

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
January 25, 2024
675 WEST MAIN STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



January 25, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel
Tim Cook, Tipping Point Communications
Stephanie Cascio, Community Bank
Ronda Howard, Community Bank

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

There was no public comment. There were two people from Community Bank in attendance, just to sit in the board meeting to listen, Stephanie Cascio and Ronda Howard.

2. Approval of Minutes: December 20, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve the December 2023 Regular Board Meeting Minutes Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Ocansey voted yes, the motion passed five to zero.

3. Director's Report and Board Approval Requests

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

CONTINUE

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 NYS PHADA: 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 the RMAPI Steering Committee that he is a part of. RMAPI publicly announced that Pulitzer Prize-winning author Matthew Desmond (Profit in the American City, Evicted, Poverty by America) will visit Rochester on March 6 for a community conversation and book signing. This promises to be an inspirational event that will educate, engage, and inspire our community to act against poverty. The event will be held from 4-6 pm at Innovation Square, 140 South Clinton Ave. Through research, history, and his investigative work, Desmond shines a light on the intentional and unintentional societal structures that cause and keep people in poverty. Mr. Desmond also describes the steps we can take together to be "poverty abolitionists." Breaking these societal barriers begins with education and awareness, so Mr. Desmond's visit to Rochester and the presentation of his groundbreaking work are crucial to our cause. Unfortunately, I will be on vacation and unable to attend, but RHA will have 10 spots available along with 10 books for the Board and staff to attend. Please let Diana know asap if you can attend.

Mr. Burr shared the he was invited to participate in the NYS Attorney General and Enterprises spotlight on innovative housing initiative programs, lift up lessons learned, and explore opportunities to further support New York's vulnerable communities in the years ahead in Albany on 1/24/23.

Mr. Burr shared that 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 gave an update on:

Congressional Leaders Reach Agreement on Another Two-Tiered CR for Expiring

Appropriations Bills and Announce Framework for a Final Tax Bill – Take Action!

Congressional leaders reached an agreement over the weekend on another two-tier, short-term continuing resolution (CR) to extend federal funding. If passed, funding for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) – the bill that finances HUD's vital affordable housing and homelessness assistance programs – and three other federal spending bills will be extended through March 1. Funding for the remaining eight bills will last until March 8.

While the CR has yet to pass, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) is expected to hold a procedural vote tonight (1/16) that will begin the process of enacting the CR. Congress has only until January 19 – just three days – to pass the CR or face a partial government shutdown. Congressional leaders have only recently reached a deal on a topline number for defense and non-defense spending (see Memo, 1/8) but have yet to finalize topline spending numbers for each of the 12 appropriations bills. The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate must also still reconcile their vastly different spending proposals for HUD programs; however, at current levels, neither the House nor Senate draft proposal adequately funds HUD’s vital Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. According to an updated analysis, under the Senate proposal, as many as 80,000 fewer vouchers would be reissued, and under the House proposal, an estimated 112,000 vouchers would be lost upon turnover incomes. NLIHC’s President and CEO Diane Yentel released a statement on the tax bill and the continued need for federal affordable housing investments. Take Action!

It is critical that advocates keep weighing in with their senators and representatives on the importance of increased funding for vital federal affordable housing and homelessness programs. Tell Congress that it cannot balance the federal budget at the expense of people with the lowest incomes!

- Contact your senators and representatives to urge them to expand – not cut – investments in affordable, accessible homes through the FY24 spending bill, including for NLIHC’s top priorities:
 - Full funding to renew all existing contracts for the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) and Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) programs.
 - Full funding for public housing operations and repairs.
 - The Senate’s proposed funding for Homeless Assistance Grants.
 - Protecting \$20 million in funding for legal assistance to prevent evictions in the Senate bill.
 - The House’s proposed funding for Native housing.
- National, state, local, tribal, and territorial organizations can also join over 2,100 organizations on a national letter calling on Congress to support the highest level of funding possible for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development resources in FY24.
- Contact your members of Congress and urge them to include key reforms to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) in any tax legislation so the nation’s largest source of federal financing for affordable housing can better serve rural and tribal areas, as well as those most at risk of homelessness. These bipartisan reforms - included in the “Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act,” endorsed by over 200 members of Congress – would:
 - Expand the Extremely Low-Income (ELI) Basis Boost for housing developments that set aside at least 20% of units for households with extremely low incomes or those experiencing homelessness.

- Designate Tribal and rural communities as “Difficult Development Areas” (DDAs), which would make it more financially feasible for developers to build affordable homes in these areas.

