

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
April 26, 2023
675 WEST MAIN STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



April 26, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rosalie Remarais, Chairperson
Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner, Vice Chair
Shanai T. Lee, Commissioner
Kabutey Ocansey, Commissioner
Henry Rubin, Commissioner
Willie Otis, Resident Commissioner
James Water, Jr. Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT

Melissa Berrien
Straudie Bryant
Shawn Burr
Marvel Carter-Shaw
Diana Colon
Robert Croston
Pierre Dorancy
Cynthia Herriott
Kimberly Huffman
Shawanna Lawrence
Daniel Long
Lynette McGee
Mariam Rodriguez –
Machuca
James Senger
Evhen Tupis
Harolda Wilcox

OTHERS PRESENT

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel
Amy Blum, Tipping Point Communications
Jeffrey Heller, Tipping Point Communications

Commissioner Rosalie Remarais called the April Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:06 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 - None

2. Approval of Minutes: March 21, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Otis moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion to approve the March 2023 Regular Board Meeting Minutes Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Ocansey, voted yes. The motion passed four to zero.

3. Director's Report and Board Approval Requests

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

Mr. Burr would like to



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 long-lasting pandemic! They really continue to do a remarkable job day in and day out!

Mr. Burr gave Kudos to the HR, Wellness Committee, and Diversity & Inclusion Committee teams for all their hard work informing staff and planning and facilitating staff functions that build morale and brings us all together. Great work!!!

Mr. Burr reported that the meeting with Mayor Evans went very well! Diana prepared an RHA development binder that had information on all our development projects and "Change the Face of Public Housing" projects. He was very engaged and impressed with our efforts and I made a point to state that we will be involved with the preservation of our public housing stock for the next 20 years.

Mr. Burr reported that on 4/19, I attended the Mayor's State of the City Address. It was very enlightening, and the future of Rochester is going to be full of Hope and Opportunity. RHA certainly plays a vital role in our community and provides valuable resources for residents. By increasing and improving collaborative efforts, our impact will improve.

Mr. Burr reported 117 Emergency Housing Vouchers by HUD as a result of the RESCUE Plan, 137 have been issued in accordance with the process we developed with the Continuum of Care. We have housed 107 applicants so far and 7 are searching for housing and 2 applicants have submitted paperwork. Several have found housing and contracts will be executed shortly. The RHA team continues to assist those looking for units. Still no word on HUD reallocating unused vouchers, but they are evaluating data from PHA's, and we'll see if they will expand the program.

Mr. Burr reported that the Community Choice Demonstration RHA Team is working diligently with families. We have randomly selected 1000+ qualifying families so far. 74 families have been enrolled and 38 have been randomly selected for services. I'm very proud of our dedicated team! NYS and Enterprise are partnering on a similar program

and have issued an RFP for funding. We are not eligible since we are participating in the HUD program.

Mr. Burr reported that Trillium's COVID testing/Primary Care services for our residents continue with February's schedule moving along. Property managers have been reminded to notify residents each month of the schedule. We will be continuing our partnership and expanding services where we can.

Mr. Burr stated he continues to recognize the extra efforts of staff involved in community projects. Partners Ending Homelessness, RMAPI Housing Working Group which will focus on our community's full housing system, Closing the Gaps Six City Cohort, Jordan Health Community Engagement Committee, Boy Scouts, City FEC Program Initiative, Connected Communities Housing Committee, Guardian Ad Litem Program, Private Sector Rental Market Study Working Group, Eviction Response Team, Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning and Benefits Cliff Project are a few that are in the works. I really appreciate their efforts in representing RHA on critical projects in our community and their extra efforts are commendable.

Mr. Burr shared that RMAPI's Steering Committee's next meeting will be on May 18th. On Thursday, May 4th, RMAPI is hosting a viewing of "Through the Night" which he is looking forward to attending.

Mr. Burr share that RHA along with our development partner submitted our NYSHCR LIHTC funding applications for the Fernwood project. We have submitted other applications and are working on additional funding applications for both projects as well.

Mr. Burr stated that our development projects are moving forward with the closing for Federal St-SS scheduled for 4/27. Parliament-Fairfield will most likely have a closing date in September/October of this year. We were not funded for Fernwood Phase I and will resubmit for the next round when it's announced.

Mr. Burr stated that Our Town Hall meeting was a big success! We received a lot of Strategic Goal input and interest from staff on working with the Goal Teams. Our summary of comments etc. will be issued shortly and meeting with new team members are being scheduled.

