

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
November 18, 2020  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Tynise Edwards, Chairperson  
Rosalie Remarais, Vice-Chairperson  
Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner  
Hershel Patterson, Resident Commissioner  
Duwaine T. Bascoe, New Commissioner  
Hank Rubin, Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT**

Melissa Berrien  
Shawn Burr  
Sinclair Carrington  
Diana Colon  
Jacquetta Harris  
Sarafina Hilaire  
Shawanna Lawrence  
Mark Plantholt  
Mariam Rodriguez-Machuca  
James Senger  
Shelby Simpson  
Linda Stango  
Evhen Tupis

**OTHERS PRESENT**

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

Commissioner Tynise Edwards called the August Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:01 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: October 2020 Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

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

**3. Swearing in of Board Commissioner Chairperson, Tynise Edwards**

Commissinor Duwaine T. Bascoe, Esq. took the Oath of Office

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

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

Mr. Burr **CONTINUES** to recognize Staff across the Authority who continue to go above and beyond to ensure our high quality of services are maintained and that our resident's and participant's needs are taken care of during this Pandemic. They have been doing a remarkable job! As we are "re-opening," great efforts are being made in the planning and execution. Procurement and Maintenance have been extremely helpful.

Mr. Burr shared our employee recognition day was October 26th and was appreciated by staff. A special thank you to all Board Commissioners who attended!

Mr. Burr shared that our next steps for the NYS POP grant will be working with our consultant to move the project forward once they iron out contract details with Enterprise.

Mr. Burr shared that Trillium's COVID testing/Primary Care services for our residents continue with the November schedule moving along.

Mr. Burr reported our "Reopening Committee" has been very busy developing plans for RHA to "reopen" in phases. PHASE III is underway, and all staff is back "in the office." We are working out the kinks to implement temperature checks as part of our daily screening process, which has been a big challenge. The Committee is addressing the opening "doors" will be open to the public, but with the current trends in increased positive cases, we are reluctant to do so. Continued kudos to Shawanna for taking the lead on this and the countless hours she and the committee have put in.

Mr. Burr reported that discussions continue on the PIH Notices that HUD has issued and eligible expenses we are focusing monies on. It looks like we won't have any difficulty in spending the CARE'S Act funds for Public Housing, as Sinclair has reported. Jacquetta and her team have developed some creative ways to allocate those funds for Section 8 programs we hope to implement on 11/1. We extended the landlord incentive program, and with increased awareness, more landlords are participating. Finance staff are working on the reporting requirements and will ensure we remain in compliance with the tracking and reporting.

Mr. Burr reported that staff have been involved in several community projects and will report on them in their Board reports. RMAPI Housing Committee, City FEC Program Initiative, Connected Communities Housing Committee, Private Sector Rental Market Study, and Benefits Project are a few that are in the works.

Mr. Burr reported that RHA is participating in the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge. This initiative is a powerful opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of how inequity and racism affect our lives and community. It's imperative we rise to the challenge to

improve our community and ourselves. In our commitment to implement antiracist practice

b. Board Action Requests

- i. 117 William Warfield Drive Townhouse – Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract to Erie Contracting Inc. for \$165,000 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Remarais seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Patterson, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. Commissioner Bascoe abstained and Commissioner Cummings voted no. The motion was did not pass, vote was, it will be presented at the December Planning Committee Meeting.

- ii. MRI/Temast Assistance Connect Tenant Portal – Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to purchase the MRI/Temast Assistance Connect Tenant Portal for \$22,687.00 – Information Technology

Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. Commissioner Bascoe abstained . The motion was passed five to zero and one abstention.

- iii. Action Item for Proposed Change to Administrative Plan Language – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to change the Language in Chapter 17, Part IV Section 17-V.C.Amendments to the HAP Contract of the Administrative Plan– Leasing Operations

Commissioner Remarais moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Bascoe, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- iv. Unit Offer Policy Revision Request – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to change the Language in Section Part II: Unit Offer Policy in the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy Manual – Public Housing

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. Commissioner Bascoe abstained. The motion passed.four to zero and one abstention.

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

**Shawanna Lawrence**

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.

**Recruitment Information – August 2020:**

- (1) (Position- Clerk III/Typing – Leasing Operations Department started on 11/16/2020
- (1) Position- Computer Communications Technician- IT Department started on 11/16/2020
- (1) Position- Mail Room Clerk- Human Resources Department started on 11/16/2020

**Recent Events – October 2020**

Employee Recognition/Service Awards Event was scheduled on Monday, October 26, 2020 at 675 W. Main Street. This event highlighted our continued commitment to improving internal communications and further enhancing our culture of excellence. We celebrated the associates hard work and dedication to RHA provided them lunch and several fun activities which include Zoom games and prizes.

