and expenses. The COCC and Public Housing recorded a surplus, while Section 8 recorded a deficit. The Finance Reports show that RHA is in a better financial position than they were last year at this time. This report was discussed at the Finance Committee Meeting, and the Board was satisfied with the report.

Mr. Carrington also reported on the COVID-19 CARES Funding income and expenses for the year-to-date through June 2020.

7. Public Housing Report

Cynthia Herriott

Interim Public Housing Structure:

- It is my pleasure to announce that Amit Sud joined our team as the Public Housing Director. We will work together during the transition period.

ACOP revision recommendations:

Jaquanda Jones is recommending a revision of three offers of housing to two. This would expedite our ability to get people housed.

Public Housing Matters:

COVID Matters:

- Building Security – RHA properties have adopted a protocol of restricted visitation to minimize the COVID virus impact. Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other notices have been posted.
 - Kennedy Tower – Capital Projects have been placed on hold.
 - Residents – Family Self Sufficiency in partnership with Lifespan, Foodlink, United Way and our Resident Council members are delivering food to those seniors in need.
 - Disinfection of the main lobby areas, elevators, door handles is being done daily.
 - Community rooms have been secured.
- Some staff have reported an increase in income loss notices due to the pandemic. The waiver process is being utilized to assist residents with recertification.
- Grievance hearings have been temporarily placed on hold.
- I am working closely with management to develop a temporary process for serving 14-Day Notices when the court reopens
- Maintenance and building management have submitted their work plan to me to address vacancies.
- Evictions are on hold. We are working with the Public Housing Attorney to develop a plan for restarting this process.
- The Agency Plan will be presented to the board and the JWRC for final review. The due date is 10/18/2020.
- The Property Management office will offer applicants several methods to view a unit e.g. virtual, email & text pictures, solo unit showings (staff will wait outside of unit as applicant walks through unit). This will meet our COVID reopening requirements.
- Trillium testing has taken place at Danforth and is scheduled for Glenwood on July 1st and 2nd.

Security Matters:

- A Resident in unit 1319 Hudson Ridge Tower was setting off fireworks from balcony – a violation letter has been to the resident.
- University Tower – Brandon Bradley was located at Apt. # 511 and arrested by the Rochester Police Department for a shooting incident that did not take place on RHA property.

Online Applications:

- APC continues to accept online applications with no reported concerns.
- As of 6/11/20, APC has resumed making unit offers.

8. Maintenance Report

Mark Plantholt

Chief of Maintenance, Mark Plantholt, reported on Maintenance Special Projects for June 2020. He provided progress reports for the following projects:

- Laundry rooms across RHA
- Hudson Ridge Tower Exterior Community Space Upgrade – Gazebo installed
- Hudson Ridge Tower Main Entry Sidewalk Resurfacing
- Scattered Sites furnace replacements
- Lexington Court Mechanical Replacements
- Administrative Office at 675 W. Main St. upgrades
- Kennedy Tower Generator
- 255 Hamilton St. Rehab.

He reported on the status of regular and emergency work orders.

9. Leasing Operations Report (Section 8)

Jacquetta Harris

Director Harris, Leasing Operations Department, shared utilization and funding information with the Board of Commissioners.

Four thousand applications have been selected to be added to the Housing Choice Voucher Wait List. To date, there is a total of 3,639 applicants on the Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List.

The Leasing Operations' utilization of the voucher's goal is between 95% to 98%; RHA is currently at 93.84%.

The monthly inspection average is 780 - 960. During June 2020, the total number of inspections was 232. In Mid-March RHA stopped performing annual inspections to reduce the person to person contact for the inspectors due to the COVID-19 virus.

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 RHA has an action plan that will demonstrate correction within the next 60 days.

10. Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Report

Melissa Berrien

Ms. Collins entered the FSS program on September 1, 2014, with employment and credit restoration goals. Ms. Collins has maintained her employment, increasing her earnings by 80%. Ms. Collins also resolved all her collection accounts. Ms. Collins is a successful graduate of the FSS Program and entitled to receive \$2,619.99 in escrow savings.

RHA currently has 19 businesses on the RHA Section 3 Registry.

RHA has had three families close on their new homes, there are four families with anticipated closings and 13 families who have been approved for financing and searching for homes.

11. Planning Committee Report

Shawn Burr

The Planning Committee meeting was held on 7/8/2020. The meeting began with the follow-up items from the previous meeting, of which three have been completed, and one is pending.

Mr. Burr thanked the Board for Action Item approvals and their continued attendance and input at the Committee meetings.

The following projects' statuses were discussed, and pictures shared:

1. Seneca Manor Weatherization Project – we are getting ready to resume work
2. Harriet Tubman Window Replacement – restarted with a COVID-19 safety plan in place
3. Scattered Sites Roof Replacement R-17 – work has started
4. Kennedy Tower Hallway and unit Rehab – we are getting ready to resume work

Mr. Burr reported that the current status of the CFP Budgets as of May 31st, 2020 are: 501.17 budget is 100% obligated and 99% expended, and the 501.18 budget is 100% obligated and 47% expended and 501.19 is 17% obligated and 0% expended. RHF Funds grants as of May 31st are: 502.13 is 21% obligated and 14% expended, and 502.14 is 0% obligated and 0% expended.

Mr. Burr reported that our seven Section 32 homeownership homes have had their PNA's completed. We continue to work on the application to HUD and will submit that to the Special Applications Center as soon as it is completed. A timeline has been created for this process. Work is being complete to each home to ensure they are ready for homeownership, which includes a new roof on one of the homes. Melissa Berrien continues to work with other residents who have expressed interest to meet eligibility requirements.

Mr. Burr discussed upcoming projects in various stages of planning and design, along with some of our "pipeline" projects. We continue to meet with management and maintenance to prioritize projects.

Mr. Burr gave a status update for the two RAD projects at Federal St and Parkside. The closing for Parkside has been completed and thanked everyone that help facilitate the process. The Federal St. project is moving forward with the architect and developer partner; they are performing their assigned tasks. A draft developer agreement for this project has been revised and approved by Counsel and the Board. It was signed and executed. The physical needs assessments for the scattered sites that are to be included in the Federal St. conversion and are being completed safely following NYS COVID-19 Safety Guidelines.

12. Commissioner Comments

No reports

13. August Regular Board Meeting-

The August Annual Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, August 19, 2020**, at 11:30 AM via Skype and the RHA tv on YouTube.

The August Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, August 19, 2020**, at 12:00 PM via Skype and the RHA tv on YouTube.

There being no further Regular Meeting Business to come before the Board, Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Remarais seconded, a motion to end the Board Meeting at 1:49 PM. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Burr,
Secretary to the RHA Board
Deputy Executive Director