

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
December 20, 2023  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**December 20, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Rosalie Remarais, Chairperson  
Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner, Vice Chair  
Robert Davis, Commissioner  
Shanai Lee, Commissioner  
Kabutey Ocansey, Commissioner  
James Water, Jr. Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT**

Melissa Berrien  
Shawn Burr  
Diana Colon  
Robert Croston  
Natasha Dicks  
Pierre Dorancy  
Cynthia Herriott  
Kimberly Huffman  
Joyce Kinsey  
Shawanna Lawrence  
Daniel Long  
Loretha J.  
McCullough  
Mariam Rodriguez –  
Machuca  
Evhen Tupis  
Harolda Wilcox

**OTHERS PRESENT**

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

Commissioner Rosalie Remarais called the December 2023 Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:16 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: November 15, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the November 2023 Annual and Regular Board Meeting Minutes Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Cummings, 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

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 continued hard work informing staff and planning and facilitating staff functions that build morale and brings us all together. Great work!!!

Mr. Burr shared our Community Choice Demonstration RHA Team continues to work diligently with families. We have made significant progress and I'm very proud of our dedicated team!

Mr. Burr wanted to continue 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 share that the Development projects are moving forward with Federal St-SS construction/demo well under way! We are scheduled to have the first residents moving back to some of the scattered site homes in late December. Parliament-Fairfield is

officially under construction with good progress being made. Dan will have some pictures with his report. We are excited that our residents will be soon living in more modern, energy efficient homes with more accessible units and more community space. Public housing staff continue to meet 1:1 with the residents who are moving to address their needs. We submitted a 9% LIHTC application by the deadline of November 7 for Fernwood Phase I, despite the new challenges raised by HCR staff and City. Glenwood is moving along with a concept plan submitted to HCR. We met with the residents and brought them up to speed in November and I will continue to meet with them every three months or so. Big kudos to Harolda and her team for assisting residents and preparing and training on tax credit compliance, Bob and his team for assisting wherever and with the contractors and Dan for representing RHA in the field and at the table!! They are truly doing great work!

Mr. Burr shared an updated from NYSPHADA: The Legislative Committee has been very busy advocating at the State level for funding for PHA's. We have met with many state legislators advocating on the importance of budget line items that support upstate NY PHA's. We continue to push for more ERAP funds for upstate PHA's as we all have significant arrears, capital improvement and gap funding for upstate PHA's. We are lining up additional meetings with more legislators.

Mr. Burr gave an update on Continuing Resolution – Congress passed, and the President signed another continuing resolution that will fund the government at 2023 spending levels until January 19, 2024. We are hopeful that a budget will be passed, and we will avoid a government shutdown.

Mr. Burr gave an update on the executive team has been working on updating our org chart from top to bottom and assessing our civil service class plan. We will be adding additional titles to create more advancement opportunities and fill gaps where needed.

Mr. Burr shared that our employee holiday party is Thursday, 12/21/23 at the Holiday Inn Rochester/University & Medical Center from noon to 4:00 and we hope you will be able to attend.

Mr. Burr gave an update on:

### **Industry Groups Request Changes to Improve VASH Utilization**

RHA has struggled with the utilization of HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers. The housing industry groups (PHADA, CLPHA, NAHRO, and the MTW Collaborative) wrote to HUD leadership on November 20, requesting that the Department take steps to improve utilization of VASH vouchers. VASH utilization is approximately 74 percent nationwide, compared to 85 percent for the general HCV program. RHA is at 86% which is higher than the average, but not where we want to be to improve our overall utilization rate.

Under current VASH regulations, veterans must be referred from a VA Medical Center or a Designated Service Provider (DSP) to a housing authority to receive a voucher. Many HAs, however, do not receive enough referrals to utilize their available VASH vouchers. In a September 2021 Federal Register notice, HUD stated it would release additional guidance allowing housing authorities to serve as DSPs but, over two years later, the Department has not done so.