**6. Compliance, Inclusion, and Diversity Officer's Report      Shawn Burr**

**Inclusion**

- Covid Strategy – We have been working with community partners to facilitate addressing resident needs around testing and education. The COVID testing has taken place at most of RHA’s senior sites with Trillium’s mobile unit. We held a debrief meeting to assess outcomes and tweak the process, and Trillium has now added primary care services being available for residents along with COVID testing. A regular schedule has been established and posted at our sites. We had another meeting on 11/6/2020 with Trillium at Danforth Tower East on furthering services for our residents. Channels 8 and 10 conducted interviews with myself and Trillium.

**Compliance**

- **Fraud Investigations**
  - **Leasing Operations** Repayment agreement payment totals YTD as of October 2020, \$58,848.32 collected. (\$386,996.00 has been collected to-date)
  - **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for Vacated Arrears and Collection Loss as of October 2020: \$13,448.22 collected. A total of \$40,630.9689 collected to-date (since 2017)
- **Termination Hearings**
  - We have upgraded our process to be able to conduct hearings remotely.
  - **Leasing Operations** – 13 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 5 upheld; 1 overturned, two re-instated & 5 adjourned.
  - **Public Housing** – 0 Participant Grievance Hearings Scheduled

**Operations**

- **Case Management** –
  - Program Violation Referrals Outstanding – 1,083 – We have a staff member working on addressing violations and getting them up to date.

- **Rochester Housing Charities** – Commissioner Cummings serves as RHA’s ex-officio representative on the RHC Board of Directors, and we’ll need to appoint a second member in Cynthia’s absence.
  - We continue to work on the RHC project and will continue to keep the Board updated.
- **Audit and Review** – I will be working closely with Legal to address areas in need of assessment within RHA. (*Executive Session for any requested reporting*)
  - Compliance is currently planning the 2021 Audit Schedule.
- **Public Safety** – Please see the Activity Chart for Public Safety. The targeted problem strategy appears to be having an impact.

**Current Actions:**

- Conduct Violations – We continue to mail violation letters to tenants that do not comply with the restricted visitation protocol.
- Security Camera Project – This project has been on hold while another vendor is selected due to the New York Pandemic Pause. Currently, I am working with IT and Procurement to restart the vendor process. We have a lot of information gathered and an Authority wide scope of work to proceed with.
- We have reviewed the COVID Security Plan and have reduced hours as a part of our re-opening plan at certain sites and will monitor closely
- 34 Somerset- Security has been directed to assign a special attention detail due to shots fired.
- A stolen vehicle was parked at 675 West Main. We had RPD remove the vehicle from our property.
- Security Issues at Glenwood Gardens: Security is still an issue in the parking lots. AP Security continues the special detail.
- Parliament Arms - Resident’s vehicle was stolen from a different location with house keys and entrance key in spouse jacket. RHA was not informed until Tuesday of the following week. The entrance door key allowed access to all buildings, which is a safety issue. We had all entrance door locks replaced to each building in which only residents of that building has an entrance door key. Now, if a resident loses their keys, only that assigned building lock have to be changed instead of the entire complex.

**7. Finance**

**Sinclair Carrington**

Mr. Carrington reported that the monthly Finance Report, the actual vs. budgeted figures and variances for year-to-date through September 2020 for the COCC, Public Housing, and Section 8 income and expenses had not been completed yet; due to the fact, that the Finance Department is finalizing the Finance Reporting that is due to HUD by 11/30/2020

Mr. Carrington also reported on the COVID-19 CARES Funding income and expenses for year-to-date through October 31, 2020, and also reported on the projected ways of

spending the remaining \$3.1 million of the HCV Cares Funding.

**8. Public Housing Report**

**Shawn Burr**

**Interim Public Housing Structure:**

- While the Public Housing Director position is vacant, I will oversee and coordinate the management of this department in coordination with property managers. We have a new property manager starting on 11/2. Mr. Jesse McCarthy has been working in Leasing Operations and will be a welcomed addition to the Public Housing Team.

