

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

*June 24, 2020
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**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
June 24, 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
Linda Stango
Amit Sud
Evhen Tupis

OTHERS PRESENT

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel
Joyce Ramirez, Tipping Point Communications

Commissioner Tynise Edwards called the June Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:03 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. NYS PHADA 2020 Scholarship Recipient – **Melissa Berrien**

Raeona Hampton is a dedicated member of the Rochester Housing Authority community, who is an exemplary example to her peers, excelling academically while being employed part-time. As a student, Raeona has received various academic honors, including several Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, National Honor Society, Urban League Black Scholar, Top 25 Senior Scholars, and New England Young Writers Conference Award. Raeona supports the community by volunteering at Foodlink and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and supports her fellow classmates by participating in the Prom committee. Raeona's academic achievements and spirit of volunteerism are mirrored in her dedication to service in her employment. Working part-time at Footlocker and the Rochester Public Library, she offers a positive attitude while striving for excellence. Raeona is very grateful for her scholarship and thanked everyone. She will be attending Howard University this fall and the Board members congratulated her. The Board praised her for her accomplishments and asked that she stay in contact.

3. Approval of Minutes: May 2020 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

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

4. 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! The Directors are currently working on the "Re-Opening Plan" and have formed a committee. Phase 1 is under way and Phase 2 to begin in July.

Mr. Burr shared that we have had a few positive things happen; RHA has been awarded up to \$500K from the NYS Preservation Opportunity Program grant, Trillium is providing COVID-19 testing for our residents, one of RHA successful homeowners was interviewed by Channel 8 News resulting in a positive newsstory, along with the "reopening" of RHA and NYS. Other Great news!! The COVID-19 testing that Trillium conducted at Danforth, was a big success. Staff did a nice job of getting things ready and assisting with facilitating the process of residents getting registered and out to the Mobile Access Clinic (MAC), which has two treatment rooms with one being ADA accessible via a lift. On 6/18/20, they performed 36 COVID-19 tests, which is a record for them. Most residents had called ahead to schedule an appointment, and Trillium was

able to assist several walk-ins as well. Test results have been taking several days, but they are seeing quicker returns as of late. We will move to Glenwood and will be conducting a dry run there on Tuesday, 6/23. We will most likely move to Lake Tower next and will be working on a longer-range schedule. After the COVID testing initiative is complete, we may be able to partner with Trillium to have their MAC unit visit our sites on a regular basis to perform primary care services for residents, including flu shots.

Mr. Burr shared that a "Reopening Committee" has been formed, which has been very busy developing plans for RHA to "reopen." The plan encompasses phasing employees back into the offices in three phases of 2-3 weeks each, beginning on 6/17. We have increased staff hours in the office, and some employees who were working from home are now back in the office. We've analyzed workspace layouts to ensure we can maintain proper social distancing, and adequate PPE supplies are in place. We implemented "shifts" to help keep face to face contact to a minimum. We will be evaluating the process on a weekly basis with the current phases. Kudos to Shawanna for taking the lead on this as she has put in countless hours, not only organizing the plans, but also attending webinars, meetings, and calls to gather best practices.

Mr. Burr reported last month that he was elected to the NYSPHADA Board of Directors. His first official board meeting will be on 6/26/20. With the Governor's Executive Order declaring Juneteenth (June 19) as a NYS holiday for State workers, NYSPHADA sent a request out to members wanting to know how Housing Authorities may be planning to handle this and/or if they are also declaring it a paid holiday for staff. He would like to further discussion with Board in Executive Session if the Board is agreeable. The Governor stated that he will propose legislation to make Juneteenth a permanent State Holiday, and NYSPHADA will be supporting that with our advocacy efforts.

Mr. Burr included the most recent PIH Notices that HUD has issued, these are updated from last month HUD has agreed that the funding eligibility period is now 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 team that will be meeting to discuss the eligible uses has a meeting scheduled for on or about 6/25/20. This will be a great opportunity to get creative with this funding in providing much needed resources for our residents and participants.

Mr. Burr reported that NAHRO Take Action: Support Housing in COVID-19 Legislation and help NAHRO send 2,000 letters to Congress and the White House by July 1 and support additional emergency resources for Public Housing Authorities-contact your lawmakers today to tell them to include housing and community development programs in the next COVID-19 emergency legislation. Since the CARES Act was signed into law in late March, Congress has debated the next COVID-19 emergency legislation. The House approved the HEROES Act in May, which contained over \$6 billion in funding for programs administered by Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), but the Senate has not yet taken action on a bill. Visit NAHRO's Advocacy Action Center or use NAHRO's Advocacy mobile app to send letters to your legislators and the White House now.

For those of you who were on the National Low Income Housing Coalition call with Senator Schumer, you may recall him urging folks to contact their elected officials about this.