The letter asks the Department to expedite publishing guidance that allows HAs to serve as DSPs for VASH selection and intake. In the meantime, HUD should grant HAs individual waivers to do so. These actions would increase VASH utilization and meet the administration's goals of reducing homelessness. In fact, achieving an 85 percent utilization rate for the VASH program – which would bring its utilization in line with the general HCV program – would provide housing to over 12,000 veteran households.

### **Proposed Rule Requiring 30-day Notice for Non-payment Published for Public**

#### **Comment**

##### **Rule Will Worsen TARs Problems**

On Friday, December 1, HUD published a proposed rule with a 60-day comment period. “Under this proposed rule, when tenants who reside in public housing or in properties receiving project based rental assistance (PBRA) face eviction for nonpayment of rent, public housing agencies (PHAs) and owners would need to provide those tenants with written notification at least 30 days prior to the commencement of a formal judicial eviction procedure for lease termination.” PHADA will immediately begin preparing detailed and specific comments in response to this notice after careful review of the notice, referenced supporting documentation, and prior PHADA correspondence with HUD and the Hill on this policy.

The negative and disparate impacts of eviction that have resulted from the current laws governing residential rental properties and landlord/tenant relations are well presented. However, HUD has not made a convincing argument that imposing a 30-day notice policy only on owners of federally assisted housing will positively impact outcomes that result from the state-governed and market-driven fundamentals of our rental housing lease enforcement structures. Furthermore, HUD has not addressed the impact this requirement has on Tenant Accounts Receivable (TARs) and the fiscal impact on owners of uncollected rent.

PHADA has been consistent in calling on HUD to recognize the seriousness of the rise in TARs, the growing risk to agency solvency that results, and the role the 30-day notice requirement plays in exacerbating this growing financial issue. As detailed in PHADA's September 29, letter to Secretary Fudge, the Department should immediately share additional information on TARs and the financial status of public housing agencies and other owners, should make PHAS scoring modifications related to TARs, and should make the 30-day notice for non-payment a recommendation, not a requirement. As PHADA President Mark Gillett highlights in his recent column, increased TARs are one factor, along with rising insurance and other costs and inadequate appropriations,

contributing to severe financial risk for many agencies and affordable housing owners and operators. The 30-day notice requirement exacerbates these challenges and risks.

PHADA encourages members to share how making this provision permanent will impact your agency and your tenants. HUD specifically asks for feedback on HA experience with the 30-day requirement under the interim final rule. Specific real-life examples and/or data showing negative impacts of the longer notice period would be most effective in getting any responsiveness from HUD. Please send any and all feedback on this issue to: [policy@phada.org](mailto:policy@phada.org), and/or join our discussion of this issue at the Housing Committee meeting during PHADA's Commissioners' Conference in early January!

**b. Board Action Requests**

- i. Microsoft 365 Year - Authorized the Executive Director to renew the contract with Dell Marketing, LP in the amount of \$86,409.51 – Information Technology

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

- ii. Tenmast WinTen2+ for RAD

- a. Federal Street & Scattered Sites - Authorized the Executive Director to approve the contract with MRI Software in the amount of \$18,210.00 – Information Technology.

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

- b. Parliament Arms and Fairfield - Authorized the Executive Director to approve the contract with MRI Software in the amount of \$18,125.00 – Information Technology.

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

- iii. Financial Audit – Authorized the Executive Director to renew the contract with EFPR Group, LLC in the amount of \$56,250.00 – Finance.

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner

Remarais, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Davis, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

iv. Insurance policies – Public Housing

- a. Auto Insurance Policy - Authorized the Executive Director to approve the contract with Preferred Mutual Insurance Company for a year in the amount of \$77,557.00 – Public Housing.

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

- b. Umbrella Insurance Policy - Authorized the Executive Director to approve the contract with Scottsdale Insurance for a year in the amount of \$23,772.50 – Public Housing.

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

- v. Human Resource and Payroll Information Processing System renewal – Authorized the Executive Director renew the contract with ADP (renewal 2 of 4) in the amount of \$96,000.00 – Authority Wide.