Mr. Burr gave an NYSPHADA Update: The Spring conference was a big success and we had 10 people from RHA attend. Two property managers attended the fair housing training and said it was very informative. The scholarship luncheon was awesome with our very own Daniel Shiferaw as the \$2500 scholarship recipient!! He was presented with a check for \$5000 which will end up being much more than that after all the donations are tallied up. Daniel is a very impressive young man who is all about giving back. He has an impressive resume already and is poised to go on to do great things. He will be attending RIT this Fall and we wish him all the very best! We are very proud of Daniel!! I'd like to acknowledge Lynette McGee, Marvel Carter-Shaw, and Straudie Bryant from our Resident Services department who went above and beyond to assist Daniel with

navigating through the scholarship process and working tirelessly to get him to the conference. So much so, that they were willing and ready to drive him there themselves!! Great job!!

HUD Publishes 2023 HCV Funding Notice

On April 4, HUD published a notice titled “[Implementation of the Federal Fiscal Year \(FFY\) 2023 Funding Provisions for the Housing Choice Voucher Program](#).” This notice details the process by which HUD will implement and allocate funding from the 2023 appropriations bill for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. One change from prior implementing notices is that set-aside applications for additional funding must be accepted through DocuSign. The notice describes several aspects of the HCV portion of the appropriations act, including how renewal funding is calculated (using the same renewal formula that has been in use for the last several years). Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs) The notice notes that the act provides \$337 million for TPVs. Of that amount, \$5 million is set aside for TPVs to certain households in low-vacancy areas. It also describes the process by which TPVs may be requested. The Department notes that HUD will provide TPVs for vacant units that were occupied within the previous 24 months, though HUD reserves the right to suspend that policy. Administrative Fees The notice states that the appropriations act provides approximately \$2,778 million for administrative expenses. Of that amount, \$30 million will be made available for special administrative fees. The notice details the procedures to apply for blended administrative fees and higher administrative fees.

- Blended Administrative Fees (Application Deadline – July 14, 2023) – these fees are for housing agencies serving multiple administrative fee areas based on the location of their assisted units.
- Higher Administrative Fee Rates (Application Deadline – July 14, 2023) – these fees are for housing agencies that serve two or more counties, though the PHA will be required to submit evidence of actual costs at the end of the calendar year (CY) to determine if the approved increase was needed.
- Special administrative fees are also available for the following reasons:
 - o HCV Homeownership Fees – HUD provides a \$200 fee for every homeownership closing.
 - Special Fees for PHAs that Administer TPVs in Connection with Multifamily Housing Conversion Actions.
 - Special Fees for Portability – PHAs must have been administering enough port-in vouchers to equal 20% or more of the total number of leased vouchers.
 - Special Fees for Audit Costs for Declaring Major HCV Programs per Notice 2021-08, and for HCV Voluntary Transfers per PIH Notice 2018-12.
 - PIH Notice 2018-12, Section 6 (closing out or transferring HCVs); and
 - Special Fees Needed for Administration of Section 8 Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program. Special administrative fees may also be used for the following:

- Category 1 – HUD-VASH Special Fees.
- Category 2 – Family Unification Program Special Fees.
- Category 3 – Disaster Related Special Fees – Additional guidance on this will be provided in the future.
- Category 4 – Application for other Special Fees under The Secretary’s Discretion.
- Special Fees for SAFMR and SAFMR-Based Exception Payment Standards.
- Special Fees for New Incremental Vouchers – guidance for this category will be forthcoming; and
Planning for Housing Mobility-related Services – guidance for this category will be forthcoming.

HUD-VASH Funding

The notice states that the appropriations act provides approximately \$50 million for HUD-VASH funding. At least \$40 million will be used for new incremental vouchers, while up to \$10 million may be used for administrative fees. Additional guidance will be forthcoming.

Tribal HUD-VASH Renewals

The appropriations act provides up to \$7.5 million for HAP renewal and administrative fees for the Tribal HUD-VASH program. **Mainstream Vouchers**

The appropriations act provides approximately \$607 million for renewal funding and administrative fees for Mainstream vouchers. The act also provides up to \$10 million for set-aside funding:

- Category 1 – Prevention of Terminations Due to Insufficient Funding (shortfall); and
- Category 2 – Unforeseen Circumstances.

Family Unification Program (FUP)

The act provides \$30 million for the FUP program. Of this amount, \$25 million must be used for the foster youth to Independence (FYI) initiative, while \$5 million must be for FUP allocated through a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO). The Department will scrutinize the utilization of any non-competitive awards and recapture and reallocation of unused amounts. Guidance will be forthcoming.

New HCV Incremental Vouchers

The act provides \$50 million for new incremental vouchers. Additional guidance will be forthcoming.

Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Set-Aside

The appropriations act provides \$200 million in HAP set aside. Awards in this category may be reduced if PHAs have available reserves. The Department may prioritize funding for category 1. Applications must be completed using DocuSign. The set-aside categories are the following:

- Category 1 – Prevention of Terminations Due to Insufficient Funding (shortfall).
- Category 2a – Unforeseen Circumstances.
- Category 2b – Portability.
- Category 3a – PBVs.
- Category 3b – Moving to Work (MTW) New Cohorts.
- Category 4 – HUD-VASH.
- Category 5 – Lower-Than-Average-Leasing.
- Category 6 – Disaster; and
- Category 7 – Non-Life-Threatening Inspection Withheld Housing Assistance Payments.

b. Board Action Requests

- i. FY 2023 2nd Quarter Vacated Arrears Write-off - Authorized the Executive Director to approve the write-off of the Vacated Arrears in the amount of \$48,134.09 – Public Housing

Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Rubin seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Otis, and Commissioner Ocansey voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- ii. Asbestos abatement for unit 1117 Hudson Ridge Tower– Authorized the Executive Director to award the contract to AAC Contracting, LLC in the amount of \$26,780.00 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Oris seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Otis, and Commissioner Ocansey voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- iii. Chapter 4 – Local Preference – 4-II.B Selection Method – Authorized the Executive Director to revise the RHA ACOP Chapter -4-II.B – Public Housing

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Otis, and Commissioner Ocansey voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- iv. Chapter 12 – Transfer Policy – 12-II.B Emergency Transfers – Authorized the Executive Director to revise the RHA ACOP Chapter -12-II.B – Public Housing

Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Otis seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Otis, and Commissioner Ocansey voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- v. Chapter 13 – Chapter 13-III.C. OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS FOR TERMINATION [24 CFR 966.4(l)(2) and (5)(ii)(B)]-OVER INCOME Transfers -- Authorized the Executive Director to revise the RHA ACOP Chapter -13-III.C – Public Housing

Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Otis, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Ocansey voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

- vi. Chapter 17-III.Category V. No Trespass -- Authorized the Executive Director to revise the RHA ACOP Chapter -17- V – Public Housing

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Waters seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Otis, Commissioner Cummings, and Commissioner Ocansey voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

4. Human Resource Coordinator Report

Shawanna Lawrence

The Human Resource Department is continuing to: "Support our Employees to Enhance an Organizational Culture of Excellence" Please see the update below:

The HR department had a productive month in April 2023, focusing on critical activities such as recruitment and employee engagement. The department's efforts have resulted in the successful hiring of new employees and improved concentration on engagement.

Recruitment Strategies

Monroe Community College Job Fair – April 20, 2023
Employee Referral Program- Ongoing

Key Activities:

1. The Wellness Committee submitted its monthly newsletter to staff.
2. The employee experience is extremely important, so we continue to strive on creating a positive and engaging work environment. Some of the strategies for improving the

employee experience, including employee engagement initiatives, highlighting the benefits and perks we offer.

Events April 2023:

Easter Egg Hunt: Thursday, April 6, 2023

Gardening 101 with Cornell Cooperative: Thursday, April 13, 2023

Radio Social: Friday, April 21, 2023

Administrative Professionals Day: Wednesday, April 26, 2023

Employee Relaxation Day: Thursday, April 27, 2023.

Opportunities:

Talent Retention:

While we have successfully attracted new talent, we are also focused on retaining our existing talent.

HR checked in with four (3) new hires which is an important part of the onboarding process. These check-ins provide an opportunity for HR to assess the new hire's progress, address any concerns, and ensure a smooth transition into the company.

Updates April 2023:

We had two employees retire within the following years of service.

Interim Finance Director- 28 years

Purchaser – 20 years

Demographic Information:

I want to provide you with current demographic information for the Authority as of April 26, 2023. The breakdown of the demographic information for Employees and Managers in the following categories are (1) the age of Employees, (2) Employees over 40, (3) Employees' Self-Reported Ethnicity, and (4) Employees by gender.

Conclusion:

Human Resources will continue to focus on these critical areas and address challenges and opportunities to support the organization's goals and objectives.

5. **Compliance, Inclusion, and Diversity Officer's Report** **Cynthia Herriott**

Inclusion

- COVID Strategy – We continue to work with community partners to facilitate addressing resident needs around vaccinations, testing, and education.
- Language Access Plan- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is working on a Language Access Plan to adopt new procedures and to work with community organizations and Language Access Liaisons to identify opportunities to enhance RHA services. The plan draft has been provided to the board and senior staff as an FYI. No action is necessary, but feedback is welcome.
- Guardian Ad Litem Program - C. Herriott is chairing the Monroe County Court Housing Court Subcommittee to implement a guardian protocol for participants with behavioral health issues. She is going to meet with the Rochester Police Department, Law NY, and Councilmember Patterson to further discuss this project.
- On-Site Mini Libraries- The Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee is in the early stages of developing the On-Site Mini Libraries – Reading Education Program for Public Housing residents. These books will promote diversity and inclusion as well as growth, literacy, and empowerment. A meeting took place on 8/9/22. Commissioners Cummings and Rubin are members.
- Irish Heritage Month- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee acknowledged the contributions of Irish Americans through a series of emails and a Leprechaun Hunt.
- Holi Festival- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee celebrated our own Holi Festival with staff on March 17, 2023, by playing with the colorful powders and a variety of Indian sweets.
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Compliance

