

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
September 23, 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
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: August 2020 Annual Board Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Remarais moved, and Commissioner Larson seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the August 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. Approval of Minutes: August 2020 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

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

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 that we are waiting to hear from Enterprise on the next steps for the NYS POP grant we were awarded. A scope of work has been created and submitted to Enterprise for approval.

Mr. Burr shared that Trillium's COVID testing for our residents continues with the addition of primary care services, and it has been very successful

Mr. Burr reported our "Reopening Committee" has been very busy developing plans for RHA to "re-open" in phases, and PHASE III will be coming soon. It will implement temperature checks as part of our daily screening process, and some "doors" that will be open to the public. Continued kudos to Shawanna for taking the lead on this and the countless hours she has put in.

Mr. Burr reported that discussions continue on the PIH Notices that HUD has issued and eligible expenses we are focusing on monies. There will not be an issue to spend the Public Housing funds from the CARE'S Act. We are in the process of creative ways to allocate those funds for Section 8 programs. HUD issued PIH-2020-24, which outlines guidance on the reporting requirements. The notice also extends the spending deadlines for both programs until 12/31/2020. The Finance staff has attended a HUD webinar regarding this notice and will ensure that RHA remains in compliance with the tracking and reporting.

Mr. Burr reported that HUD published a notice titled "Rent Reasonableness – Defining

Assisted Units for the Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Voucher Programs" (PIH 2020-19) This notice updates guidance on which units may be considered "assisted" for the purpose of rent reasonableness requirements. In general, the rent to an owner—in the context of a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract—must be reasonable. In determining that the rent to an owner for a HCV unit (including project-based voucher [PBV] units) is reasonable, a PHA must ensure that the rent for the applicable unit does not exceed rent for other comparable, unassisted units. In certain instances, owners charge below-market rents to protect families from rent increases that result solely from a conversion action (e.g., opting out of a Multifamily Section 8 project-based contract). These units are considered "assisted units" and are excluded from a rent reasonableness determination. This notice broadens the assisted unit standard to "all projects undergoing any conversion action that triggers eligibility for an award of tenant protection vouchers (TPVs)." It also clarifies that "units with restricted rents" are still "excluded from rent reasonableness determinations until the PHA is notified by the owner or otherwise determines that the rent restriction has expired." Additionally, the language defining "unassisted units" has been refined but remains essentially the same.

b. Board Action Requests

- i. A/E Services for Façade Repairs at Danforth Towers East & West – Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract to Konopka Architecture, PC for \$39,575.00 – 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 unanimously

- ii. Site Office Upgrades – Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to increase the contingency from 10% to 20% for the Site Office Upgrade Project for \$32,340.00 – Capital Projects

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

- iii. FY21 Annual Operating Agency Budget – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to Approve FY 2021 Annual Operating Agency Budget. – Authority Wide

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. Insurance Renewal

a. Property Insurance – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to renew the policy with Housing Authority Insurance Group for \$494,009.00 – All RHA Locations

Commissioner Remarais moved, and Commissioner Patterson 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.

b. Commercial Liability Insurance - Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to renew the policy with Housing Authority Insurance Group for \$211,216.00 – All RHA Locations

Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Rubin 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. Cloud Hosted Tenmast and TenDocs Service Migration – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to purchase from MRI/Tenmast for \$51,800.00 – Information Technology

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

vi. Laptop Deployment Services – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to purchase laptop deployment services from Innovative Solutions for \$29,950.00 – Information Technology

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. Consultant for Mobility Demonstration Voucher – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award a statement of work to EJP/Praxis for \$30,000.00 – Leasing Operations

Commissioner Remarais moved, and Commissioner Rubin 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. Renewal of Extermination Contract – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to approve the contract renewal for the 5th year of a 5-year contract to Town and Country Pest Solutions for \$325,000.00 – Public Housing

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

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.

Recent Training - September 2020:

ADP Time & Attendance Management Training – Human Resource

Demographic Information

The demographic information presented for the Authority was as of June 2020. The breakdown of the demographic information for Associates and Managers in the following categories are: (1) the age of Associates, (2) Associates over 40, (3) Associates Self-Reported Ethnicity, and (4) Associates by gender, (5) in addition we provided some additional analysis of managers. You will be provided with a folder labeled "Demographics."

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

Cynthia Herriott

Inclusion

- Student Homework Academy – This committee continues to meet. The Compliance Officer met with two Rochester City School Principals referred by Commissioner Larson.
- COVID Strategy – We have been working with community partners to facilitate addressing resident needs around testing and education. The testing has taken place at most of RHA's Westside properties. We held a debrief meeting to address minor concerns and tweak the process. We are currently in discussion to increase accessibility to regular healthcare.
- Resident Needs – Working with our Resident Services Committee to address food shortages, healthy meals, and academic support. Our strategy involves 1. Nutritional resources, 2. Nutritional education, 3. Access to food. We recently met to approve the informational flyers that will be distributed. Tipping Point attended a meeting and did a site review that the committee will assess.