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

- vi. 2024 Short Term Disability, Long Term Disability, NYS Disability, Basic Life and AD&D and Voluntary Life – Authorized the Executive Director renew the contract with Lincoln Financial Group (renewal 2 of 4) in the amount of \$195,684.00 – Authority Wide.

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

- vii. Worker’s Compensation – Authorized the Executive Director to award a 1-year contract to Redwood Fire and Casualty Insurance Company in the amount of \$478,490.52 – Authority Wide.

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

- viii. Employee Dental Insu –Authorized the Executive Director to award a 1-year contract to MetLife - Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in the amount of \$185,900.00 – Authority Wide.

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

- ix. Opening the RHA Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Waiting List – Authorized the Executive Director to open the HVC Waiting List to new applicants – Leasing Operations.

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

**4. Human Resource Report**

**Loretha J. McCullough**

Consistent with our RHA’s Strategic Plan, the Human Resource Department is committed to "Fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment." In December 2023, HR focused on key activities such as building organizational capacity through hiring and promotions and creating a positive culture.

**Recruitment, Hires & Promotions:**

**Hires:**

<b>Hire Type</b>	<b>New Position</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
New Hire	Purchaser	Finance	November 6, 2023
Rehire	Housing Specialist	Public Housing - HRT	November 27, 2023
Rehire	Housing Specialist	Public Housing - Holland/WW	December 11, 2023

**Employee Promotions:**

In recognition of outstanding performance and commitment to RHA, the following employees were promoted:

<b>Previous Position</b>	<b>New Position</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Sr. Maintenance Mechanic	Building Maintenance Supervisor	Maintenance	Nov. 27, 2023
Family Self Sufficiency Supervisor	Director of Resident Services	Resident Serv.	Nov. 27, 2023
Housing Specialist	Sr. Housing Specialist	Compliance	Dec. 26, 2023
Clerk II/Typing/Bilingual	Human Services Specialist	Resident Serv.	Dec. 26, 2023
Maintenance Mechanic	Building Maintenance Supervisor	Maintenance	Dec. 26, 2023

**Transfers:**

<b>Previous Position</b>	<b>New Position</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Pending			TBD

**Note:**

- Promotions and Transfers are aligned with the Human Resources Department’s overarching strategic goal of promoting an organizational culture of excellence.

**Recruitment Strategies:**

- 4 applications were resubmitted to Civil Services and approved.
- \*The declined offer was pay related.
- Ensured all job postings are on multiple career sites and posted for the same length of time.
- Automated onboarding hiring process through ADP vs. paper forms.
- Electronic Background Screening Process - Initiated by HR and completed by candidate.
- Planning an Application Preparation Workshop for internal employees. To date 15 employees expressed an interest in attending.
  - The objective is to make sure the application meets the minimum qualifications before applying to open positions.

**Staffing Plan:**

- Reviewed/Revised Class Plan.
- Revised Org Charts to reflect RHA’s current organization.

**Employee Engagement Initiatives:**

- Developed a Dress Code Policy Committee - Kick-off meeting held November 29, 2023. Second Meeting held December 11, 2023.
  - In the process of developing a proposed policy for review and approval.
- Solicited input from employees regarding Holiday Ideas for the upcoming Annual Holiday Party scheduled for December 14th. Selected activities were based on employee input.
- Executive Staff approved an RHA wide participation in the 12 Days of Holidays beginning December 7th through 22nd.

- Conducted field visits at the following locations:
  - Danforth
  - Glenwood
  - Lexington Court
  - Hudson Ridge Towers
  - 495 Upper Falls
  - 270 Lake Ave
- Continue to prioritize the employee experience, focusing on creating a positive and engaging work environment.

**Health & Wellness:**

- Open Enrollment November 14th - 27th.
  - Extended to November 28th.
    - 12 Not Started; 5 In Progress and 125 Pending.
  - Retiree packages mailed on December 1st.

**Conclusion:** The HR Department remains committed to these critical areas and will continually address challenges and opportunities to align with the organization's goals and objectives.

