

**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