**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:**

- We are currently in the process of developing a policy and procedure for deceased residents that will be presented to the Board of Commissioners upon completion.
- 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. The RHA Re-open Committee is working on the plan to re-open community rooms, common spaces and revised visitation. Tipping Point will be assisting also and is in the process of drafting resident notices. One to be delivered shortly reminding of current restrictions and safe practices and informing of Re-opening only when it is safe to do so.
    - Kennedy Tower – all units will have new cabinets 9<sup>th</sup> floor is being cleared out for contractor to start. More updates at the Planning Committee.
    - 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 twice daily.
    - Community rooms have been secured. Plan to re-open is in progress.
  - 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. Staff continues to assist and a reminder notice to residents will go out soon. I am working closely with management to develop a temporary process for serving 14-Day Notices when the court re-opens.
  - Evictions are on hold. We are working with the Public Housing Attorney to develop a plan for restarting this process.

- The Property Management office is offering 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 re-opening requirements.
- Slow mail system is impacting the recertification process. Tenants are reporting that it's taking two weeks to get mail that RHA sent. We will work with residents on a case by case basis.
- On October 26, 2020 security began a reduced Covid coverage schedule for Danforth, Kennedy and University Towers.
- Human Resources is currently reviewing a Re-opening Plan for the Public Housing Towers.
- HUD has granted RHA an extension to submit the Agency Plan.

**Security Matters:**

- Security is an issue of the parking lots of Glenwood Garden. Cynthia had requested a special security detail.
- Special detail was needed at Parliament Arms due to a resident losing their keys.
- Special detail is in place for voting sites next Tuesday.

**Online Applications:**

- APC 1 and 2 bedrooms waiting lists is currently closed . We have provided notice to the public via Facebook and Rochester Housing Authority website.
- To address the high number of high-rise vacancies, APC is currently canvassing the 1 bedroom waiting list. We will continue to do so until all the high-rise units are occupied.
- APC is currently operating with 50% staffing. Due to sick, personal and vacation leave, the department sometimes has only 25% of its staffing present for a day up to a week's time. We made offers to two candidates and both candidates declined.

**9. Maintenance Report**

**Mark Plantholt**

Chief of Maintenance, Mark Plantholt, he provided a department update for the following items:

- Laundry rooms across RHA
- Kennedy Tower Emergency Generator Project
- Open Work Orders
- Maintenance Open Positions
- COVID Sanitizing
- Landscaping Upgrades
- Upcoming Request for Proposals for Contracts and Projects

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

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

**Jacquetta Harris**

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

To date, RHA has 3,558 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 94.1%.

The monthly inspection average is 780 - 960. During September 2020, the total number of inspections was 835. As of August 24, 2020, we resumed biennial inspections and are conducting virtual debriefings with Inspectors to identify and address immediate concerns.

Permanent Supportive Housing projects are being monitored monthly for financials and project participation. Two grants ended July 2020. All projects that are projecting a funding deficit by the end of the grant period have an action plan to address the deficit.

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

**Melissa Berrien**

**Monthly Services Highlights**

We have 249 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:

- Ms. Higgins entered the FSS program on November 1, 2016, with employment and education goals. In March of 2020 Ms. Higgins was accepted into the Isabella Graham Hart School of Practical nursing. Ms. Higgins began employment with the Highlands at Brighton and increased her income by 134% making her over-income for the Section 8 program. Ms. Higgins is a successful graduate of the FSS Program and entitled to receive an estimated \$33.00 in escrow savings.
- Ms. Rivera entered the FSS program on November 1, 2018, with employment and credit restoration goals. Ms. Rivera has maintained employment and increased her credit by 53 points. Ms. Rivera is a successful graduate of the FSS Program and entitled to receive an estimated \$2,492.00 in escrow savings.

**Section 3**

- We currently have 19 businesses on the RHA Section 3 Registry

**Agency Collaborations**

- Financial Empowerment Center (FEC)
- Action for a Better Community (ABC)
- URMC and Unity Health
- Election Support



### **Homeownership**

- Ms. Abdulkadir closed on his home at 415 Magnolia Street on October 19, 2020.
- We have 7 families with anticipated closings and 14 families who have been approved for financing and are searching for homes.

## **12. Planning Committee Report**

**Shawn Burr**

The Planning Committee meeting was held on 11/4/2020. 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. Scattered Sites Roof Replacement R-16- 70% of the work has been completed.
2. Scattered Sites Roof Replacement R-17- 100% of the work has been completed.
3. 58-66 Merrimac Street Roof alterations & replacement- project is on schedule and 10% complete
4. RHA Office Site Upgrades – project is on schedule and 20% complete.
5. Kennedy Tower Hallway and unit Rehab – 30% of the work has been completed.
6. Lena Gantt Estates- sidewalk and paving project on schedule and 90% complete.
7. Lake Tower Façade Repair – 20% of the work is completed and is on schedule.
8. Seneca Manor Weatherization Project – project getting back underway.
9. Bay/Zimmer Boiler Replacement – project on schedule.