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

**Inclusion**

- 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.
- Diwali Celebration: The Diversity and Inclusion Committee commemorated Diwali by a festival with traditional sweets, tea, henna, traditional attire, informational data, traditional dances, mandala creation and fun activities.
- Diversity and Inclusion Tree: The Diversity and Inclusion Committee will have an RHA Diversity and Inclusion Tree so staff members will be able to share something about their culture to represent the diversity in RHA.
- Hanukkah: The Diversity and Inclusion Committee will share information via email to staff regarding Hanukkah.

## **Compliance**

- **Fraud Investigations:**
  - **Leasing Operations** Repayment Agreement payments total YTD as of November 2023, \$59,734.37 collected (with a total of \$5,661.31 collected in November 2023) A total of \$616,756.86 has been collected to date.
  - **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for vacated arrears and collection loss as of November 2023, with \$10,588.05 collected (with a total of \$879.08 collected in November 2023). A total of \$66,435.71 was collected to date.
- **Termination Hearings:**
  - **Leasing Operations** – 1 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 1 Upheld; 0 No Show, 0 Overturned, 0 Reinstated, 0 Adjourned, 0 Withdrawn; 0 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 – 1,444 (Previously 1,433)– 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 serves 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*)

- The Compliance Department regular rotation 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.
  - There were several attempted break-ins to Glenwood Gardens. I am working with AP Security for them to pay special attention in that site.
  - The Rochester Police Department will be performing a 2nd Safety Training for RHA employees on December 8, 2023.
- **Training** – I coordinated with HUD Office of Inspector General (OIG) to provide Housing policy Training for employees on December 8, 2023. A hybrid format will be utilized.

**6. Finance**

**Kimberly Huffman**

Ms. Huffman shared that Finance is still working on finalizing the closing of FY 2023, she should have a report in the month of January 2024.

**7. Information Technology Report**

**Evhen Tupis**

**RFQ: Video Safety – Glenwood Gardens – 41 Kestrel St., Rochester NY**

- Agreements and BPO have been signed and executed.
- Milestone: 20 Nov 2023 – initial/suggested configuration outline sent to Owner (Compliance and Security) for review/editing. This is not on a critical path.
  - Point(s) of Contact (POC) for Systems Administration & Training
  - Real-time Viewing Station
  - Authorized Remote Viewers
- Milestone: 30 Nov 2023 – Launch/trenching. Residents notified by Public Housing.
- Future: After initial installation is complete (and video is being recorded and is extractable on demand), Owner shall identify any desired alerts, alert-targets, and system training recipients.

**RFP: Video Safety System & Electronic Access Control – 18 sites**

- (No update) Proposals are due December 1, 2023.

**RFP: Tenmast Upgrade/Replacement**

- Milestone: 1 December 2023 – Receive interview questions from Key Stakeholders.
- Teams-based initial interviews scheduled for mid-December through late-January.
- Have I mentioned this initiative is not trivial and is likely to take at least 2-years

**8. Public Housing Report**

**Harolda Wilcox**

**Public Housing Activities:**

- In the month of November, the Public Housing administrative staff took a four-day Low Income Housing Tax Credit training. The purpose of this training was to provide an overview to the Public Housing management team a compilation of regulations pertaining to the operation and management of residential properties that fall under the Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits model.
- On November 13th and 15th, we met with the residents at Glenwood Gardens to provide an update on the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) project and the installation of security cameras for the site.
- Our Third Annual Thanksgiving Meal giveaway was held on Saturday, November 18th, in partnership with Faith Church at the Public Housing Lexington Court location. We were able to feed 122 families with a whole Turkey and all the ingredients for the Thanksgiving dinner. It was an amazing time for the residents and the RHA staff. The Faith Church volunteers assisted with delivering groceries to the shut in, provided prayer to those that wanted prayer. I want to thank Commissioner Davis for coming out and being a part of the function. A special thanks to Karen Crittenden, Lynette McGee, Celeste Langston, and Romy Layz for their support and assistance.