- **Fraud Investigations**
 - **Leasing Operations** Repayment Agreement payments total YTD as of March 2023, \$11,593 collected (with a total of \$3,458 collected in March 2023) A total of \$459,219.15 has been collected to date.
 - **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for vacated arrears and collection loss as of March 2023, with \$1,284.00 collected (with a total of \$370.00 collected in March 2023). A total of \$45,155.31 was collected to date.
- **Termination Hearings:**
 - **Leasing Operations** – 14 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 0 Upheld; 0 No Show, 1 Overturned, 0 Reinstated, 10 Adjourned, 2 Withdrawn; 1 Failure to Recertify.

- **Public Housing** – 0 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 0 Upheld; 0 No Show, 0 Overturned, 0 Reinstated, 0 Adjourned; 0 Withdrawn.

Operations

- **Case Management**
 - Program Violation Referrals Outstanding – 1,493 (Previously 1,496)– which is a total to date since 2015. Due to staffing shortages, program violation referrals will be temporarily on hold. Compliance is working with HR to fill the positions.
- **Rochester Housing Charities (RHC) – Commissioner Florine Cummings and Deputy Executive Director, Cynthia Herriott serve as RHA’s ex-officio representative on the RHC Board of Directors.**
 - Both attend monthly board meetings.
 - Board member recruitment for RHC is ongoing and staff are working on Board training.
 - The DED will work with the ED to schedule a retreat with both the Rochester Housing Authority and Rochester Housing Charities once Board members are in place.
 - RHC’s draft audit and budget have been provided to the board representatives.
- **Audit and Review** – The DED works closely with Legal Counsel to address areas in need of assessment within RHA. (*Executive Session for any requested reporting*)
 - Most Compliance Audits are temporarily on hold until vacant positions are filled. The DED has conducted several small-scale audits.
- **Public Safety** – Please note the attached Activity Chart for Public Safety.
 - Public Safety works with the Rochester Police Department to develop strategies to address crime trends.

6. Finance

Kimberly Huffman

Ms. Huffman reported the monthly Finance Report, the actual vs. budgeted figures, and variances for year-to-date through February 2023, for the COCC, Public Housing, and Section 8 income and expenses.

7. Information Technology Report

Evhen Tupis

Video Safety and Access Control (potentially two separate projects) (14 sites, expanded to 18)

Summary: RHA’s video safety system is antiquated and lacks needed features. Our Access Control system is old and clumsy to maintain. We have been directed to pursue an RFP to replace both with modern systems.

Status: Target: Awaiting cost estimate from the consulting firm. Once received, funding approvals will be pursued through the Finance office. Public RFP would follow.

Telephone System Modernization/Upgrade

Summary: Our telephone system is outdated. Four years ago, we pursued an upgrade only to discover that our foundational communication circuits were not capable of delivering the service and our telephone line records were in disarray. Both dependent issues have now been resolved.

While leveraging some of the work that was done four years ago, both the state-of-the-art and our needs have matured since then. We will launch this initiative now with an updated focus, while targeting implementation in F.Y. 2023-24.

Status: Awaiting funding approval from the Finance office to cover Project Consultant services. To be followed by public RFP for those services.

RochesterHousing.org Website Upgrade

Summary: RHA's website is outdated both technically (the modules it was built upon are reaching end-of-life) and navigationally. An upgrade is available and is being pursued.

Status: Feedback from stakeholders has been received and is being digested. This will occur over a series of meetings and is anticipated to take up to 60 days. Budgeting for the actual upgrade would be next.

Making the Internet More Affordable for Residents

Summary: E.D. Burr directed RHA to find a way to help residents better afford Internet access when desired. IT is launching a campaign to both inform all residents of the Federal Subsidy program (reducing costs by \$30/month) and coach them through the application process with the help of Resident Services staff.

Status: The direct-contact campaign has concluded. A bilingual flier has been created. See EXHIBIT IT-2023-04-A below. It will be shared with both new and recertifying residents and participants.

Public Document-scanning Kiosk

Summary: The Leasing Operations department is actively seeking ways to enhance and streamline the public's ability to submit documents electronically, reliably, and securely.

Status: Leasing Operations and Information Technology have met on to document the desired solution. Process flows were diagramed (see EXHIBIT IT-2023-04-B, below). The kiosk manufacturer is evaluating our requirements. The financial quote is pending.