Compliance

- **Fraud Investigations**

- **Leasing Operations** Repayment agreement payment totals YTD as of August 2020, \$47,346.32 collected. (\$376,228.00 has been collected to-date)
- **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for Vacated Arrears and Collection Loss as of August 2020: \$11,952.22 collected. A total of \$39,134.89 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 – 1,062 – 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 and I serve as RHA's ex-officio representative on the RHC Board of Directors**
 - Mrs. Herriott is currently working with RHC to confirm what current debts RHC owes to RHA and ensure they are recorded in the RHC budget. We continue to manage this process.
- **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.
- **Public Safety** –Activity Chart for Public Safety was present. The targeted problem strategy appears to be having an impact.
 - **Current Actions:**
 - Conduct Violations - Violation letters have been mailed to tenants that do not comply with the restricted visitation protocol. I sign letters personally as a special Covid-19 strategy response.
 - 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.
 - We have reviewed the COVID Security Plan and will adjust hours as a part of our re-opening plan.

7. Finance

Sinclair Carrington

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

8. Public Housing Report

Cynthia Herriott

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. The Board has been advised of this change.

Public Housing Matters:

COVID Matters:

- We entered Phase 2 of our COVID safety plan on August 10. Restricted visitation continues and daily sanitizing of all common areas, elevators, and doorknobs, continues as well.
- 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. Currently, I am working with the building managers to roll out a re-opening plan for visitation and our Community Rooms.
 - Kennedy Tower – all units will have new cabinets 9th floor is being cleared out for the contractor to start.
 - Residents – Family Self Sufficiency in partnership with Lifespan, Foodlink, UnitedWay, and our Resident Council members are delivering food to those seniors in need.
 - Disinfection of the main lobby areas, elevators, door handles are being done daily.
- 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.
- Payments for rental space involving Enriched Housing will be late for this month due to a new payment system they are utilizing. They have assured me it has been rectified.

- Evictions are on hold. We are working with the Public Housing Attorney to develop a plan for restarting this process. The process is supposed to start in October.
- The Housing Court Committee that I sit on announced a special court that will handle the influx expected.
- The Agency Plan will be presented to the Board and the JWRC for the 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 the unit as applicant walks through unit). This will meet our COVID re-opening requirements. IT is working with Public Housing on this process.
- The current slow Postal Service mail system is impacting the recertification process. Tenants are reporting that it's taking two weeks to get mail sent by RHA.

Security Matters:

- Security has become an issue again in the parking lots of Glenwood Garden. Security has been directed to assign a special attention detail.

Online Applications:

- Per APC, 1 and 2 bedrooms on the waiting lists will close as of 9/21/20. They will provide notice to the public via Facebook and the Rochester Housing Authority website beginning 9/14/20.
- To address the high number of high-rise vacancies, APC has begun canvassing the one-bedroom waiting list. We will continue to do so until all the high-rise units are occupied.

9. 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.

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 3,557 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 94.30%.

The monthly inspection average is 780 - 960. During August 2020, the total number of inspections was 358. 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. For 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.

11. 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. Watrous entered the FSS program on July 1, 2017, with employment and credit restoration goals. Ms. Watrous maintained her full-time employment with Maximus Services LLC and increased her credit score by 131 points. In addition to her goals, Ms. Watrous closed on her home at 236 Belknap Street on June 25, 2020. Ms. Watrous is a successful graduate of the FSS Program and entitled to receive \$8269.11 in escrow savings.
- Ms. Knight entered the FSS program on December 1, 2015, with a full-time employment goal. Ms. Knight obtained employment with Rochester Regional Health and increased her income by 443%. Ms. Knight is a successful graduate of the FSS Program and entitled to receive \$15843.60 in escrow savings.

RHA collaborated with the City of Rochester and the US Census Bureau to host census completion events at the High-rise sites and Resident Services from September 21-25.

RHA currently has 22 businesses on the RHA Section 3 Registry.

RHA has four families with anticipated closings and 15 families who have been approved for financing and searching for homes.

12. Planning Committee Report

Shawn Burr

The Planning Committee meeting was held on 9/9/2020. 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. Harriet Tubman Window Replacement – installation is 100% complete.
2. Scattered Sites Roof Replacement R-17- 80% of the work has been completed.
3. Kennedy Tower Hallway and unit Rehab – work has resumed, 15% completed, with a COVID-19 safety plan in place.
4. Lena Gantt Estates - sidewalk and paving project on schedule and 60% complete.
5. Lake Tower Façade Repair – project underway and on schedule
6. Seneca Manor Weatherization Project – getting preparations done to resume work
7. Bay/Zimmer Boiler Replacement – project getting underway

Mr. Burr reported that the current status of the CFP Budgets as of August 30, 2020, are the 501.18 budget is 100% obligated and 51% expended, and 501.19 is 43% obligated and 2% expended. RHF Funds grants as of June 30, 2020, are: 502.13 is 24% 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. The Edinburgh Street testing is done for Regulated Building Materials; if any are found, it would be an abatement prior to demolition. The trees on the property are being addressed.

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

13. Commissioner Comments

Board Chair Edwards requested a motion to go into Executive Session for a legal and personnel matter. Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded a motion to go into Executive Session at 2:25 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

Board Chair Edwards requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Larson moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 3:20 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Patterson, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Edwards voted yes. The motion was passed.

14. October Regular Board Meeting-

The September Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, October 21, 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 Remarais moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded a motion to end the Board Meeting at 3:21 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