**Public Housing Matters:**

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

**RENT ARREARS**

- RHA Public Housing department Received \$1,412.86 in EPPI2.0 monies for November 2023.
- As of November 2023, the total delinquent rent amount owed is \$702,056.55, which is an increase of \$44,008.55 for the of November.
  - 0 to 30 days -- \$196,323.01
  - 31 to 60 days -- \$129,023.22
  - 61 to 90 days -- \$103,264.00
  - Over 90 days -- \$586,810.55
- Friendly reminder that RHA arrears are larger due to not taking partial payments from residents. This is due to the residents not paying their rent in full, which is not in accordance with RHA policies. Also, there are residents who have not paid their rent in two-plus years. These residents are in the process of court proceedings.
- RHA is sending all partial payments back to the resident with a letter of explanation as to why RHA is not accepting their payment.
- 5 - 30-day notices were sent to the City Marshal in November.
- Repayment agreements are offered in extreme circumstances due to the

- We are still collaborating with residents to address arrears in lieu of court proceedings. As of October, RHA has entered into 121 repayment agreements year to date totaling \$214,231.94.
- As of November 30, 2023, the following is an update of the Public Housing zones repayment agreements:
  - North – One resident are currently in lease termination status and four residents are in delinquent status.
  - South – One resident is currently in lease termination status and four in delinquent status.
  - Central – Zero residents are currently in lease termination status and three residents are in delinquent status.
  - Scattered Sites – Zero resident is in lease termination and three in delinquent status.
- Parkside
  - 4 Vacant Units
  - 2 Units Ready to Lease
  - 0 Offers
- Parkside Arrears
  - \$ 60,296.56 outstanding rent
  - \$12,754.00 0 -30 days
  - \$ 6,860.98 31-60 days
  - \$ 4,626.00 61-90 days
  - \$ 46,477.00 over 90 days (represents eleven tenants)

## **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

### **Staffing**

- 4 positions open – Housing Specialist
- 4 positions open – Clerk

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

Housing Specialists are still making unit offers to applicants for the promo high-rise offers.

- The Studio Wait List is still open and applicants applying to this wait list will be immediately contacted to process application.
- Next Studio Wait List Pull: 12/11/23 and 12/18/23.
- (12 units) KT 4t and 5th floors have been released to APC for unit offers. Housing Specialist is currently making offers to occupy those units.
- (12 units) HRT 11th floors is now open, and Housing Specialist is making offers to fill these units as well.

- (10) Studios at DTE/DTW are still open. We are continuously pulling from the studio wait list to get those unit occupied. Most applicants, after going thru the intake process, decide not to take the unit citing the unit is too small for their belongings as for the reason they've declined the unit offer.
- (4 units) Glenwood – only 504 units are available, but we do not have any approved applicants that are in need of those units at this time. We did canvas the 1-bedroom wait list for any applicants in need of a 504/Wheelchair unit and have only 1 applicant that responded to the canvas.

**Wait List Purge:**

- Tentatively, APC will begin its wait lists purge starting 1/22/24. Currently, all wait lists except the Studio Wait List is closed. APC will begin purging all of the 2 – 4-bedroom wait lists. This process will take around 60 days to complete. Once after the purge has been completed, I will assess each list to determine the wait time an applicant will experience. If the wait time is near/around 24 months, the wait list will remain closed. If the wait list is around 12-16 months, it will be reopened soon afterwards.
  - APC's USPS Business Reply account expired and will need to have another account set up and balance of previous account transferred to new account in order to proceed with purge.
    - UPDATE: The account has been resolved and business reply envelopes are in the process of being ordered for the wait lists purge.

**Current Department Operation Status:**

- No updates to report as of 12/11/23.

