

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
May 24, 2023  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**May 24, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Rosalie Remarais, Chairperson  
Shanai T. Lee, Commissioner  
Henry Rubin, Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT**

Melissa Berrien  
Shawn Burr  
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 May 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: deferred until June 5, 2023, until there is a quorum for the vote.**
  
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

**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 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 117 Emergency Housing Vouchers by HUD as a result of the RESCUE Plan, are being issued in accordance with the process we developed with the Continuum of Care. We continue to work with participants to find suitable housing. 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 made significant progress and I'm very proud of our dedicated team! NYS and Enterprise are also 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 hosting of "Through the Night" on May 4<sup>th</sup> with Melissa and Diana and thought that it was very inspiring. The RMAPI Summit 2023 will be held on Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup>: [RMAPI Summit 2023: UPWARD MOBILITY AND](#)

[BEYOND Registration, Wed, Jun 14, 2023 at 8:30 AM | Eventbrite](#) I am planning to attend all morning.

Mr. Burr share that RHA along with our development projects are moving forward with the closing for Federal St-SS complete! Parliament-Fairfield will most likely have a closing date in September/October of this year, and we have held two resident meetings at each site. We were not funded for Fernwood Phase I and will resubmit for the next round when it's announced.

Mr. Burr stated that our summer employee picnic will be on July 27<sup>th</sup> at Ontario Beach Park and our Senior Resident Summer Outing is going to be on August 4<sup>th</sup>, so save the dates!

Mr. Burr gave an NYSPHADA Update: The Legislative Committee continues to work hard on advocating at the State level for funding for PHA's. We pushed for more ERAP funds for upstate PHA's as we all have significant arrears, and now that the budget has been approved, OTDA will need to implement it. Those applications submitted by the deadline in January by our residents that weren't funded are supposed to be reviewed and funded.

#### **HUD Publishes Report on HCV Success Rates**

Earlier this year, HUD posted a report titled "Using Administrative Data to Estimate Success Rates and Search Durations for New Voucher Recipients." The purpose of the study is to estimate national success rates and evaluate the quality of HUD's administrative data. The study finds that "61 percent of searches initiated in 2019 succeeded, using a 180-day search window." Additionally, "[i]f that timeline [was] extended to 240 days, the estimated success rate [rose] to 63 percent." The report also discusses how success rates and search durations vary by an area's rural characterization, a PHA's regional classification (e.g., located in the Northeast), and a PHA's size. The study looks at two metrics to evaluate the data quality. First, it looks at the share of entrances to the program which have a search voucher. The rationale behind examining this metric is that if a PHA is accurately recording data, then it will be recording both the issuance of the voucher and the admission to the program. Similarly, if a PHA is only recording the admission, then the PHA may not be recording use of quality data, the study excludes new admissions that are not preceded by a search voucher and only calculates success rates for PHAs with nearly complete issuance data. The second metric that the study uses to evaluate data quality is the timeline for successful searches. If a PHA admits many participants only a few days after voucher issuance, then it is likely indicative that the PHA is retroactively adding the issuance date at admittance, which may mean failed searches are not tracked. To address this issue, the study does not estimate annual success rates for PHAs that have admitted more than 15 percent of new families within seven days of voucher issuance. The success rates from this study should not be directly compared to how PHAs calculate success rates as the study examines search events, which might include multiple voucher issuances to a family. Housing agencies may calculate success rates based on each discrete issuance of a voucher.

