

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
February 24, 2021  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Rosalie Remarais, Acting Chairperson  
Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner  
Duwaine T. Bascoe, Commissioner  
Joanne Larson, Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT**

Melissa Berrien  
Shawn Burr  
Sinclair Carrington  
Diana Colon  
Jacquetta Harris  
Joyce Kinsey  
Shawanna Lawrence  
Mark Plantholt  
Mariam Rodriguez-  
Machuca  
Evhen Tupis

**OTHERS PRESENT**

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel  
Julie Panna, Tipping Point Communications

Commissioner Rosalie Remarais called the February 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. Approval of Minutes: January 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Larson seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the January 2021 Regular Board Meeting. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Remarais, and Commissioner Larson voted yes. The motion passed three to zero

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

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

Mr. Burr would like **CONTINUE** to recognize Staff across the Authority who continue to go above and beyond to ensure our quality services are performed and resident and participant needs are taken care of especially during this pandemic! They are doing a remarkable job! Efforts are being made in the planning and execution of when we reopen. Procurement and Maintenance are helping greatly.

Mr. Burr shared that as the pandemic continues, we all need to remain diligent in maintaining each other's safety. RHA continues to monitor and adhere to new regulations and Executive Orders as we receive them. Mark and staff are testing the new sanitizing system he sent info to you about. Visitor restrictions, COVID questionnaires, and temperature checks continue for all visitors. Temperature kiosks for staff and visitors are moving forward with implementation. The Executive Team monitors current conditions daily and meets weekly to discuss our processes.

Mr. Burr shared that we have weekly meetings with our NYS POP grant consultant to move the grant forward. We are meeting with our City of Rochester partners on 2/18/21 to update on progress, strategies and target area. We will continue to update at the Project Planning meeting.

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

Mr. Burr reported we have met with Common Ground Health and others o developing a plan for providing vaccinations for our eligible residents. Todd Bullard, Commissioner Remarais and Mr. Burr continue to move this forward.

Mr. Burr reported that staff continue to be involved in several community projects and 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. He really appreciate their efforts in representing RHA on critical projects in our community and their extra efforts are commendable.

Mr. Burr reported that RHA participated in the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge. This initiative proved to be a powerful opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of how inequity and racism affect our lives and community. It's imperative we continue to improve our community and ourselves in our commitment to implement antiracist practice. We will continue to hold meetings with staff to further RHA's commitment and I'm looking into procuring a consultant to provide staff training.

Mr. Burr reported that he is participating on the West Main Steering Committee as planning takes place on the redevelopment of the "Bull's Head" neighborhood. We will be creating an actionable vision for West Main St that reflects a revived multimodal, economic, and cultural corridor. This study will create a roadmap for making investments and changes to the neighborhood, street, and streetscape design.

Mr. Burr reported on an update from NYSPHAD: they continue to put on ED forums for ED's and staff to discuss various topics and conduct trainings and info sessions. The Board meeting was held on 2/19/21 and we are working on a virtual Spring conference

to be held in late May-early June. More info to come on that as sessions and trainings are identified. I am on the By-Laws Committee and we have been working on a couple revisions. The Legislative Committee continues to work hard on advocating at the State level for funding for PHA's, especially upstate