Supreme Court to Hear Most Significant Case About Homelessness in Decades

The U.S. Supreme Court announced on January 12 that it will hear **Johnson v. City of Grants Pass**, a case that will determine whether people experiencing homelessness have a constitutional right to camp on public property when they do not have a place to sleep. The Supreme Court will decide whether laws regulating camping on public property constitute “cruel and unusual punishment” prohibited by the Eighth Amendment.

A 2018 ruling from the Ninth Circuit – **Martin v. City of Boise** – found that, under the Eighth Amendment, cities cannot punish people experiencing homelessness for breaking anti-camping ordinances if there are no available shelter beds. As a result of the ruling, communities in the nine states under the Ninth Circuit’s jurisdiction face legal challenges and greater scrutiny when they clear encampments and are pressured, instead, to focus on long-term housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness.

Johnson v. Grants Pass is a court case originally filed in 2018 that determined that it is cruel and unusual punishment to ticket or arrest people for sleeping outside when they have no other safe option. A federal judge and Ninth Circuit panel struck down an anti-camping ordinance enacted in Grants Pass, Oregon, because the city did not have adequate shelter. The ruling affirmed the holding of *Martin v. City of Boise*. The city lost an appeal for the full Ninth Circuit to reconsider that ruling and then petitioned the Supreme Court to hear the case. The Supreme Court may hear arguments in the case in April and issue a ruling by the end of June.

To learn more, visit: <https://johnsonvgrantspass.com/>

b. Board Action Requests

- i. IT Staff Augmentation - Authorized the Executive Director to award a two-month contract to Innovative Solutions in the amount of \$26,000.00 – Information Technology

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

- ii. FY 2024 1st Quarter Vacated Areas - Authorized the Executive Director to approve the write-off in the amount of \$30,978.11 – Public Housing.

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

- iii. Vacation Leave Policy – Authorized the Executive Director to approve the revision, implementation of the policy and notification of the employees to Policy #170 RHA Vacation Policy – Human Resources.

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

- iv. Holland Townhouses Dryer Vent Upgrades - Authorized the Executive Director to award the contract to Kennedy Mechanical in the amount of \$66,680.19 – Capital Projects.

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

- v. RHA Vehicle Fleet – Authorized the Executive Director to approve a bridge contract with Enterprise Fleet Management in the amount of \$84,255.00 – Maintenance.

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

- vi. Directors and Officers Insurance Policy – Authorized the Executive Director renew the contract with AIG in the amount of \$59,000.00 – Authority Wide.

Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed six 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 January 2024, HR focused on key activities such as building organizational capacity through hiring and promotions and creating a positive culture.

Recruitment, Hires & Promotions:

Hires:

Hire Type	New Position	Department	Effective Date
New Hire	Clerk I	Human Resources	February 5, 2024
New Hire	Maintenance Laborer	Maintenance	TBD

Employee Promotions:

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

Previous Position	New Position	Department	Effective Date
Stock Clerk	Purchaser Assistant	Procurement	Dec. 26, 2023
Maintenance Mechanic	Sr. Maintenance Mechanic	Maintenance	Jan. 8, 2024
Maintenance Mechanic	Sr. Maintenance Mechanic	Maintenance	Jan. 8, 2024

Transfers:

Previous Position	New Position	Department	Effective Date
N/A			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:

Open Req.s	# Apl’s Approved by Civil Service	# Apl’s Denied by Civil Service	# Interviews Completed	# Interviews Pending	# Offers Extended	# Offers Accepted	Offer Acceptance Rate
42*	48	18	27	12	15	14	93%

- 63 Open Positions.
- ** Declined due to pay

Staffing Plan:

- Finalizing Class Plan and Org Charts.
 - Working with Civil Service Commission to create and abolish positions.

- Temp Staffing Firms Purchase Orders created.
 - Intro meetings scheduled as follows:
 - AppleOne: Need to reschedule due to inclement weather.
 - Clovity, Inc: Friday, January 19, 2024.
 - Rad.gov: Thursday, January 24, 2024.

Performance:

- 2022 Performance Evaluation Cycle completed.
- 2022 Performance Bonus Process underway.
- 2023 Performance Evaluation Cycle: preparation is underway.

Employee Engagement Initiatives:

- Dress Code Policy Committee.
- Reviewed proposed draft during January 11th meeting.
- Continue to prioritize the employee experience, focusing on creating a positive and engaging work environment.

Health & Wellness:

- Covid Reporting Procedures Update.

Miscellaneous:

- Creation of a HR Mailbox.