8. Public Housing Report

Harolda Wilcox

Public Housing Activities:

- In the month of March, the Public Housing Department hosted several Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) meetings at Parliament Arms, Luther Circle (Fairfield), Federal St/Scattered sites, and Glenwood Gardens to inform the residents that the sites are going to be converted to Project Based Vouchers (PBV) vouchers and will be renovated/demolished. We also had a meeting with the Bond Street residents to provide updates on the upcoming renovation at this site.
- Our move-in incentive program currently has **ten** residents that moved in, **one** in the month of March and **nine** in the month of February, these residents have completed the required forms and will begin to receive the rent incentives. These will be submitted to Finance by March 15, 2023.

Public Housing Matters:

The **TEAM** continues to do an **excellent** job of keeping things moving within the department.

COVID Matters:

- Building Security – RHA visitor restrictions are still in place, with visitation hours from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm. Everyone is encouraged to social distance.
- Residents – Partnership with Foodlink is still providing food to those seniors in need.
- Community Rooms are currently open on the weekends. Protocols sent to Resident Council presidents. Notices were sent to residents of optional mask-wearing.
- Offices continue to receive residents by appointment only. Residents will always need to wear facial coverings for scheduled appointments.

RENT ARREARS

- To avoid eviction and to assist residents in becoming current with rental arrears, the team will have the resident sign a repayment agreement along with applying for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).
- RHA Public Housing department Received **\$3,332.00 in EPPI 2.0** monies for **March** 2023.
- As of March 2023, the total delinquent rent amount owed is **\$394,686.23** which is a decrease of **\$48,569.09** from February.
- **19 – 30-day notices** were served by the City Marshal in February

- We are working diligently with residents to address arrears in lieu of court proceedings. As of **March 2023**, RHA has entered into **96** repayment agreements year to date.
- We are still encountering vacant units where the resident has skipped out. This affects both Public Housing arrears and vacancy rates.

Parkside

- 6 Vacant Units
- 5 Units Ready to Lease

Parkside Arrears

- \$ 31,860.75 outstanding rent
- \$ 6,246.75 0-30 days
- \$ 3,230.00 31-60 days
- \$ 2,577.00 61-90 days
- \$ 19,331.00 over 90 days (represents 9 tenants)

Rental Arrears

- Two residents were previously in court and the judge dismissed the case with prejudice.
- One resident has entered into a repayment agreement.
- Remaining residents that owe more than 2 months have been issued 5-day notices.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- The Property Management office continues to offer applicants several methods to view a unit, e.g., virtual, email & text pictures, and solo unit showings (staff will wait outside of the unit as the applicant walks through the unit).
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Application Processing Center: Waiting List Management:

As of 3/31/2023, there are NO updates.

Scheduled High Rise Canvas Pull – No longer pulling for high rises. We have pulled over the number needed to address vacancy concerns. Housing Specialists are currently processing applications for unit offers to start for those that are approved by mid-March.

PH began offering moving incentives for applicants as of January 1, 2023. Move-in incentives will be given to the **first** 100 applicants that are housed at Lake Tower, Danforth Towers, and Kennedy, and that remain in good standing for one year.

UPDATE

As of 3/31/23 Danforth Tower East and Danforth Tower West will potentially be full as all units have been offered.

Kennedy Tower -- 4th and 5th floor is still under renovation.

Lake Towers is potentially full occupancy as all units have been offered.

Unit Offers:

- APC Manager is extending offers to 'ready drawer' applicants to fill vacancies. This process is slower than desired because the manager has absorbed most of the responsibilities from the staff vacancy in APC, reduced staff hours, and the applicant's response time was extended as a response to COVID.
- Current applications in the Screening and Intake Phase as of 1/27/23

Currently being screened - 91 applications

*Studio– 11

*Regular 1 bedroom - 0

*2+ bedrooms - 0 applications

currently going thru intake (w/Intake Specialist): 30 applications

*studio/1-bedroom – 13 applications

*2+ bedrooms – 17 applications

Renovation Projects:

Bond St. – From the 11 households that are a part of this project, 3 families have been extended offers with 2 residents having accepted their unit offer.

9. Maintenance Report

Robert Croston

1. Vacant Unit Report

* The Maintenance Department continues to work hard to keep up with the number of new vacancies. Still one of our highest numbers of vacant unit in years with many move outs, residents skipping out and more court dates opening for more evictions.

2. Site Beautification

* We will be working with Public Housing on updating the insides at some of our high raises by painting some of the lobbies and community room.

* Maintenance is moving forward to start working on upgrading the inside lobby of Hudson Ridge Tower. We will be looking at painting the lobby, upgrading the flooring near the vending machines, upgrading the guard station and any other Public Housing concerns.

3. Training for Maintenance staff

* The Maintenance department has scheduled training for the upcoming change from REAC to NSPIRE as the new HUD system of grading Public Housing Authorities moving forward. We are trying to stay ahead of the changes by training staff early.