**Unit Offers:**

- APC Manager and designated staff continue to extend offers to 'ready drawer' applicants to fill vacancies. We are continuously pulling applicants from the 1-bedroom and studio wait lists to make immediate offers.
- Current applications in Screening and Intake Phase as of 12/11/23:
  - Currently being screened - 13 applications\*
    - Studio - 3
    - Regular 1-bdrm – 6
    - High Rise 1-bdrm canvas - 0
    - 2+ bedrooms – 4
  - Currently going thru intake (w/Intake Specialists): 68 applications
    - studio/1-bedroom – 55 applications
    - 2+ bedrooms – 13 applications

**Staffing**

- 1 position open – Housing Specialist

**Renovation projects**

- Fed/Scattered Site –

- As of 10/5/23 – All residents, except for the Section 32 resident and resident requiring a 504 unit, have received a final relocation unit offer, per the Relocation Plan.
  - As of 12/11/23 - NO OTHER UPDATES
- Bond St. – As of 5/2/23 - All families have been extended an offer. All have accepted their offers except 1 resident. Property Manager is currently addressing this issue.
  - As of 12/11/23 – no updates
- Luther Circle -all residents have been assigned a unit to relocate to. APC is waiting on transfer paperwork/preferences from Property Manager and residents to officially add them to wait list and extend offer according to transfer policy and relocation plan.
  - APC is currently extending offers to residents with construction project start dates of 1/2024. All other residents with earlier construction project start dates have been extended a unit offer. Most of those residents have accepted their relocation unit and are either waiting for their stipend to move or moving date by moving company.
    - UPDATE: Since the closing of Fairfield Village, the remaining 16 residents (excluding lease terminations), will be offered a final unit offer.
- Parliament Arms – Since the closing of Parliament Arms, the remaining 16 residents will be offered a final unit offer.

**9. Maintenance Report**

**Robert Croston**

**1. Vacant Unit Report**

- The Maintenance Department continues to work on keeping up with the high number of vacant units. This is preparations for more resident to relocate during the projects at Fairfield Village and Parliament Arms.

**2. Site Beautification**

- We have started the fall cleanup at all of the sites at RHA. This includes removal of all debris, tree limbs and branches and leaves on the ground to prepare for the upcoming winter season. This also helps us to limit any damage done to the lawns and sites of having the debris laying on the lawns all winter long. (Pictures to be provided once completed).
- Maintenance is painting the stairwells at Hudson Ridge Towers to upgrade the looks for the residents in the building. (Pictures to be provided once completed).
- We will be looking at finding some new wall coverings for the lobbies at DTE and DTW with direction from Public Housing. To try and update the looks of the buildings when you first walk in for a better first impression.

**3. Preparing for Elections**

- We had our first look into the winter season in Rochester, right at the end of November. This was helpful to the Maintenance Department and gave us a chance to get the equipment up and running in for the first time this year. It was also a good trial experience for the staff and those who are new to RHA in the Maintenance Department to learn our snow removal system and the sites.

- It was also a good for the contractor to test and get their equipment up and running to prepare for this season's snow fall.

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

**Pierre Dorancy**

**Leasing Operations Matters:**

1. The Administrative Plan language changes have been approved. Staff have implemented the changes. Robocall was used to notify participants and landlords of the changes that affect them.
2. Currently, there are 709 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 82.83% utilization of vouchers and 97.11% utilization of funds. Leasing Operations Department has a Leasing Plan for 2023 to maximize HUD funding for Housing Assistance Payments. Staff continues to work overtime to issue vouchers, complete certifications and maintain utilization. To that end, we have increased our payment standards, and will continue to issue vouchers, and improve communication with participants on available resources during the housing search process.
4. The monthly inspection goal has been 780-960. The Inspection Unit conducted 845 inspections in November 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 fourteen (14) batches of letters of interest to qualifying families with 2 – Leasing Operations Section 8 Meeting –

12/13/2023 recertifications from May 2023 through June 2024 were randomly selected and provided with program information. As of 12/04/2023, one hundred sixty (163) families have been enrolled in the program of which eighty-eight (88) have been randomly selected for mobility services. Three (3) applicant families from the HCV Waiting List have enrolled and one (1) was randomly assigned to receive services. CCD families continue to search for units throughout the Opportunity Areas and six (6) families have leased up in an Opportunity Areas. Five (5) CCD families moved into a non-Opportunity Areas; twenty-one (21) families renewed their lease and did not move.