### **HUD Publishes NSPIRE Final Rule**

On May 9, HUD previewed the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) final rule. As of this writing, it is scheduled to be published May 11, 2023. This rule sets the effective dates for each of the covered programs. It also provides updates based on comments to the proposed rule. Finally, it delineates the remaining notices which will outline NSPIRE standards, scoring, administrative procedures, small agency scoring under PHAS and SEMAP, and community development programs. NAHRO has provided comments throughout the implementation of NSPIRE, beginning with the demonstration in 2019, the proposed rule in 2021, and the additional Scoring and Standards notices. HUD will publish final Scoring and Standards notices as well as the final Administrative and Small Agency notices in the Federal Register before July 1. A Community Planning and Development notice will also provide details about the following programs, though this final rule applies to these programs as well: HOME, Housing Trust Fund, Emergency Solutions Grants, Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids, and Community of Care. The Standards and Scoring notices will respond to comments from the proposed versions of these notices, but the information in the Administrative notice will be new. NAHRO anticipates this notice covering inspector selection, timelines for using Housing Quality Standard inspections and similar alternatives, the inspection process under NSPIRE, submitting evidence to HUD, technical reviews, appeals, compliance, inspection reports, communicating with residents about results, and the role of resident feedback. Consistent with its previous messaging, the Public Housing program has a July 1, 2023 effective date. The other programs covered—Multifamily Housing, Project-Based Rental Assistance, Housing Choice Voucher, Project-Based Vouchers, and Community Planning and Development programs have an effective date of October 1, 2023 per the final rule. HUD makes a significant change: the first public housing agencies to receive inspections will be those with a June 30 fiscal year end date instead of March 31. However, consistent with prior statements, public housing will not receive a PHAS score until the entire portfolio has been inspected under NSPIRE, so HUD will not calculate PHAS scores when properties administered by PHAs have received a combination of UPCS and NSPIRE inspections. Small PHAs and small rural PHAs may receive PHAS scores before all public housing developments have been inspected under NSPIRE. Multifamily Housing program participants will receive one additional UPCS inspection. Below are summaries of significant changes.

**Affirmative Requirements**— The final rule requires agencies to meet affirmative requirements in the three areas NSPIRE will inspect: within units, common spaces inside buildings, and outside buildings. HUD has added detail that multiple unit requirements also apply to spaces outside of the unit—see the notice for more detail. Within the unit, the Secretary of HUD will provide notices in the Federal Register delineating the climate zones that must have a permanent heating source. Another substantive change is that HUD will not use the National Fire Protection Association Standards; instead, the rule includes smoke detector requirements on each floor. Additionally, units must have both hot and cold water in the kitchen and bathrooms that is safe to drink, and kitchens must have appliances as defined in the unit. Inside buildings, this specifies where GFCIs in outlets within six feet of water, guardrails for walking surfaces with at least 30-inch differences, permanent light fixtures in kitchens and bathrooms, and a prohibition of

unvented oil, gas, and kerosene-burning space heaters, a change which also affects units. The outside areas of buildings have the same GFCI and handrail requirements. See the final rule for definitions of each of the three areas. HUD also notes that the upcoming Standards and Administrative notices will provide greater detail on affirmative requirements. See the final rule for affirmative requirements discussed in § 5.703 and not included here. The 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act requires carbon monoxide detectors. At this time, HUD only requires compliance with this law, but may release additional guidance in the future.

**Water Safety**—HUD has adopted the EPA’s definition of water safety and maintained the requirement for Section 8 and public housing operators to comply with the recommendations of local officials.

**Tenant Involvement**—Tenants may recommend specific units for inspection. If a unit is inspected that is not part of the unit sampling, it will not be scored but PHAs must address the unit’s deficiencies.

**Inspection Timing and Delays**—HUD maintains the ability to approve inspection delays and to delay inspections even without requests. Inspections are no longer required to be completed in the same calendar year the inspection is due. Finally, NSPIRE will continue the three-, two-, and one-year intervals between inspection depending on score.

**Self-Inspections**—PHAs must complete self-inspections, but PHAs will save these records locally rather than turning them in. Additionally, PHAs will now be allowed to do their self-inspections as part of follow-up inspections. These results are unscored, and there will not be an opportunity to comment on this policy in the Federal Register. HUD will provide more detail in the Administrative notice. HUD makes an exception in the final rule for properties scoring below 60—these projects must complete a full self-inspection of every unit.

**Defect Correction Timelines and Post Report Inspections**—Deficiencies defined by the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act’s (HOTMA) Life Threatening list of deficiencies, as well as Severe health and safety deficiencies, must be repaired within 24 hours. PHAs must provide electronic evidence that they have addressed these deficiencies, but they will no longer need to do the same for moderate deficiencies. HUD can approve delayed repair time requirements based on individual circumstances. The Standards notice will provide additional guidance.

**Community Development Programs**—Additional notices will support NSPIRE implementation for these programs. However, while the final rule adds that single-room occupancy units must comply with the affirmative requirements described above, HOME and the Housing Trust Fund do not and will receive program-specific guidance.

**Miscellaneous**—HUD has aligned the final rule with the Standards and Scoring terminology for severity levels. The rule also contains other technical and administrative changes not discussed here.