*We have also scheduled training for the new maintenance staff with our in-house electrical department. Just to bring the new staff that has been hired over the last few months up to speed.

10. Leasing Operations Report (Section 8)

Pierre Dorancy

Leasing Operations Matters:

1. The Administrative Plan language changes have been approved. Staff is working on implementing the changes. Robocall has been used to notify participants and landlords of the changes that affect them.

2. Currently, there are 1,461 active applicants on the Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List.

3. Leasing Operations' voucher and funding utilization goal is between 95% to 98%. **We are currently at 83.91% utilization of vouchers and 103.77% utilization of funds.** Leasing Operations Department has a Leasing Plan for 2023 to maximize HUD funding for Housing Assistance Payments. Staff continues working overtime to issue vouchers and to maintain utilization.

4. The monthly inspection goal has been 780-960. **The Inspection Unit conducted 772 inspections in March 2023.**

HUD Community Choice Demonstration (formerly Mobility Demonstration)

As previously reported, RHA was one of nine (9) PHAs selected to join the HUD's HCV Mobility Demonstration Program. The program is now known as Community Choice Demonstration (CCD). Briefly, this is a 6-year demonstration program designed to increase participation for voucher families with children with better access to low-poverty neighborhoods and other areas of opportunity with high-performing schools and other strong community resources.

As of the pilot start date of October 17, 2022, the Managers implementing the program have updated the RHA website with CCD information. Interested families can reach out to a dedicated phone line and email address to communicate interest in participation. The CCD email address is communitychoice@rochesterhousing.org and the phone line is (585) 697-6210. The Leasing Operations staff have sent out six (6) batches of interest letters. One thousand seven (1,007) qualifying families with recertifications from May through October 2023 were randomly selected and provided with program information. As of 04/10/2023, seventy-four (74) families have been enrolled in the program of which thirty-eight (38) have been randomly selected for mobility services. The first CCD families searching for units within Opportunity Areas are planning moves for this spring. We have a pending lease up for a CCD family who found a unit in an Opportunity Area. The HAP contract is pending and is not yet executed.

HUD Emergency Housing Vouchers

As of 04/10/2023, out of 117 EHV vouchers authorized:

- 137 moving papers have been issued,
- 107 applicants have been housed.
- 7 applicants are searching for housing.
- 2 applicants have submitted moving papers to RHA.
- 10 new referrals have been requested from the COC.

RHA continues to collaborate with the local CoC and consult with other housing authorities and has statistics on the status of EHV lease-ups. These reviews indicate that RHA is working at a similar pace as other public housing agencies.

The policies of the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program were approved by the Board on 9/22/21 and are reflected in the RHA HCV Administrative Plan.

Additional Mainstream Voucher Awards

RHA has been awarded 25 additional Mainstream Vouchers to assist households that include a non-elderly person(s) with disabilities to lease up affordable units. This award includes extraordinary administrative funding to support administrative costs, including activities to support housing search and lease up of eligible applicants. Fees can also be used for costs related to the retention, recruitment, and support of participating owners in the form of security deposits, signing bonuses, vacancy payments, and damage mitigation.

As of 04/10/2023, out of 25 new Mainstream Vouchers authorized, 6 applicants have been housed and 5 have submitted moving papers to RHA.

Training

The Leasing Operations team will continue to provide training for staff in Calendar Year 2023 in collaboration with the HR department. Topics include:

- SEMAP;
- Rent Calculations & HCV Program Management;
- Effective Use of HUD's Two-Year Tool to maximize voucher utilization;

- Personal and Professional Development such as effective communication

11. Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Report

Melissa Berrien

Participant Highlights

We have 232 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:

- Ms. Simmons entered the FSS program on November 1st, 2015, with an employment goal. Ms. Simmons sought and maintained employment with Maxim Health Care. Ms. Simmons is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive \$2,605.20 in escrow savings.

Section 3

- Monthly Report – no updates
- Participated in the City of Rochester’s MWBE expo on 3/24/2023 to solicit new contractors.

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.

- 2022 Stats
 1. 93 clients
 2. 286 counseling sessions
 3. \$255,000 debt reduction
 4. \$111,000 increased savings
- FEC awarded 150K to assist RHA families, of which 30 new homeowners are eligible for a 1k grant.
- Project approved by City Council at February council meeting. The agreement was signed by Executive Director and to the mayor for signature on 3/4/22.
- Executed Agreement received on 3/25/2022, Meeting to discuss payment issuance with Finance on 4/25/22.
- Homeowner grants awarded to six participants.
- Four additional grants were awarded in December.
- FEC is requesting additional time to assist new homeowners as the original agreement ends February 2023
- City Council approved the extension of the HO grant project through September 30th of 2023. Amendment to Executive Director and Mayor for Signature.