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.
- Diversity and Inclusion Tree: The Diversity and Inclusion Committee created a Diversity and Inclusion Tree in which the staff attached leaves with their names, something about their culture and notes representing the diversity in RHA. The tree will be displayed on the culture wall to remind us to celebrate our differences.

- 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 December 2023, \$65,822.37 collected (with a total of \$6,088 collected in December 2023) A total of \$622,844.86 has been collected to date.
 - **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for vacated arrears and collection loss as of December 2023, with \$10,972.68 collected (with a total of \$384.63 collected in December 2023). A total of \$66,820.34 was collected to date.
- **Termination Hearings:**
 - **Leasing Operations** – 0 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 0 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 – 1,437 (Previously 1,444)– 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.
 - We have recently taken a proactive step of engaging the services of two additional security companies to bolster safety measures in both Glenwood Gardens and our main office. By doing so, we aim to enhance the overall security and ensure a safe environment for our residents and employees. These additional security companies will work in collaboration with our existing security team to provide comprehensive coverage and effectively address any potential security concerns.
- **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 reported the monthly Finance Report, the actual vs. budgeted figures, and variances for September 2023 and October through November 2023, for the COCC, Public Housing, and Section 8 income and expenses.

7. Information Technology Report

Evhen Tupis

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

- System is functional with ability to request the pulling of video, at-will (January 1, 2024).
- The system acceptance meeting, system-alerting training, and system administration training with Deputy Executive Director Herriott (as owner) and her designees is being scheduled.

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

- RFP's have been received and are under review. This initiative is quite complex so RFP review will take time.

RFP: Tenmast Upgrade/Replacement

- Vendors that responded to the RFP are being interviewed. The final vendor interview is scheduled for January 29, 2024.
- Twenty-four RHA stakeholders are participating and represent almost every RHA department. Each has committed 2-hours of time to each interview, plus time to offer formal feedback on each.

Federal Affordable Connectivity Program (\$30/month Internet Subsidy)

- Unless additional funding is appropriated, the program is expected to run out of funding sometime in the spring of 2024. In-person events are on pause, pending the outcome of additional funding being made available.
- Proactive communication has been posted through our communication channels because if/when funding runs out, Internet bills will return to pre-ACP levels.
- HUD has examined the RHA approach and commended us as being well ahead of most other organizations saying that our strategy was a "best practice".

8. Public Housing Report

Harolda Wilcox

Public Housing Activities:

- From December 1 to December 19th, the Managers and I hosted the 12 days of thank you for the Public Housing staff to show our appreciation for all their hard work. The team enjoyed the events, there was positive bonding amongst the team. There was a variety of team building events scheduled for each day, such as paint and twist, bingo, cookie decorating contest. The staff expressed positive feedback and said the food was amazing. We closed out the event on the 19th with a soul food spread. Thank you to Shawn and Cynthia for coming through and showing their support. It was a great time to be able to share some quality time with each other. These events allowed staff from other sites to come together and see each other. We are thankful to all the staff members for all their efforts/support to make these events enjoyable. Attached are pictures of these events.
- Emergency evacuation exercises were done at Hudson Ridge Tower, Kennedy Tower, and University Tower. Afterwards, the fire department representative did a hi rise safety presentation and open discussion with the residents at these sites.
- On December 4, 2023, the first Annual Plan meeting with key stakeholders was held. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss annual plan timeline and assigned task with the staff. Our Kickoff meeting with key staff, council presidents and council members is scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 11:00 am.
- On December 7, 2023, Resident Services hosted the senior Christmas luncheon at the Kodak Center. It was a great turnout this year and the Public Housing staff assisted with the event. The residents enjoyed themselves. The residents gave positive feedback regarding the location and the food. We would like to thank all of them for all their support during the event.

- On December 8, 2023, the public housing administrative staff attended an in person/virtual fair housing presentation by the OIG (Office Inspector General) this office is committed to protecting HUD's programs, operation and beneficiaries from individuals and organizations. Based on their discussion/presentation RHA staff learned that regardless of their level of involvement in a HUD program the OIG office relies on us in stopping and preventing misappropriation of HUD/taxpayers dollars.
- We have been working closely and diligently with the attorneys at Harris Beach, PLLC regarding residents that are in the court process. Recently they have provided us a road map for court proceedings. This roadmap has provided us more detail information needed for court proceedings.

Public Housing terminations status:

There are 33 residents with the Attorney's office that is being processed for court. The following is the statistical breakdown:

6 are holdovers.