**b. Board Action Requests deferred until June 5, 2023, until there is a quorum for the vote.**

**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 May 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 Information:**

**New Hires:**

Position- Housing Specialist – (1) Public Housing Department started on May 15, 2023.

Position- Maintenance Mechanic – (1) Maintenance Department started on May 15, 2023.

**Recruitment Strategies**

City Union Apprentice Career Fair– May 17, 2023

R-center Employment and Resource Opportunity Fair– May 24, 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.

**Training May 2023:**

Managing Stress and Burnout for Mental Health Awareness Month: Monday, May 22, 2023

**Opportunities:**

**Talent Retention:**

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

HR checked in with two (2) 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.

**Kudos Korner:**

**Congratulations To Our Kudos Korner Recipients!**

Melissa Berrien- is a goal setter, an ambassador for our housing agency, and always has a positive attitude.

Betty Colon- has a strong work ethic, is reliable, and is dedicated to helping our residents.

**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.

- Asian American and Pacific Islanders Heritage Month- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee will be acknowledging Asian American and Pacific Islanders Month through a series of informational emails and a Luau Celebration.
- MARC NAHRO Diversity and Inclusion Award: The Diversity and Inclusion Committee participated in an award ceremony that was given at the NAHRO 2023 Spring Conference.

### **Compliance**

#### ○ **Fraud Investigations**

- **Leasing Operations** Repayment Agreement payments total YTD as of April 2023, \$15,048 collected (with a total of \$3,455 collected in April 2023) A total of \$462,674.15 has been collected to date.
- **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for vacated arrears and collection loss as of April 2023, with \$2,062.50 collected (with a total of \$778.50 collected in April 2023). A total of \$45,933.81 was collected to date.

#### ○ **Termination Hearings:**

- **Leasing Operations** – Participant Hearings Scheduled: 0 Upheld; 1 No Show, 0 Overturned, 0 Reinstated, 1 Adjourned, 0 Withdrawn; 3 Pending Hearing Decision.
- **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 – 1,430 (Previously 1,493 )– which is 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 March 2023, for the COCC, Public Housing, and Section 8 income and expenses.

**7. Information Technology Report**

**Evhen Tupis**

*Affordable Internet for Residents*

- Literacy Rochester has been engaged to schedule a series of building-based in-person coaching sessions for reluctant residents as a “capstone” activity.
- New: The ability of RHA to both supply Internet to residents and realize a new funding source is being explored. There is an estimated 18-month horizon associated with the process.

*Public/Participant Self-serve Kiosks*

- Awaiting cost estimate from the kiosk manufacturer. Task: provide the public with secure, auditable, and acknowledged document scan-to-RHA.
- Thank you: L.O.s’ Kim Bell, Tiffanie Green, Jeannean Gardner, Danielle Huertas, Pierre Dorancy and IT’s Anna Zheleznyak.

*Upgrade Landlord Portal to modern Owner Portal product*

- RHA’s “Super Users” have been trained and are in the process of evaluating a best rollout method to assure all landlords/owners who wish to use it are informed proactively and offered needed supports.
- Thank you: Jenelle Aguero, Kim Bauman, and Shanna Cranmer

*Video Safety and Access Control Upgrade/Modernization*

- Budgeting discussions have been scheduled with the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Director of Finance, and Director of Development and Capital Projects.

*Telephone System Upgrade/Modernization*

- On hold to assess budget as noted above. Tenmast Upgrade/Replacement
- On hold to assess budget as noted above.

*RochesterHousing.org Website Upgrade/Modernization*

- Feedback from stakeholders has been received. Processing will take another 30-45 days. Budgeting for the actual upgrade would be next.