- RMAPI Housing Subcommittee Cochair – Collaborative initiative focused on making housing more accessible, affordable, and equitable in our community. • Mission - Increase housing equity and access, improve housing stability, and close the wealth gap in Monroe County
 - Areas of focus: Housing Navigation, Displacement/Transiency, reviewing the list of budget priorities aligned with RMAPI’s housing policy.
 - The team is reviewing RMAPI’s state-level housing policy to inform our local delegation at RMAPI’s legislative breakfast.
 - RMAPI presented its Policy Agenda to a delegation of local state representatives on 2/10/2023. Policy Priorities:
 - 1 Raise Income
 - 2 Invest in Families
 - 3 Decriminalize Poverty
 - 4 Reform Housing

- Closing the Gaps 6 city cohort (Albuquerque, NM; Austin, TX; Memphis, TN; Minneapolis, MN; Rochester, NY; and St. Paul, MN) is a one-year initiative that brings together leaders from cities across the country who are committed to imagining what an anti-racist society might look like and playing an important role in building it through the transformation of government policies, practices, and operations.
 - CTG provides up to \$167,000 per cohort city to execute your homeownership strategy and up to \$100,000 per cohort city to execute your business, starts, and growth strategy.
 - Mayor Evans has signed off on the proposed plan. We are awaiting an award letter from Living Cities to present it to the city council. Closing the gaps seeks to improve homeownership and entrepreneurial outcomes incentives for young families to pursue homeownership.
 - Next steps: Create collaborative outreach materials, meet with Head Start staff, and explore RHA/Landbank partnership.

- Wilmot Cancer Institute Faith in Community Advisory Board (FCAB) will exist to strengthen the relationship between faith-based organizations, the communities they serve, and the Wilmot Cancer Institute to address cancer health disparities that disproportionality impact specific groups.
 - Dr. Nikesha Gilmore to present the study at the December Resident Relations meeting.
 - January FCAB meeting presentation with Dr. Harris – Studying how antioxidant levels affect cancer.
 - March 2023 FCAB meeting - Dr. Capizo discussed pancreatic cancer and its incidence and mortality rates are higher in the 27-county area of NY that Wilmot serves in comparison to the rest of the state and national averages particularly amongst black and Hispanic groups. To address this problem in our area, Wilmot researchers are preparing to submit a large grant to the

National Cancer Institute to fund a research program that aims to test novel therapies in clinical trials in pancreatic cancer patients.

- Crisis in Housing Community Forum 3/1/23 – Councilman Kim Smith and County Legislator Rachel Barnhart brought together RHA, DHS the Continuum of Care, and community members to identify gaps in our systems and find solutions to our community’s housing needs.
 - Attended Eviction Court on 3/28 to observe the community experience. The next community forum is scheduled for May 1st.
- FSS Graduation event to celebrate graduates from 2020-2022 on Tuesday, May 2nd.

Homeownership

- Ms. Rivera closed on her home at 85 Bennington Drive on March 22nd.
- We have two families with anticipated closings and thirty-three families who have been approved for financing and are searching for homes.

12. Resident Relations Report

Melissa Berrien

Community Rooms Resident Rental – Harolda presented the presidents a draft policy for private community rooms events. Resident review and feedback requested. Meeting scheduled to further discuss new procedure with finance.

Resident Email Communications - Commissioner Cummings requested presidents to utilize the emails set up for their councils by RHA. We discussed the benefits of using email as a communication tool. Lynette McGee is working with IT to retrain residents. Training is tentatively scheduled for May.

Resident Worker Procedure - Shawanna presented the new procedure and distributed the new Resident Worker application.

Senior Activities

- Commissioner Cummings has formed a committee of presidents and RHA staff to move the OK Card program forward. Lake and Hudson Ridge Towers have residents who have signed up for the program. Commissioner Cummings encouraged other sites to continue outreach efforts.
- Tenant on Patrol (TOP) is underway at Danforth East, Danforth West, Kennedy Tower, and Hudson Ridge. Commissioner Cummings encouraged other sites to continue outreach efforts.
- Senior summer outing planning has commenced the event will be held on August 4th.

Family Activities –

- Girl Scouts offering 45 slots for a low-cost summer camp program, the cost is \$25 for the 6 weeks of summer camp.
- Strong Families event planning has commenced tentative dates scheduled at individual family public housing sites from June- August. More info to come.

Presenter – David Langley, City of Rochester Animal Assistance Program presentation. Mr. Langley provided information about the various resources offered by the City of Rochester’s Animal Services to support families with pets.

