

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
October 21, 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  
Linda Kavanagh-  
Schwenger  
Shawanna Lawrence  
Mark Plantholt  
Mariam Rodriguez-Machuca  
James Senger  
Shelby Simpson  
Linda Stango  
Evhen Tupis  
Cheryl Wilcox

**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**

A Public Comment was received from Friends of the African Union smartWISE Community Reinvestment Coalition of Monroe County; it was delivered in person to Rochester Housing Authority's administration building on October 21, 2020, 11:40 am. It was a 10-page document that was scanned and emailed to all of the Board Commissioners. It was noted that the Board does not respond to public comments during the meeting.

**2. Approval of Minutes: September 2020 Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

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

**3. 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 "reopening," great efforts are being made in the planning and execution. Procurement and Maintenance have been extremely helpful. Our employee recognition day is October 26th.

Mr. Burr shared that we did hear from Enterprise on the next steps for the NYS POP grant, and we have sent our signed agreement back that Counsel reviewed. We will now be working with our consultant to move the project forward.

Mr. Burr shared that Trillium's COVID testing/Primary Care services for our residents continues with the October 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 are back "in the office." We are working out the kinks to implement temperature checks as part of our daily screening process. The Committee is addressing the opening "doors" that will be open to the public. 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 had been involved in several community projects, and they will report on them during their Board Reports. RMAPI Housing Committee, City FEC Program Initiative, and Benefits Project are a few that are in the works.

Mr. Burr informed the Board of the United Way of Greater Rochester 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge, taking place in Rochester from October 23<sup>rd</sup> through November 20<sup>th</sup>.

b. Board Action Requests

- i. Development Agreement for Parliament Arms/Fairfield Village Redevelopment Project – Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to enter into Development Agreement with Edgemere Development, Inc and Home Leasing – Capital Projects

Commissioner Remarais 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 unanimously

- ii. Third Renewal of contract for EJP Consulting – Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to renew the contract with EJP Consulting Group, LLC for \$100,000.00 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Cummings 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 unanimously

iii. Architectural/MEP/Structural Services Renewal

- a. Architectural/MEP/Structural Services – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract to LiRo Group a three year or \$300,00.00, whichever expires first. – Capital Projects

Commissioner Remarais 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 unanimously

- b. Architectural/MEP/Structural Services – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract to HUNT-EAS a three year or \$300,00.00, whichever expires first. – Capital Projects

Commissioner Rubin 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 unanimously

- iv. 369 Waring Road Fire Rehabilitation – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract to Erie Contracting for \$121,000.00 – Capital Projects

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

- v. Kennedy Tower Asbestos Abatement Boiler #1– Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract to Hazardous Removals of Rochester for \$31,844.00 – Capital Project

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Patterson 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 unanimously

- vi. FY 2020 4th Quarter Vacated Arrears Write-off – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to approve the write off of the FY 2020 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Vacated Arrears for \$35,986.10 – Finance

Commissioner Cummings 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 unanimously

- vii. General Counsel Legal Services Contract Renewal Request– Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award the contract renewal to Harris Beach, PLLC for \$100,000.00 – Authority Wide

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

- viii. 2021 Employee Dental Insurance– Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to approve the contract renewal for four year of 5 years to MetLife Dental Insurance for \$163,620.00 for MetLife to be the vendor for RHA Dental Insurance for \$163,620.00 – Human Resources

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 unanimously

- ix. 2021 Employee Medical Insurance (Active Employees and Retirees <65 yrs.) – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to approve the contract renewal for MVP Healthcare to MVP Healthcare/FLMHIT/Brown and Brown for \$2,806,925.00 – Human Resources

Commissioner Remarais 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 unanimously

x. Renewal of Snow Plowing Services Contracts

- a. Administrative Sites – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract renewal to Cardinal Lawn & Landscape for \$23,400.00 – Maintenance

Commissioner Remarais 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 unanimously

- b. Central and North Sites – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract renewal to AA Blades Enterprises, Inc. for \$78,000.00 – Maintenance

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Cummings 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 unanimously

- c. Central and North Sites – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award a the first contract renewal to Washington Property Management. for \$233,160.00 – Maintenance

Commissioner Patterson 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 unanimously

xi. Rescind Board Action Item from October 14, 2020 RHA % Year Plan - Executive

Commissioner Patterson moved, and Commissioner Cummings 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 unanimously

**4. 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 10/19/2020
- (2) Position- Maintenance Laborer- Maintenance Department started on 10/19/2020
- (1) Position- Sr. Housing Specialist- Compliance Department started on 10/19/2020

## Upcoming Events – October 2020

Employee Recognition/Service Awards Event is scheduled on Monday, October 26, 2020, from 11:00, am 2:00 pm at 675 W. Main Street. This event will highlight our continued commitment to improving internal communications and further enhancing our culture of excellence. We will celebrate the associate's hard work and dedication to RHA by providing them lunch and several fun activities, which include Zoom games and prizes.