**Additional Informational Items**

- Resident Council Presidents will be receiving Microsoft 365 training regarding receiving, processing, and responding to email. Training will take place at 495. A thank you to Lynette McGee and Anna Zheleznyak for coordinating and delivering it.
- Despite significant speed increases documented, some Tenmast users have reported sluggishness. The source has been ID'd. There are too many legacy/unused data documents that remain in the production system. An archival strategy has been created and "acceptance testing" involving the Finance department and others is underway.
- With future e-document storage initiatives likely, HUD representatives have been contacted and asked for links to HUD's document retention policies. Awaiting response.
- 5-year Strategic Goal 3 Towne Hall volunteer focus group meetings have been initiated. Strategic Goal 5 Towne Hall follow-up will launch shortly.
- A "Super User Summit" program is being initiated to more concretely support RHA Associates who have stepped forward to lead their department's use of technology.
- A "pilot" phase of a new initiative called "Skill Builders" has concluded and received positively. Skill Builders are 15-minute hands-on demonstrations of ways that technology can be used to solve business problems. We don't teach technology; we workshop examples of how it is used to solve business issues. Topics have included:
  - "How to keep private notes for multi-participant meetings"
  - "How to convert an email into a meeting invitation so participants arrive with proper context/agenda", and
  - "Why and how to embed pictures and video into a PowerPoint presentation".
- Upcoming topics will include "Using Outlook efficiently on your cell phone", and "Using Forms365 to gather information". Our new Business Analyst, Anna Zheleznyak will be regularly offering "Skill Builders" using Microsoft Teams to all Associates as professional skill development opportunities.
- Upcoming: RHA's IT security has been quite good to this point, however, it is time to pursue an RFP to have an outside firm perform a vulnerability assessment and suggest further improvements. This includes a budget discussion component.
- RHA's move to Two-factor Authentication is well underway. This will additionally help to secure RHA's data and financial assets. Active support and

adoption by the Board of Commissioners is requested as lack of universal adoption will place RHA in legal jeopardy should a compromise be trackable back to lack of implementation.

- Upcoming: developing an RFP to cover IT services from the external service provider(s) for FY 2023-24 with a clause to diminish those services if/when RHA hires local staff. This includes a budget discussion component.
- HR-approved IT to work directly with HR's approved staffing agency to find better-qualified IT candidates. Activity has launched.

**8. Public Housing Report**

**Harolda Wilcox**

**Public Housing Activities:**

- In the month of April, in conjunction with the Rochester Fire Department fire drills were held at University Tower, Kennedy Tower, Lake Tower, and Hudson Ridge Tower. There was a good turnout at the various sites but could be better. The Public Housing Department is working to have the fire drills scheduled every six months. Immediately after the fire drill, the fire department presented an informational PowerPoint presentation to the residents providing them with fire safety information and answering fire safety questions or concerns from the residents. The remaining high rises have been scheduled for the month of May.
- We held two RAD meetings with the residents of Parliament Arms to inform them of the project delay and answered questions or concerns from the residents.
- On April 27, a meeting with community leaders from the Edgerton Recreation Center was held in the Lake Tower community room to discuss the upcoming projects that will be built in the neighborhood near Lake Tower. The purpose of this project is to provide shelter to those who are homeless and prepare them for the transitioning of going back into their community by providing them with case management and all the resources that they would need. Information and pictures/plans of the project were shown to all the attendees. President Council for Lake Tower, community leaders, residents, Property Manager Karen Hoover, and Clerk Romy Layz was present in this meeting. A huge thank you to Romy for coming to the meeting on short notice to translate for our Spanish-speaking residents.
- Public Housing is collaborating with FSS on strong families functions this summer in all PH family sites. The first date for this function is June 6, 2023.
- Various high-rise sites are slated to be updated – working with Robert Croston and team to determine what updates can be completed..

**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 \$2,959.00 in EPPI 2.0 monies for April 2023.
- As of April 2023, the total delinquent rent amount owed is \$359,865.32 which is a decrease of \$44,820.91
- 17 – 30-day notices were served by the City Marshal in April.
- We are collaborating 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.
- As of April 28<sup>th</sup>, the following is the status of repayments:
  - North – four residents in the eviction process and ten residents are in delinquent status.
  - South – three in the eviction process and eight residents are in delinquent status.
  - Central – eight in the eviction process and thirteen residents are in delinquent status.
  - Scattered Sites – five in the eviction process and five in delinquent status.

**Parkside**

- 6 Vacant Units
- 4 Units Ready to Lease
- 1 leased up and moved in for April 2023.
- 4 Offers have been issued and will be leased up soon.
- We have canvassed the PH waitlist and are responding to those interested to let them know that they have been placed on the Parkside waiting list.

**Parkside Arrears**

- \$ 39,105.00 outstanding rent
- \$ 4,446.00 0-30 days
- \$ 11,299.00 31-60 days
- \$ 1,715.00 61-90 days
- \$ 21,645.00 over 90 days (represents 9 tenants)

**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).

**Application Processing Center: Waiting List Management:**

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

Housing specialists are still making unit offers to applicants for the promo high-rise offers. New waitlists pull: 5/1/23 (total of 20) and 5/22/23 (total of 20).