### **HUD Emergency Housing Vouchers**

As of 12/04/2023, out of 117 EHV vouchers authorized:

- 175 moving papers have been issued,
  - 120 applicants have been housed.
  - 6 applicants are searching for housing.
  - 2 applicants have moving papers submitted to Contracts Unit.
- No additional referral has 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 12/04/2023, out of 25 new Mainstream Vouchers authorized, 24 applicants have been housed and 1 have submitted moving papers to RHA.

### **Training**

The Leasing Operations team will continue to provide training for staff in Calendar Year 2024 in collaboration with the HR department. Topics include:

- Trainings on SEMAP, HOTMA and NSPIRE have been attended and scheduled.
- Rent Calculations & HCV Program Management.
- Personal and Professional Development such as effective communication.

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

**Melissa Berrien**

**ROSS NOFA** (grant renewal application) - The Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency Service Coordinator (ROSS-SC) grant program is designed to assist residents of Public and Indian Housing make progress towards economic and housing self-sufficiency by removing the educational, professional and health barriers they face.

- **Community Needs Assessment:** ROSS-SCs must assess the needs of residents in the project(s) to be served to determine the critical needs that residents identify as barriers to achieving self-sufficiency.

**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 30<sup>th</sup> of 2023. Amendment to Executive Director and Mayor for Signature. A signed extension was received on 4/5/2023.
  - Program extended until September 2024 or until funds expended.
  - To date we have issued 17 homeownership grants.

- **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 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 their 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
  - RMAPI Housing Navigation – RMAPI is surveying participants, landlords, and experts to examine the navigation of our local housing systems and ways to make it easier.
  - The project has moved to the next phase of ideation after completing interviews with 56 renters, landlords, and field experts.
  - Next phase- the team is working on drafting “How Might We” statements incorporating the insights gathered from the interview process.
  - We are planning a prototyping session to review possible solutions and create a pilot around housing navigation.
  - Housing prototyping summit scheduled for 9/29.
  - Over 75 attendees from across our community, including tenants, landlords, multiple levels of government, housing agencies, community-based organizations, and more participated in the prototyping session. The Housing Working Group will be coming back together again soon to work through the seven prototypes.
  - After analyzing the 7 prototypes we combined duplicative ideas into 3 prototypes: Housing Choice Hub, Certification and Housing Matching App. Meetings are scheduled with key partners to determine viability, ownership and needed resources to get to pilot phase.
  
- **Closing the Gaps** – This 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.

- Closing the gaps seeks to improve homeownership and entrepreneurial outcomes for people of color. The proposed plan would add outreach dollars and incentives for young families to pursue homeownership.
  - Next steps: Create collaborative outreach materials, meet with Head Start staff, explore RHA/Landbank partnership.
  - The City of Rochester team is planning a site visit scheduled with the Living Cities team September 13-15.
  - Informative meeting held with Living Cities, City of Rochester staff, RMAPI and RHA staff and board on 9/13.
  - Pathstone and CCCS responded to an RFP to push the homeownership project further.
- 
- **Homeownership**
    - Ms. Brown closed on her home in the town of Hamlin zip code 14464 on December 1, 2023.
    - We have four families with anticipated closings and thirty-six families who have been approved for financing and are searching for homes.

**12. Resident Relations Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

There was no report since there was no meeting held in December.

**13. Planning Committee Report**

**Daniel R. Long**

- The Planning Committee meeting was held on 12/6/2023. There were no follow-up items from the previous meeting.
- There is no potential action item to consider.
- We then discussed the status of our current projects by having staff give updates and review progress pictures:
  1. Unit's 43 & 60 Wm. Warfield Dr. Fire Restoration – is at 60% with abatement and demo completed and re-installations progressing.
  2. Atlantic Townhomes Site Upgrades – project is in the close out phase.
  3. Unit 910 University Tower Fire Restoration – project is at 60% with restoration work having begun.
  4. Bronson Court Phase II project has begun.