27 are for non-payments – there are 21 that are from the Family/Scattered Sites with 7 of those being families that have 11 minors in the household that are at risk.

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 \$0.00 in EPPI 2.0 monies for December 2023.
- As of December 2023, the total delinquent rent amount owed is \$776,890.75, which is an increase of \$69,972.75 for the of November.
 - 0 to 30 days -- \$555,710.13
 - 31 to 60 days -- \$176,807.60
 - 61 to 90 days -- \$124,214.13
 - Over 90 days -- \$710,281.52
- 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.
- 4 - 30-day notices were sent to the City Marshal in December.
- 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 January 5, 2024, the following is an update of the Public Housing zones repayment agreements:
 - North – One resident is 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
 - \$13,779.00 0 -30 days
 - \$ 7,318.98 31-60 days
 - \$ 5,590.58.00 61-90 days
 - \$ 37,913.00 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: 1/08/24 and 1/22/24.
- (12 units) KT 4th 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.
 - ❖ UPDATE: APC will be canvassing the 1 bedroom wait list for applicants that are 50+ years old and have an interest in residing in our hi-rise communities. We will canvas the 1-bedroom wait list until end of March 2024 and/or until we have enough applicants that have been approved to reside in those units (DTE/DTW/KT and HRT).

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 12-16months, 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.
 - No Updates to Report – 1/3/24

Current Department Operation Status:

- No updates to report as of 01/03/24.

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 01/03/24:
 - Currently being screened - 16 applications*
 - Studio - 9
 - Regular 1-bdrm – 6
 - High Rise 1-bdrm canvas - 0
 - 2+ bedrooms – 1
 - Currently going thru intake (w/Intake Specialists): 46 applications
 - studio/1-bedroom – 25 applications
 - 2+ bedrooms – 21 applications

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 1/3/24 - 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 1/3/24 – 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 Luther/Fairfield Village, the remaining 3 residents (excluding lease terminations), have been offered a final unit offer.
- Parliament Arms – Since the closing of Parliament Arms, the remaining 10 residents will or have been offered a final 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

- Maintenance is painting the stairwells at Hudson Ridge Towers to upgrade the looks for the residents in the building. (Pictures to be provided)
- We are still 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 Winter

- As we get into the winter season the maintenance department will be concentration on weather related issues and snow removal at out sites.
- We had our second look into the winter season here in Rochester and it has been a good year so far. Once again, we made it through without any major setbacks on staff or equipment. This helps the staff, and the contractors move into the winter season. With some of the construction going on at RHA, it will be a challenge for staff and the contractor at those sites to find space to pile the snow. We may end up if the weather calls for it, to remove snow from some sites in order to provide safe conditions for residents still living in these sites and contractors working on upgrading the buildings.

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. Updates in 2024 will reflect required and discretionary changes, including HOTMA and NSPIRE regulations..
2. Currently, there are 591 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 83.70% utilization of vouchers and 97.71% utilization of funds. Leasing Operations Department has a Leasing Plan for 2024 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 685 inspections in December 2023.

HUD Community Choice Demonstration (formerly Mobility Demonstration)

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

neighborhoods and other areas of opportunity with high-performing schools and other strong community resources.

As of the pilot start date of October 17, 2022, the Managers implementing the program have updated the RHA website with CCD information. Interested families can reach out to a dedicated phone line and email address to communicate interest in participation. The CCD email address is communitychoice@rochesterhousing.org and the phone line is (585) 697-6210. The Leasing Operations staff have sent out 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 01/11/2024, two hundred seven (207) families have been enrolled in the program of which one hundred six (106) have been randomly selected for mobility services. Four (4) 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 eight (8) families have leased up in an Opportunity Area. Five (5) CCD families moved into a non-Opportunity Areas; twenty-seven (27) families renewed their lease and did not move.

HUD Emergency Housing Vouchers

As of 01/11/2024, out of 117 EHV vouchers authorized:

- 175 moving papers have been issued,
 - 123 applicants have been housed.
 - 5 applicants are searching for housing.
 - 1 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 01/11/2024, 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

FSS Grant (grant renewal) - FY23 Family Self Sufficiency Grant - RHA was awarded \$316,764 which funds Human Service Specialist who work directly with participating FSS families assisting them in finding jobs, increasing earned income, reducing, or eliminating the need for rental and/or welfare assistance, and making progress toward achieving.