To address the number of high-rise vacancies, APC is conducting a high-rise canvas for applicants that are interested in residing in one of the high-rise communities (LT, UT, HRT, DTE, UT)

**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 5/2/23

Currently being screened - 8 applications

\*Studio- 1

\*Regular 1 bedroom - 1

\*High Rise 1 – bedroom canvas 6

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

\*studio/1-bedroom – 67 applications

\*2+ bedrooms – 13 applications

**Renovation Projects:**

- **Fed/Scattered Site** – From the **37 households** that will have their units demolished or renovated, we have **25 residents** that have accepted unit offers. Maintenance Chief, Bob Croston has been notified of each accepted unit offer to follow up on to ensure units are ready for move-in. Many high-priority residents (those that have a project start date within the next 6 months) have been given a final offer.
- As of 9/27/2022 – 36 residents have received a final relocation unit offer, per Relocation Plan. One of those residents has been identified as a Section 32 participant. Will need to discuss further the plan to relocate the family.

As of 5/2/2023 – Closing is scheduled for 5/5/2023.

Bond St. – As of 5/2/2023, all families have been extended an offer. All accepted their offer except for two residents. The property Manager is currently addressing this issue.

**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. One of our highest numbers of vacant units in years.

**2. Site Beautification**

\* Maintenance is moving forward to start 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.

\* The lawn cutting for the season has started at RHA.

**3. Training for Maintenance staff**

- The Maintenance department has completed 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. As more training presents itself, we will continue to educate our staff to be prepared.
- Maintenance is developing a plan to help educate the residents of RHA to prepare and ready their units for the upcoming new NSPIRE inspections required by HUD. It is our hope to educate the residents and get their help and support to increase our HUD scores and make them part of the process.

- RHA will be having in-house electrical training for all newly hired Maintenance staff as part of the training and support for new employees. Tom Schlegel our in-house licensed Master Electrician, will be teaching this training.

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

**Pierre Dorancy**

**Leasing Operations Matters:**

1. The Administrative Plan language changes have been approved. The 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 83.59% utilization of vouchers and 93.33% 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 713 inspections in April 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](mailto: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 05/10/2023, out of 117 EHV vouchers authorized:

- 145 moving papers have been issued,
- 111 applicants have been housed.
- 8 applicants are searching for housing.
- 3 applicants have submitted moving papers to RHA.
- 1 new referral 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 agency.

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 05/10/2023, out of 25 new Mainstream Vouchers authorized, 6 applicants have been housed and 8 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 185 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:

- Ms. Gregg's entered the FSS program on December 1st, 2015, with an employment goal. Ms. Gregg's sought and maintained employment with BJ's and increased her income by 258%. Ms. Gregg is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive an estimated \$2,262.00 in escrow savings.

### **Section 3**

- Monthly Report – no updates

### **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. Signed extension received on 4/5/2023.
- 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.

- 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.
- May 1st, 2023, a meeting facilitated by Councilman Smith and County Legislator President Lamar – The conversation centered around the

county's homeless response. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 2023.

- FSS Graduation event to celebrate graduates from 2020-2022 on Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. event to celebrate graduates from 2020-2022 on Tuesday May 2<sup>nd</sup>. 60 graduates completed the program during this period. Of these graduates, 12 became first time homeowners, 6 received advanced degrees, 3 started a business and 24 achieved upward economic mobility. The graduates received a combined \$353,032 in escrow savings.
  - University of Rochester Urban Fellow – Program is designed to provide project-based capacity building services to expand and optimize programming to advance community organization's missions.
  - Aide resident services in a resident need survey and an outreach and engagement plan.

#### **Homeownership**

- Ms. Jiles closed on her home at 315 Eileen Drive on March 31st.
- • We have three families with anticipated closings and thirty-five 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 president with a draft policy for private community room events. Resident review and feedback requested. The policy is still under review. Finance working to ensure insurance requirements are in order.

**Resident Email Communications** - Resident Councils email has been created. Lynette (RS) is working with Anna (IT) to retrain residents. Training is tentatively scheduled for June 22<sup>nd</sup> at resident services.