- We are under contract with Bureau Veritas to undertake the PNA work on the CNI target sites and evaluation needs for that effort. BV is in the process of delivering a draft report for RHA review, in related business, we are putting out an updated RFP for any sites not originally evaluated in support of our overall Capital and Development pipeline in January.
- 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 September 12th are: 501.20 is 100% Obligated and 60% Expended and 501.21 is 100% Obligated and 54% Expended and 501.22 is 67% Obligated and 4% Expended. With the latest projects and upcoming bid openings, we expect to meet all our deadlines. We expect to start obligating the 501.23 grant as soon as spring 2024.
- 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 as we move forward from permitting into abatement and construction. RHA has been attending site visits to review any site issues that come up on the Scattered sites to ensure timely response to our Contractor. The Federal site is well underway with the pouring of one foundation slab and wall framing commencing. The second multi-unit building will have framing completed in the next week; the single-family home is near framing completion as well. The contractor has been finishing all utility tie-ins and is performing backfill and rough grading this week.
- Our meetings for Parliament / Fairfield have shifted to construction/ site meetings. Walk-throughs for both sites to update any outstanding scope of work items have been completed. Mitigation and abatement along with general demolition is ongoing at both sites. Abatement of Building #4 at Parliament is complete, and the contractor is preparing for full demolition of that structure.
- Fernwood Development was reviewed during our HCR Technical Assistance meeting and revisions have been made to address concerns HCR had over zoning and environment items, we are working with the City to obtain an updated support letter prior to re-submittal.
- 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.
- Updates were then given on our pipeline of capital projects in planning and design stages.
- Updates were also given on the Hazard Related Grant and Section 32 progress.

- The Bond Street Development project restart is in the updated planning stages, new TDC limits have been published by HUD and we are preparing to engage the A/E consultant to finalize bid documents.
- The rest of our project pipeline was presented, and the meeting was adjourned.

**14. Commissioner Comments**

**Commissioner Cummings:** Once again. We just want to thank you, Stafford. And my word, you know that that's a lot of you. This shows your commitment to this agency and to our mission. And I wish everybody a blessed Christmas if I don't see you but prosperously here. Thanks.

**Commissioner Waters:** Congratulations on the promotions of all the Staffs that have been promoted. Happy holidays that you see. I've had a lot of questions this time. Thank you.

**Commissioner Ocansey:** I just would like to put in the same sentiment of my fellow commissioners, it's been a long year, and I am always amazed about how much we get accomplished here. Shawn it's tremendous doing in doing his part to help move RHA forward. Melissa of course congratulations all deserved and rest of you for joining our staff. It's a blessing you finally got position we've been asking for a long time, and you come and get it ground running you're taking off and we really appreciate that. I am look forward to 2024 with Federal St. kicking off this year. I am excited about what the future must hold for RHA. We just have to get the money for it, and I know Shawn is working hard to make sure it happens. The future is bright, and RHA is in good position thanks to you guys. So, thank you all and happy holidays and so hopefully we'll celebrate together with a toast tomorrow, thank you.

**Commissioner Lee:** I'll keep it short and speak congratulations Melissa and happy holidays and thank you to all the staff for your contributions.

**Commissioner Davis:** since I've been here, I'm still impressed with everybody. Congratulations to everybody and thanks for welcoming me here Thank you.

**Commissioner Remarais:** From me, the same. I Ditto Flo and everyone else. I'm super impressed. It has been a great year. I'm very proud to lead this board. I brag about it all the time. I'm on a couple of the boards and committees and I'm always, you know, bragging about how organized and how up to date and how well we run. I couldn't be prouder of everyone and thankful. I appreciate all of you. Happy holidays. You guys know that I'm here if you need anything and I'm going to be a little late, couple hours late to tomorrow's event, but I will stop by and spend some time with everyone tomorrow. I'm looking forward to that.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to go into Executive Session for a legal and personnel matter. Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded a motion to go into Executive Session at 1:30 pm. Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Davis, and Commissioner Remarais voted yes. The motion was passed, five to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 2:28 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Lee, and Commissioner Waters voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to end the Regular Board Meeting; Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 2:29 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Davis, and Commissioner Waters, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

**15. January Regular Board Meeting**

The December Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at 12:00 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board, Executive Director