**Mr. Burr reported on Emergency Housing Vouchers, Other Housing Relief Proposed by House Committee:**

The Financial Services Committee was in the process of considering and approving their section of COVID-19 relief as the Monitor went to print. Visit the NAHRO website for information on the vote and any amendments following the conclusion of the mark-up. On Feb. 5, the House Financial Services Committee unveiled its proposal for COVID-19 relief, including \$5 billion for emergency vouchers and \$19 billion in additional funding for the Emergency Rental Assistance program. The committee will consider the proposal later this week. The Financial Services proposal is part of a broader COVID-19 emergency relief package that is being moved through Congress using a procedural method called budget reconciliation. This process allows legislation to pass the Senate by a simple majority. The Financial Services Committee will vote on its proposal on Wednesday, and eventually will be packaged together with other sections approved by other House committees. Once the package is approved by the House, it will move to the Senate for consideration. Democratic leadership is aiming to finalize a bill by mid-March when unemployment benefits approved late last year are set to expire. The proposed package operationalizes the concept of transitional voucher assistance (i.e., sunseting housing choice vouchers) that was endorsed by NAHRO in its document "What Happens Next: Housing Beyond the Pandemic" and by a joint industry group letter that NAHRO signed. Emergency Housing Vouchers The COVID relief package allocates \$5 billion for FY 2021 that can be used for the following: 1. New emergency vouchers; 2. Renewals of emergency vouchers; 3. Administrative fees for emergency vouchers and other eligible expenses "to prevent, prepare, and respond to coronavirus to facilitate the leasing of the emergency vouchers, such as security deposit assistance and other costs related to retention and support of participating owners" 4. Adjustments to the calendar year 2021 section 8 renewal funding allocation for PHAs that experience a higher per-unit-cost (PUC) or that "despite taking reasonable cost-savings measures, would . . . be required to terminate rental assistance for families" (i.e., PHAs that experience shortfall) Eligibility Individuals that qualify for these emergency vouchers include people who are homeless, people who are at risk of homelessness, people who are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or people who are recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or have a high-risk of housing instability. Allocation The Department will notify PHAs of the number of emergency vouchers they will be provided within 60 days of passage of the act. The vouchers will be allocated according to a formula that includes PHA capacity and ensures geographic diversity (including rural areas) among agencies with voucher programs. If a PHA fails to utilize the vouchers within a reasonable period of time, HUD may recapture and redistribute any unleased vouchers and associated administrative fees to other PHAs according to the formula. Waivers Any provision of any statute or regulation (except those related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment) used to administer these funds shall be

waived upon a finding that the waivers or alternative requirements are necessary to expedite the use of the funds. Voucher Sunsetting After Sept. 20, 2021, a PHA may not reissue any emergency vouchers when a family's assistance ends. Technical Assistance and Other Costs The Department may not use more than \$20 million of the amounts made available for the costs of HUD administering and overseeing the program, including information technology, financial reporting, and other costs. The Department may not use more than \$10 million without competition to make new awards or increase prior awards to existing technical assistance providers to provide an immediate increase in capacity building and technical assistance to PHAs. Implementation by Notice These provisions may be implemented by HUD by notice. Emergency Rental Assistance Program The COVID relief package allocates \$19.05 billion to the Emergency Rental Assistance program. The package includes several changes to the Emergency Rental Assistance program, which was created in the December COVID relief bill. Changes include allowing households to receive assistance for up to 18 months; extending the deadline to spend funds to September 2025; and extending eligibility to cover households experiencing financial hardship during or due to the pandemic. The new COVID relief package also does not include the language allowing restricting the landlord's ability to evict and the language restricting duplication of federal benefits. NAHRO will provide additional information on how this will affect the Emergency Rental Assistance Program as we have it. The package would provide \$100 million for emergency rental assistance funds for rural households living in properties financed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and \$750 million to tribal nations through HUD's native housing programs. Other Funding The package also provides \$5 billion to address the immediate need for supportive services and rental assistance to people experiencing homelessness. These funds can also be used to develop or convert properties into non-congregate housing, permanent supportive housing, and other longer-term housing solutions. The package would also allocate \$9.96 billion to support homeowners a risk of foreclosure and \$100 million for housing counseling.

**b. Board Action Requests**

- i. Marshal Services– Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to award the contract renewal to Joseph Polizzi – City Marchal for \$24,000, with two additional renewals – Public Housing

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

- ii. Legal Services related to Landlord's – Authorized the Deputy Executive Director to award the contract renewal (year 3) to Ernest D. Santoro, ESQ., P.C. for \$24,500.00 with one additional year of renewal – Public Housing

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

- iii. Turn-Key replacement of all the emergency generator for Kennedy Tower- Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award a contract to Concord Electric Corp. for \$132,000.00 (on-time) – Capital Projects

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

- iv. Deister Key Management Upgrades – Authorize the Deputy Executive Director to award the contract to Deister Electronics USA, Inc. for \$34,424.95 (on-time) - Capital Projects

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

- v. Proposal for Project Based Vouchers to authorize the Deputy Executive Director to approve to solicit proposals for 200 Project Based Vouchers for a 2 year term – Leasing Operations

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

- vi. 2021 Renewal of Audit Services – Sickler, Torchia, Aleen, & Churchill to authorize the Deputy Executive Director to approve the final contract renewal for \$41,500 (final) - Finance

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

- vii. MRI/CallMax product subscription – Authorize Deputy Executive Director to award MRI Stofware a 1 year contract for \$21,999.12 (yearly service fee) – Information Techenology

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

- viii. Development Agreement – Authorize Deputy Executive Director to to enter into a development agreement with Edgemere Development, Inc. and Home Leasing for the Fernwood Development Project– Capital Projects