### 5. 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.

#### Compliance

- **Fraud Investigations**
  - **Leasing Operations** Repayment agreement payment totals YTD as of September 2020, \$53,010.32 collected. (\$381,892.00 has been collected to-date)
  - **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for Vacated Arrears and Collection Loss as of September 2020: \$12,485.29 collected. A total of \$39,667.96 collected to-date (since 2017)
- **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.
  - We have upgraded our process to be able to conduct hearings remotely.

#### Operations

- **Case Management** –
  - Program Violation Referrals Outstanding – 1,349 – We have recently filled this position and 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 update later.
- **Audit and Review** – DED will 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.
- **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. With the New York Pandemic Pause, it will be a little while before businesses are in full operation. 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 will adjust hours as a part of our reopening plan.
    - 34 Somerset- Security has been directed to assign a special attention detail due to shots fired.

**6. Finance**

**Sinclair Carrington**

Mr. Carrington reported that the actual vs. budget figures and variances for year-to-date through August 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 year-to-date through September 2020.

**7. Public Housing Report**

**Shawn Burr**

**Interim Public Housing Structure:**

- While the Public Housing Director position is vacant, the Deputy Executive Director will oversee and coordinate the management of this department in coordination with property managers.

**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 – all units will have new cabinets 9<sup>th</sup> floor is being cleared out for contractor to start.
  - 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.
- I am working closely with management to develop a temporary process for serving 14- Day Notices when the court reopens.
- 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.
- Slow mail system is impacting the recertification process. Tenants are reporting that it's taking two weeks to get mail that RHA sent.

**Security Matters:**

- Security is an issue of the parking lots of Glenwood Garden. I have requested a special security detail.



**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 one-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.

**8. Maintenance Report**

**Mark Plantholt**

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

- Laundry rooms across RHA
- Scattered Sites and Lexington Court HVAC Equipment Replacement
- 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.

**9. 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 3,557 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 94.2%.

The monthly inspection average is 780 - 960. During September 2020, the total number of inspections was 822. 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.

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

**Melissa Berrien**

**Monthly Services Highlights**

We have 241 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:

- Ms. Vellon entered the FSS program on September 1, 2016, with employment and credit restoration goals. Ms. Vellon has maintained her full-time employment with Maxim and increased her income by 168%, making her over-income for the program. Ms. Vellon is a successful graduate of the FSS Program and entitled to receive an estimated \$3,937.00 in escrow savings.
- Ms. Thomas entered the FSS program on July 1, 2015, with educational, employment, and credit restoration goals. Ms. Thomas completed her Bachelor of Science degree in August 2017 and is expected to complete her MS degree by December 2020. Ms. Thomas is currently employed Full time and increased her credit score by more than 155 points. Ms. Thomas is a successful graduate of the FSS Program and is entitled to receive an estimated \$856.63 in escrow savings.

**Section 3**

- We currently have 22 businesses on the RHA Section 3 Registry

**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.

- 56 Clients report being referred by RHA
- Average 2.80 Session per client
- 151 Session completed by RHA referrals
- Total Savings Increased by RHA referrals: \$9,285
- Total Debt Reduced by RHA referrals: \$4,316

**Homeownership**

- Ms. Jones closed on her home at 39 Henry Street on September 4, 2020.
- We have six families with anticipated closings and 15 families who have been approved for financing and are searching for homes.

**11. Planning Committee Report**

**Shawn Burr**

The Planning Committee meeting was held on 10/7/2020. 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-17- 90% of the work has been completed.
2. Kennedy Tower Hallway and unit Rehab – 20% of the work has been completed.
3. Lena Gantt Estates- sidewalk and paving project on schedule and 60% complete.
4. Lake Tower Façade Repair – 10% of the work is completed and is on schedule
5. Seneca Manor Weatherization Project – project getting underway
6. Bay/Zimmer Boiler Replacement – project getting underway
7. Merrimac Street Roof alterations & replacement- project getting underway

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 64% expended, and 501.19 is 41% obligated and 3% expended. RHF Funds grants as of September 30, 2020, are: 502.13 is 54% obligated and 24% expended, and 502.14 is 0% obligated and 0% expended.

Mr. Burr reported that our seven Section 32 homeownership homes have now turned into eight 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; an onsite kick-off meeting was held on 9/1/2020 to review the overall project and interior design options. A/E firm is developing alternative layouts.

Mr. Burr gave a status update for the two RAD projects at Federal St and Parkside. The closing for Parkside has been completed and now are operating under the LLC. The Federal St. project is moving forward with the architect and developer partner; they are performing their assigned tasks. Property inspections on the scattered sites that will be included in the Federal St. conversion have been completed. We have submitted the NYS HCR application for LIHTC funding on time; and results/awards will be announced after the first of the year, most likely

## **12. 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.

Board Chair Edwards requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Remarais moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 3:49 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

**13. November Regular Board Meeting-**

The November Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 18, 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 3:21 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board  
Deputy Executive Director