**Resident Worker Procedure** - Shawanna presented the new procedure and distributed the new Resident Worker application. The policy revision is complete, and Shawanna is revising the timecard.

**AP Report** – Commissioner Cummings reviewed the AP security report with the presidents and encourage them to inform the residents of the process of filing a report.

**Tenants on Patrol (TOP)** – Presidents inquired about treating TOP volunteers as resident workers and receiving stipends.

**NSPIRE** – Shawn gave an overview of the upcoming public housing inspections and ask the presidents to go over the information with their residents. Letters will be mailed to the affected residents. Inspections will begin in July.

#### **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. Commissioner Cummings requested we move forward with the program at Lake and Hudson Ridge Towers.

- Senior summer outing planning has commenced the event will be held on August 4th.

**Family Activities –**

- Strong Families event planning has commenced. Event dates
  - 6/6 (Harriet Tubman)
  - 6/20 (Seneca Manor)
  - 7/11 (Holland Townhouses/Atlantic)
  - 7/25 (Lexington)
  - 8/8 (Bay Zimmer)
  - 8/22 (Bronson Court/Capsule)
  - 8/29 (Fairfield Village)

**Presenter** – Evan Lowenstein, Flower City Pickers presentation. Mr. Lowenstein provided information about a volunteer opportunity at the public market. Lynette and Straudie will follow up with the councils who would like him to present the information at their resident council meetings.

**13. Planning Committee Report**

**Shawn Burr**

- The Planning Committee meeting was held on 5/10/2023. There were no follow-up items from the previous meeting.
- There were no new actions 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 now complete and is in the process of project close-out.
  2. Danforth Towers East & West Façade Repair – the project is 95% and anticipates completion in a month.
  3. Bronson Ct. Roofing – project is 48% complete.
  4. Unit's 43 & 60 Wm. Warfield Dr. Fire Restoration – is at 15% with abatement and demo nearing completion.
  5. Atlantic Townhomes Site Upgrades – the project is 25% 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 our PH properties. This will take some time and we will be including public housing, maintenance and finance in the process. We have asked the consultant to work towards completing evaluations of our remaining Public Housing sites.
- There are currently three 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 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 May 17th are: 501.20 is 62% Obligated and 37% Expended and 501.21 is 100% Obligated and 47% 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. Closing on the Federal Street / Scattered Site project occurred on Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup> (Congrats to the team!).
- 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:** no comment.

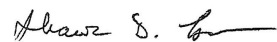
**Commissioner Lee:** no comment.

**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.

**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.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board,  
Executive Director

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
June 5, 2023  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**June 5, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner, Vice Chair  
Kabutey Ocansey, Commissioner  
Henry Rubin, Commissioner  
James Water, Jr. Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT**

Shawn Burr  
Diana Colon  
Cynthia Herriott  
Kimberly Huffman  
Shawanna Lawrence

**OTHERS PRESENT**

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel

Commissioner Cummings called the Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Special Board Meeting to order at 11:19 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. Approval of Minutes: April 26, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

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

**2. Board Action Requests**

- i. Upper Falls Blvd Townhouses - NYS Weatherization Program upgrades for 30 units - Authorize the Executive Director to sign an owner's agreement with the NYS Weatherization Program agreeing to comply with the NYS WAP program guidelines. And to also Authorize the Acting Executive Director to issue a PO in the amount of \$62,750 to Action for a Better Community – Capital Project

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

- ii. Elevator Maintenance and Service Contract RENEWAL – Authorized the Executive Director to renew the contract to Otis Elevator Company in the amount of \$59,829.00 – Capital Projects

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

- iii. Fire alarm system repair at 321 Lake Tower -- Authorized the Executive Director to award a contract to Johnson Controls LP, for the amount of \$43,209.52 – Maintenance

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

- iv. Communications Renewal -- Authorized the Executive Director to renew the contract with Tipping Point Communications in the amount of \$50,000 or one year (2 of 4) –Executive

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

- v. Legal Services -- Authorized the Executive Director to renew the contract with Harris Beach, PLLC for the sum of \$80,000.00 – Human Resources

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

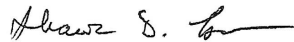


**3. June Regular Board Meeting**

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 Special Board Meeting Business was taken, Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded a motion to end the Board Meeting at 11:36 am. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Ocansey, voted yes. The motion passed four to zero.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board,  
Executive Director