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

- ix. Renewal of the Payroll Service – Authorize Deputy Executive Director to renew the contract with ADP for year 4 of 5 for \$36,000.00 – Human Resources

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

- x. Contingency Increase – Authorize Deputy Executive Director to increase the contingency amount form 20% to 35% for the Kennedy Tower Corridor and Resident Units Upgrades to \$370,522.60

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

- xi. Resolution 02.24.21.01 to Authorize Deputy Executive Director to submit a RAD application for Parliament Arms Apartments and Fairfield Village (Luther Circle)

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

**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.

**Updates**

**Recent Trainings- February 2021**

**ADP Time & Attendance Management Training**

This training provided an overview of time & attendance responsibilities in our HRIS for new and existing managers. The training focused on what the supervisor's role is regarding time & attendance responsibilities in the system. Managers received hands-on training with approving associate's timecards, editing timecards approving/denying time off requests, timecard exceptions, and creating reports.

**Recruitment Information- February 2021**

(1) Position- Clerk III/Typing – Public Housing Department started on 2/8/2021

(1) Position- Housing Specialist- Leasing Operations Department starting on 2/8/2021

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

Shawn Burr

Inclusion

- Covid Strategy – We continue to work with community partners to facilitate addressing resident needs around testing and education. The COVID testing and primary care services are taking place at most of RHA's senior sites with Trillium's mobile unit. Trillium has now added telehealth services being available for residents and we are working on adding to our MOU. A regular schedule has been established and posted at our sites. We have had discussions with URMC and Unity about medical, dental, behavior health, eye care services, and telehealth services for our residents. Discussions are ongoing to work out logistics and develop MOU agreements.
- We are working with Trillium and CommonGround Health along with Enriched Housing to obtain vaccinations for our residents. Some have been able to receive the left over vaccines from Enriched Housing scheduled clinics. Notices and a survey are going out this week.
- There is some monies coming to the City to assist tenant who are behind in their rent. We will be notifying residents when the information becomes available on how to apply for the funds.

Compliance

- **Fraud Investigations**
  - **Leasing Operations** - Repayment agreement payment totals YTD as of January 2021, \$7,194 collected. (\$403,735.98 has been collected to-date)
  - **Public Housing** - Repayment agreement totals YTD for Vacated Arrears and Collection Loss as of January 2021: \$1,192.54 collected. A total of \$42,421.43 collected to-date (since 2017)
- **Termination Hearings**
  - We have upgraded our process to be able to conduct hearings remotely.
  - Public Housing Virtual Hearings are set to begin in the month of March.
  - **Leasing Operations** – 10 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 3 upheld; 1 overturned, 2 re-instated & 3 adjourned & 1 withdrawn.
  - **Public Housing** – 0 Participant Grievance Hearings Scheduled: 0 upheld; 0 overturned, 0 reinstated & 0 adjourned.

Operations

- **Case Management** –
  - Program Violation Referrals Outstanding – 1,128 – which is a total to date. We have a staff member working on addressing violations and getting them up to date. I have detailed information that can be shared in the executive session
  - **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 has completed the 2021 Audit Schedule and began performing audits in the month of January (Leasing Operations Department on Admin Fees)
- **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 residents that do not comply with the restricted visitation protocol.
- Security Camera Project – I am working with IT and Procurement to restart the vendor process. An RFP may be needed for the RHA-wide project, but we are getting quotes for two sites that need to be addressed asap – Glenwood and HRT. Those quotes are due by 3/1/21. We have a lot of information gathered and an Authority wide scope of work to proceed with.
- We re-established the additional Covid-19 security coverage. Security coverage is 24/7 at all sites and a COVID questionnaire has been developed and each visitor is required to complete and sign it before visiting a resident. Temperature checks are also implemented for visitors.
- Glenwood has seen an increase in criminal activity as reported by residents. We are working on a perimeter access control project as reported in the Project Planning meetings. We are working with Commissioner Norm Jones on this and improving lighting from the City around this site. We assessed our lighting to see if improvements can be made. We did replace all the exterior lighting fixtures with LED type in 2019. The security camera project is moving forward with this site as a priority one. It is currently out for bid. Bids are due back by 3/1/2021. I've had conversations with RPD and AP Security and we will continue to work together to address issues and improve communications. We are currently in a design phase and is going to the City Planning Department for review. Our property manager, Harolda Wilcox is working on scheduling a virtual meeting with residents.
- Update: We began additional security at Glenwood Gardens which began on January 31, 2021, and will continue through April 3, 2021. We will have 24/7 Road Patrol conduct tours of the site at least twice throughout each shift. Security will pay close attention to laundry rooms and walkthrough areas as they are hot spots for criminal activities. AP Security will monitor the activity and provide updates and feedback to me. There was a meeting to review the current situation with PH Management, County and City Representatives on 2/3/21. The perimeter access project is going to the City Planning dept for their review and comment. We will be adding two site lights at the complex and replacing unit exterior lights with LED fixtures. RPD has provided us with informational materials to send to the residents. We will also be sending an update on the projects we are working on at the site.