Mr. Burr reported that the current status of the CFP Budgets as of September 30, 2020, are the 501.18 budget is 100% obligated and 73% expended, and 501.19 is 42% obligated and 9% expended. RHF Funds grants as of September 30, 2020, are: 502.13 is 56% obligated and 30% expended, and 502.14 is 0% obligated and 0% expended.

Mr. Burr reported that our eight Section 32 homeownership homes have now turned into seven homes. We continue to work on the application to HUD and will submit that to the Special Applications Center as soon as it's complete.

Mr. Burr discussed the Change the Face of Public Housing project at Bond/Hamilton A/E firm has developed alternative layouts. We met on Friday, 11/6 to review and will present at the next Project Planning Meeting. Also discussed was Change the Face of

Public Housing project at Edinburgh Street. Landscape issues have been addressed and updated elevations are being prepared. We will then schedule a follow up meeting with the neighborhood association.

Mr. Burr gave a status update of the RAD projects. We began with updates on our development projects beginning with our two RAD projects at Parkside and Federal St. We closed on the Parkside Conversion, and now are operating under the LLC. We

continue to work with the architect and developer partner to move the Federal St project forward, and each are performing assigned tasks. We submitted the NYS HCR application for LIHTC funding on time and received word that our project was not selected. We have a debriefing meeting scheduled with HCR to find out why we weren't selected, so we can correct and resubmit in the next round which will be after the first of the year.

Mr. Burr shared that we have submitted a proposal in response to the City for the Affordable Housing Development RFP. We received questions back (which is good) and are working on getting answers submitted.

Mr. Burr stated that the Planning Commission was favorable in proceeding with our Zoning designation change request for Federal Street and it was subsequently approved by City Council. The next step is to secure waivers and a special permit from the City Planning Commission and we are on their calendar for 11/16/20. Lin and I will be attending virtually.

### **13. Commissioner Comments**

Board Chair Edwards requested a motion to go into Executive Session for a legal and personnel matter. Commissioner Remarais moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded a motion to go into Executive Session at 2:45 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

Acting Chair Reremais requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Bascoe moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 4:44 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Bascoe voted yes. The motion was passed.

Acting Chair Reremais requested a motion to authorize Deputy Executive Director Shawn Burr to submit a Waiver to HUD for two of our Board Members to serve one as Executive Director and one as Executive Personnel Administrator, Commissioner Patterson moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Bascoe, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Reremais voted yes, and Commissioner Edwards abstained because there is a conflict of interest since she is one of the candidates who will be the subject of the waiver. Commissioner Rubin abstained because there is a conflict of interest since he is also one of the candidates who will be the subject of the waiver. The motion was passed four to zero and two abstentions.

Commissioner Edwards stated that because this motion has passed and RHA is submitting a Waiver to HUD requesting that it allow Commissioner Edwards to move from her position as a Board of Commissioner for RHA to becoming part of the RHA staff; at this point, she offered her leave from the Board of Commissioner for RHA to avoid any appearance of impropriety or conflict. The leave is to be in effect until HUD notifies RHA if they accept the waiver.

Commissioner Rubin also stated that because this motion has passed. RHA will be submitting a Waiver to HUD requesting that it allow Commissioner Rubin to move from his position as a Board of Commissioner for RHA to becoming part of the RHA staff; at this point, he offered his leave from the Board of Commissioner for RHA to avoid any appearance of impropriety or conflict. The leave is to be in effect until HUD notifies RHA if they accept the waiver.

It was also stated that both Commissioner Rubin and Commissioner Edwards would present to the Board prior to or at the December Board meeting their respective qualifications and answer any questions following Board review of materials submitted at the Nov. meeting during an Executive Session and thereafter the Board would vote to approve the waiver request and candidates after deliberation and discussion at the December meeting.

Acting Board Chair Reramaïs accepted their leave of absence at this time.

**14. December Regular Board Meeting-**

The December Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 16, 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 Cummings moved, and Commissioner Bascoe seconded a motion to end the Board Meeting at 5:01 pm. Commissioner Reramaïs, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Bascoe voted yes. The motion was passed four to zero.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board  
Deputy Executive Director