13. Planning Committee Report

Shawn Burr

- The Planning Committee meeting was held on 4/12/2023. There were no follow-up items from the previous meeting.
- There was one action item that was presented, discussed, and agreed to move forward to the Board for approval.
- We then discussed the status of our current projects by having staff give updates and review progress pictures:
 1. Kennedy Tower Hallway Rehabilitation – the project is 99% complete and behind schedule due to COVID and material delays.
 2. Danforth Towers East & West Façade Repair – the project is 89% complete and on hold until spring when the weather is conducive to finishing the work.
 3. Bronson Ct. Roofing – project is 10% complete and behind schedule.
 4. Unit’s 43 & 60 Wm. Warfield Dr. Fire Restoration – getting underway.
 5. Atlantic Townhomes Site Upgrades – the project is 10% complete and on schedule.
- We continue to work with our consultant team of D+B/Calogero on summarizing and categorizing the RAD Physical Conditions Assessments and Environmental testing on most all of our PH properties. This will take some time and we will be including public housing, maintenance and finance in the process.
- There are currently four projects out to bid and we have additional projects to be submitted to Procurement.
- Our MWBE & Section 3 Contracts report was presented and will continue to be updated each month and we continue to work on percentages of possible funds allocated/obligated.
- As we move forward with our development projects, there will be regular reporting on the status of MWBE goals. We have a neutral third party that will be monitoring and ensuring compliance.

- The status of our current CFP Budgets as of March 31st is: 501.20 is 46% Obligated and 37% Expended and 501.21 is 100% Obligated and 34% Expended. We expect to meet all our deadlines.
- We then discussed our A/E status report, and no issues were present.

Project Planning

- Our Project Planning meeting followed the Committee meeting, and updates were given on our development projects starting with our RAD project at Federal St/Scattered Sites. Moving the project forward in coordination with NYS HCR, NYS OTDA, HUD, and City of Roch. With closing calls every Friday and a closing date of 4/27/23! We are communicating regularly with HUD on the RAD conversion which is expected to go before the HUD loan committee next week. We continue to work with the City on the coordination between agencies as the project moves forward. Todd Bullard is also involved now from here on out with preparing necessary resolutions and representing RHA through the closing process with closing team meetings every week.
- Our other development projects in various stages were discussed with funding applications submitted and more being submitted prior to submission deadlines.
- Updates were given on our Change the Face of Public Housing projects with one going out to bid soon.
- Updates were then given on our pipeline of capital projects in the planning and design stages.
- Updates were also given on the Hazard Related Grant and Section 32 progress.
- The rest of our project pipeline was presented, and the meeting was adjourned.

14. Swearing in of the New Commissioner – Shanai T. Lee

15. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Rubin: OK. Thank you. Yes, you and I spoke about this. I was fortunate enough to be able to attend NYSPHADA Conference and had an opportunity to meet Daniel, he is an is an example. An extraordinary young man. I didn't realize quite how humble he was, but we should all be very proud of him. Um, I had the opportunity to sit in a session by an attorney who did what to me his Interpretation was just about the best. What it means to be a housing Commissioner interpretation that I've ever been in. And he shared with me his slides and I spoke with Rosalie. I'm going to ask that in an executive

session in the near future, we have the opportunity to quickly go through those slides. So, I can share that it was very, very useful.

Commissioner Cummings: You know, I like to thank the staff members. Jim Senger. He straightened out the resident's concerns about the cameras. At Lake Tower. And down. I really appreciate it. I know when he says it's done, it's done. The other person was one of Melissa's staff people Straudie Bryant. She attended a meeting with me, and I was so glad she was there. I cannot talk and write at the same time. Yes, this staff person got everything down. I just think that's part of Melissa having a great team over there. Anytime I'm in need or anything, they're always there to help me. Thank you.

Commissioner Waters: no comment.

Commissioner Otis: no comment.

Commissioner Ocansey: Personally give kudos to the staff as always.

Commissioner Lee: no comment.

Commissioner Remarais: All right. And from me, as always, exactly what our vice chair says, you know, kudos to the staff. Thank you. We are so appreciative. Executive team Shawn, you're always on top of everything for everyone. Appreciate all the hard work you do and Congrats on all the staff you're working with, and all the work you get done during the month.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to go into Executive Session for a legal and personnel matter. Commissioner Rubin moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded a motion to go into Executive Session at 2:00 pm. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Otis, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Remarais voted yes. The motion was passed, seven to zero.

vii. Resolution 04.26.23-01– Authorized the Executive Director to execute any and all documents including a certain Ground Lease on behalf of the Project, including but not limited to the consummation of the financial commitments for the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program, – Executive.

Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Otis seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Otis, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed seven to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Waters seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 3:12 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Otis, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed seven to zero.

16. June Regular Board Meeting

The June Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 28, 2023**, at 12:00 pm.

There were no further items to come before the Board, a vote to end the September Regular Meeting Business was taken, Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded a motion to end the Board Meeting at 3:17 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Otis, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Rubin voted yes. The motion was passed five to zero.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,
Secretary to the RHA Board,
Executive Director