**6. Finance**

**Sinclair Carrington**

Mr. Carrington reported the monthly Finance Report, the actual vs. budgeted figures and variances for year-to-date through December 2020 for the COCC, Public Housing, and Section 8 income and expenses.

Mr. Carrington also reported on the COVID-19 CARES Funding income and expenses for year-to-date through January 31, 2021, and also reported on the projected ways of spending the remaining \$3.1 million of the HCV Cares Funding.

**7. 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. The Civil Service test was given in December and we'll await the results before hiring

**Public Housing Matters:**

- Staff developed a draft policy and procedure for deceased residents is currently under review.
- Staff developed a draft Standard Operating Procedure for deceased residents that is currently under my review.
- Staff created a new Parking Violation Procedure which was implemented on January 29, 2021. Security continues to monitor any parking violations and they are being followed up through the Management Office.
- "Hearings" Standard Operating Procedure has been updated to include remote hearings and its under my review.
- There are several open positions in Public Housing currently. Due to the number of vacancies and the length of the vacancies it continues to take a toll on the current employees. Open staff positions listed below:
  - Public Housing Director: 8/14/2020
  - Central Zone: Two Clerks: 86 Vienna vacated on 9/1/20 (new hire starts 2/8/21), LT vacated on 3/1/18
  - South Zone: One Housing Specialist vacated on 10/30/2020
  - Scattered Sites: One Housing Specialist: vacated 10/07/20, One Clerk: vacated 07/01/20, BMS: vacated 04/15/2019
  - APC: Two Housing Specialists – vacated on 2/7/20 and 7/31/20

**COVID Matters:**

- Building Security – RHA properties continue with the protocol of restricted visitation to minimize the COVID virus impact. COVID questionnaires have been

put in place for each essential visitor to fill out and sign. Guards are also performing temperature checks. 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 when conditions permit and it is safe to do so. At this time, all visitor restrictions and the closure of community rooms remain in effect. Resident notices were delivered before the Holidays, reminding of current restrictions and safe practices and informing of Re-opening only when it is safe to do so.

- 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 is still being done twice daily.
  - Community rooms have been secured.
  - Essential visitor procedure is in place with security and staff increasing presence at the sites to control entry. The essential visitors to enter must be listed, complete the screening form, and perform a temperature check.
- Some staff has 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 another reminder notice to residents has gone out. I am working closely with management and legal to develop a temporary process for serving 14-Day Notices when the court reopens.
  - Evictions are still on hold. We met last week with legal counsel to ensure we are up to date on the local court situation. We have a plan for restarting this process once we can secure court dates. Property Managers are currently mailing out the Covid-19 New York State Declaration Notice along with a Temporary Moratorium Letter on Eviction Filing informing residents on the current status of eviction filing through the court systems. The forms will be sent in English and Spanish.
  - 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 the unit as the applicant walks through the unit). This will meet our COVID reopening requirements.
  - We have re-established the additional Covid-19 security coverage. Security coverage is again 24/7 at all sites.
  - HUD has granted RHA an extension to submit the Agency Plan. Your feedback is welcomed. The Plan is currently out for the 45-day Public Comment period.

**Security Matters:**

- Glenwood Gardens Security Issue: We began additional security at Glenwood Gardens which began on January 31, 2021, and will continue through April 3, 2021. We will have 24/7 Road Patrol conduct tours of the site at least twice throughout each shift. AP Security will monitor the activity and provide updates and feedback to me. There is a meeting scheduled to review the current situation with PH Management, County and City Representatives.