Participant Highlights: We have 170 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:

- Ms. Joiner began the FSS program on June 1, 2022, with employment, credit maintenance and homeownership goals. Ms. Joiner gained employment with Mary Cariola and increased her income by 301%. Ms. Joiner closed on her home on 11/7/2023. Ms. Joiner is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive \$6,465.49 in escrow savings.
- Ms. Hayes began the FSS program on August 1, 2019, with employment and homeownership goals. Ms. Hayes maintained employment with RTS and increased her income by 6,589%. Ms. Hayes is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive \$4822.88 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. 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.
 - RMAPI Housing Navigation – RMAPI is surveying participants, landlords, and experts to examine 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. Marte closed on her home in the city of Rochester zip code 14606 on December 8, 2023.
 - Ms. Torres closed on her home in the town of Greece zip code 14616 on December 11, 2023
 - Ms. Vazquez Jiminez closed on her home Rochester Zip code 14605 on December 15, 2023. (Buy the Block)
 - We have three families with an anticipated closing and thirty-four families who have been approved for financing and are searching for homes.

12. Resident Relations Report

Melissa Berrien

Community Rooms Resident Rental – Policy, procedure, and contract complete. The next step is the drafting of an MOU for RHA and the individual councils.

Resident IT needs – Resident services is working with IT to assist the residents with their IT needs. We are asking for patience until we can implement a new plan.

Facebook- Melissa discussed the presidents following RHA’s Facebook page where community resources are often posted.

Commissioner's report – Commissioner Cummings discussed councils needing additional officers to work with resident services. Presidents were requested to review the security report and to reach out to road patrol, PH Director, and DED when necessary. Also, the RHA newsletter needs a resident feature.

Executive Overview – Tenants on Patrol (TOP) –Executive Director Burr discussed development projects at Parliament, Luther and Federal and reminded presidents of the opportunity and importance of participating in 5 year plan.

Senior Activities

- Senior Holiday Luncheon is planned for December 7th.
 - 186 residents signed up.
 - 104 attended.
 - Seniors very please with the event and new space.

Family Activities –

- College Fair in partnership with the Rochester Education Foundation (REF) 11/16
 - Tileesia following up with attendees for scholarship application interest.
- Toy Giveaway- Toy pick up the week of December 18th.

13. Planning Committee Report

Daniel R. Long

- The Planning Committee meeting was held on 01/12/2024. There were no follow-up items from the previous meeting.
- There is one action item to consider (dryer vent upgrades- Holland Townhouses).
- 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 70% with abatement and demo completed and re-installations progressing.
 2. Unit 910 University Tower Fire Restoration – project is at 85% with restoration work having begun.
 3. Bronson Court Phase II project has begun. Porch foundations are going in and exterior work commencing.
- We are under contract with Bureau Veritas to undertake the PNA work on the CNI target sites, and they are preparing to deliver their final determinations this month.
- 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 Davis: no comment.

Commissioner Waters: I just wanted to congratulate around on on the graduation from I forgot what that I wasn't there I wasn't there and then I wanted to thank the team for all the work that you all are doing keep this authority going strong So I appreciate you

Commissioner Ocansey: no comment.

Commissioner Rubin: Hello staff, Thank you very much. We know you're under supported and we're you know we're also like there is resources when you're out there in the schools. So, thank you, thank you, thank you. We say it every time and we mean it.

Commissioner Cummings: As always, kudos to staff for the commitment. And I know things, you know, hectic sometimes, and I just ask that you have a little patience. This year, 2024, I'm looking for positive things that I'm Housing Authority and I'm also looking for us to start thinking outside of the box. I'm reading a lot about housing, but I don't see our name connected to it. And it's time to get for us to get back out there and let the community know who we are and what we stand for. The only way we can do that is from staff with your, with your commitment and I know you guys get a little frustrated sometimes. So, I'm just asking you this to be patient and to stay encouraged, right.

Commissioner Remarais: from me as always, thank you to the staff, our executive team. We appreciate you so much. Hang in there just the beginning of the year, but we know 2024's going to be a great one. We're going to have a lot of work on our plate, but we'll get a stronger group of, you know, staff together and some good people coming our way. Thank you everyone.

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 2:05 pm. Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Davis, and Commissioner Remarais voted yes. The motion was passed, six 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 2:49 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Lee, and Commissioner Waters voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

- vii. 86 Shelter Street – Authorized the Executive Director the purchase of the lot at 86 Shelter Street in the amount (not to exceed) of \$301.00 – Public Housing.

Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Waters seconded the motion to approve the action item Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Rubin, and Commissioner Ocansey 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 Ocansey seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 2:50 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Davis, and Commissioner Waters, voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

15. February Regular Board Meeting

The February Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 12:00 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,
Secretary to the RHA Board, Executive Director