**Online Applications:**

- The Online application process is working well.
- To address the high number of high-rise vacancies, APC continues to canvas the 1 bedroom waiting list. Based on the low responses to past canvases, we have increased the number of applicants we are canvassing to 200 per month.
  - Currently being screened- 41 applications
  - Currently going through the intake process (with the Intake Specialist) – 35 applications
- APC is currently operating with 50% staffing. 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:

- **Vacant Unit Report**
  - The completed units are listed on the report.
- **Laundry Room Improvements**
  - Meeting with contractor is on hold.
- **Staffing**
  - Interviewed two good candidates for the Scattered Sites BMS and one for the Laborer position. May also have another applicant to interview with some mechanical skills applying for a Laborer position
- **Open Work Orders**
  - As of 12/17/2020 Maintenance is doing only emergency and safety related Work Orders.
  - Dispatch is questioning all callers about COVID symptoms before assigning the work order.
  - Open Work Orders as of 1/27/2021 – Authority wide 819, HVAC 11, Electric 55 – total open work orders are 877.
- **COVID Sanitizing**
  - The sanitizing equipment and solutions were delivered. Training will start the week of 2/22 to 2/26 depending on how that goes then the roll-out trial at Lake Tower. Will have a communication plan and timeline for tenants and staff.

- The Section 3 and MWBE contractors will be extended into March 2021. These will be coordinated with the start-up of the Purus system.

- **Request for Proposals**

- Action item update - 2021 Turf Mowing and Landscaping services Request for Proposals will be posted on the RHA website on 2/22/2021 and responses are due back on 3/17/2021. Will present the results of the bid at the April PH Committee and Board meetings for your review and approval.
- 2021 Compactor Replacement Project – This is the replacement of the four (4) original tower compactors and dumpsters. Walk through on 2/17/2021 and bid responses are due back on 3/2/2021. I hope to present the results at the March PH Committee and Board for review and approval if possible. If not, it will be the April meetings. Pictures are included.

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

**Jacquetta Harris**

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

1. Staff developed a draft proposal for Administrative Language changes. The proposed changes are submitted to our Compliance Department, LawNY, Executive Staff, and Partners Ending Homelessness for review. Once feedback is received it will be posted for 45-day public comment and then a virtual public hearing will be held.
2. Currently, we have 3,557 applicants on the Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List. We have 9 applicants in the ready drawer.
3. Our voucher or funding utilization goal is 98% or above. At the end of January 2021, we were at 92.58% utilization of vouchers and 97.8% utilization of funds. Leasing Operations Department has a Leasing Plan for 2021 to fully maximize HUD funding for Housing Assistance Payments. To best optimize our Housing Choice Vouchers, we plan to issue 600-750 HCV from the Waiting List by 9/30/2021. This outcome is determined from Leasing Operations Management Planning meeting in October 2020 with Nan McKay and monthly reviews with HUD's Two-Year-Tool. Our Eligibility Unit (that issues vouchers) staffing is currently at 50% because two Housing Specialist positions are vacant. Another Housing Specialist was out for 2 months, they are back and getting caught up with tasks. To date, we have identified and completed 3 of 4 Saturdays to conduct overtime just for pre-eligibility appointments for voucher issuance. Due to the volume of vouchers that we need to issue, we are investigating using a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor to support our leasing plan. The vendor would perform the main task of interviewing HCV applicants for eligibility for HCV Program, collect the documents, and once it has been identified that they are eligible, RHA would issue the voucher. If the applicant is not eligible, RHA would be informed and would notify the applicant. This would help ensure that we meet our leasing plan goal for 2021.
4. The monthly inspection goal is 780-960. The Inspection Unit conducted 921 inspections for January.

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

6. Committee updates:

**Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative Update**

Legislation passed on Driver's License Suspension

- End suspension for unpaid traffic tickets
- Require payment plans be implemented within 180 days of signature (2% monthly income or \$25/month, whichever is greater)
- Require additional notice before suspensions for not appearing

Considering focusing on \$15-hour minimum wage increase

- Reviewing housing initiatives/programs in relation to this goal.
- People might be able to cover rent; but may still need support.
- Utilities are an expense on top of rent. Is there something we can do to reduce the utility burden?
- \$15/hour puts homeownership within reach – approximate purchase price is 3X annual income (in theory...about \$90K available purchase price.
- \$15/hour can be a benchmark for wage structure to go up.
- If we increase wages, need to increase social service rate; need to also control rent costs from going up.

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

**Melissa Berrien**

**Grant Awards**

- U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Ben Carson awarded approximately \$78 million to hundreds of public housing authorities across the country to help residents of public housing and voucher-assisted housing increase their earned income and reduce their dependency on public assistance and rental subsidies.
- RHA was awarded \$200,877 which funds Human Service Specialist who work directly with participating FSS families assisting them in finding jobs, increasing earned income, reducing or eliminating the need for rental and/or welfare assistance, and making progress toward achieving economic independence and self-sufficiency.

**Participant Highlights**

**We have 243 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:**

- Mr. Abdulkadir entered the FSS program on April 1, 2019, with employment and homeownership goals. Mr. Abdulkadir has maintained employment and closed on his home at 415 Magnolia Street on October 15, 2020. Mr. Abdulkadir is a successful graduate of the FSS Program.
- Ms. Burgos entered the FSS program on April 1, 2019, with employment and credit restoration and pre-homeownership goals. Ms. Burgos maintained

employment and increased her income by 175% percent making her no longer eligible for housing assistance. Ms. Burgos is a successful graduate of the FSS Program.

- Ms. Beltran entered the FSS program on July 1, 2019, with employment and education goals. Ms. Beltran maintained employment and increased her income by 208% percent making her no longer eligible for housing assistance. Ms. Beltran is a successful graduate of the FSS Program.

### **Section 3**

- Monthly Report (see attached)
- We currently have 19 businesses on the RHA Section 3 Registry
- Section 3 Final Rule has significant changes.

### **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.
- Action for a Better Community (ABC) – Benefits Cliff Project - We are participating on a community wide initiative led by ABC to create a tool that will help individuals receiving public assistance to understand and mitigate benefit cliffs and their impacts
- We are in talks with URMC and Unity Health systems to create a partnership that will increase access to healthcare for residents and participants
- Eviction Prevention Study - RHA is collaborating with the City of Rochester, FEC and Harvard University to evaluate the impact of FEC programming on eviction outcomes for RHA residents and the effectiveness of different Marketing tools.
- Afterschool Program Initiative - Collaborative initiative with ROC the Future (RTF), Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA) and the Community Foundation to implementing after- school engagement opportunities for residents.
- Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) Hosts a Child Care Resource Fair on Saturday, March 6, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. - a virtual fair on various childcare resources available in Monroe County

### **Homeownership**

- Ms. Orum closed on her home at 308 Winchester Street on January 5, 2021.
- We have 5 families with anticipated closings and 13 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 2/10/2020 and began with our follow up items from the previous meeting, began with our follow up item from the previous meeting, which is underway. Julie has scheduled site visits to Kennedy Tower for the Board.

- We had one action item for this meeting that were presented, questions asked and answered. The Committee agreed to move them to the Board meeting for approval.
- We had two action items for this meeting that were presented, questions asked and answered. The Committee agreed to move them to the Board meeting for approval.
- We continue to work with our internal team and the consultant team of D+B/Calogero on a preservation plan for a portion of the RHA Public Housing portfolio, as part of the New York State Preservation Opportunity Program (NYPOP) grant. We are also hiring a consultant through D&B/Calogero to provide NEPA reviews and RAD Physical Conditions Assessments on the identified PH properties. We received quotes from two firms and have met with the lowest fee firm. D&B/Calogero will work with them on establishing a contract. RHA will work with the firm to coordinate the PNA inspections. The fees for all of this work are covered by the grant. A follow up meeting with the City is scheduled on 2/18/21 to update on the progress.
- We continue to see a rise in costs associated with the pandemic. Material lead times have increased, material costs have gone up, and contractor overhead costs have also increased. As you know, contractors must have COVID-19 safety plans and procedures as part of the bid response which is reflected in higher bid amounts. Other PHA's I've spoken with are experiencing the same.
- We discussed the status of our current projects by having staff give updates and review progress pictures:
- We discussed the status of our current projects by having staff give updates and review progress pictures:
  1. RHA Office Site Upgrades – project is on schedule and 90% complete.
  2. Kennedy Tower Hallway and unit Rehab – 30% of the work has been completed. The contingency is getting used up on all the hidden unforeseen issues. We will be asking the Board for an increase at the Finance Committee meeting.
  3. Lena Gantt Estates- sidewalk and paving project on schedule and 99% complete.
  4. Lake Tower Façade Repair – 30% of the work is completed and is on schedule and will pick back up in the spring.
  5. Seneca Manor Weatherization Project – project getting back underway and 90% complete.
  6. Bay/Zimmer Boiler Replacement – project is complete.

Staff is ensuring that contractors are following the NYS COVID-19 Safety Guidelines that have been put in place.

- We presented the project summary report for the Bay-Zimmer Boiler Replacement project which was completed on schedule and a little over budget, with 51% of the contingency used.