

ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
April 23, 2025
**675 WEST MAIN STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



April 23, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rosalie Remarais, Commissioner Board Chair
Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner, Vice Chair
Robert Davis, Commissioner
Shanai Lee, Commissioner
Kabutey Ocansey, Commissioner
Hank Rubin, Commissioner
James Waters, Jr., Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT

Melissa Berrien
Shawn Burr
Diana Colon
Robert Croston
Natasha Dicks
Julie Fox
Cynthia Herriott
Danielle Huertas
Celeste Langston
Romaira Layz
Daniel Long
Mariam Machuca-Rodriguez
Marylin Morales
Denisse Ramos
Peggy Robinson

OTHERS PRESENT

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel
Joshua D. Steele, RHA Legal Counsel
Shannon Munier, Tipping Point Communications

Commissioner Rosalie Remarais called the April 2025 Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:06 pm. It was noted for the record that notice of this meeting was posted, as required by law, and that there was a quorum present.

1. Open Forum – Public Comments

Ms. Koroma attended the April Board Meeting to share some concerns.

2. Recognition of Board Chair

Executive Director, Shawn Burr, presented the Board Chair, Rosalie Remarais with a plaque, thanking her for her years of dedication and service to RHA and the community.

3. Election for Chairperson

Commissioner Waters nominated Commissioner Ocansey for the position of Board Chairperson. Commissioner Ocansey nominated Commissioner Rubin for the position of Board Chair, therefore declining his nomination.

Commissioner Ocansey moved to elect Commissioner Rubin as the RHA Board Chairperson. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Remarais voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

4. Election for Vice-Chairperson

Election for a Vice-Chairperson was not needed.

5. Approval of Minutes: March 26, 2025, Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the March 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Remarais voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

6. Director's Report and Board Approval Requests

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

CONTINUED

- Mr. Burr **CONTINUED** 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 these trying times! They really continue to do a remarkable job day in and day out!
- Mr. Burr continued to recognize the efforts of the HR, Wellness Committee and Diversity & Inclusion Committee teams for their nonstop effort informing, planning, and facilitating staff functions.
- Mr. Burr participated in meetings with various community organizations.
- Mr. Burr recognized the extra efforts of staff involved in various community projects.

- Mr. Burr shared that the Development projects are moving forward with more residents moving back into their homes! Dan will continue to show progress pictures with his report. We are exceeding our MWBE and Section 3 goals nicely in both projects, with exception of WBE which does continue to increase, but not without a lot of effort. Parliament-Fairfield construction is well under way with good progress being made also. Residents are moving back to their renovated units. Public housing staff continue to meet 1:1 with the residents who are moving to address their needs. We did receive almost \$4.5 million in NYS HHAP funding for our Fernwood project and **were awarded our 9% LIHTC application to HCR!** We have begun working on assembling the development team with the goal of closing this coming Fall. We continue to meet internally on Fernwood Phase II working on design concepts. Glenwood is moving along also with a revised concept plan to reduce costs that will be submitted to HCR. Big kudos to the PH 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. They are truly doing great work!
- Mr. Burr shared a NYSPHADA update.
- Mr. Burr shared that the executive team continues to work on updating our org chart from top to bottom and assessing our civil service class plan. We continue to work on the revised Class Plan with Civil Service. HR is working with Civil Service to accomplish our goals.
- Mr. Burr shared that the Annual Plan process is moving forward with the draft plan out for public comment. We met internally with staff and the Resident Advisory Board.
- Mr. Burr shared that our SEMAP score appeal has been submitted to HUD and we are awaiting a response.
- Mr. Burr shared information that Congress moved forward on Reconciliation Package. On April 4, Senate Republicans voted on a Motion to Proceed on a budget resolution, a necessary step to pass President Trump's second term agenda through Congress' Budget Reconciliation process. The Motion to Proceed passed on April 5.

With the current partisan dynamics in Congress and a historically slim margin in the House of Representatives, Republicans in Congress have the challenging task of passing President Trump's second term agenda. Reconciliation would allow House and Senate Republicans to move President-Elect Trump's top priorities through Congress by bypassing Democrats who remain strongly opposed to many parts of the President's policies.

The budget resolution now goes back to the House where it faces growing opposition from the House Freedom Caucus and budget hawks that take issue with the mechanics of how the bill will cut spending and extend President

Trump's 2017 Tax Cuts. Some of these members have historically opposed raising the nation's debt limit, a step that will become necessary to pay for the tax cuts. President Trump and House Speaker Mike Johnson are courting these lawmakers individually with the hope of turning their skepticism and lean-No votes, to Yes. NAHRO will continue to track Congress' progress in advancing its Reconciliation Package, which will have implications for both federal spending on domestic programs as well as changes to the tax code – including potential improvements to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

b. Board Action Requests

- i. RHA No Trespass Policy - Authorize the Executive Director to approve the No Trespass Policy. – Compliance

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

- ii. Public Housing and Local Works Reserve - Authorize the Executive Director to cover development soft costs and other associated costs for the RHA Fernwood Site in a not to exceed amount of \$250,000 – Public Housing

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

- iii. Abatement of Units 29 & 31 Bronson Ct - Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to Kascon Environmental Services, LLC. in the amount of \$67,000. – Capital Projects

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

- iv. Video Safety System (Public Housing) - Authorize the Executive Director to award a 1-year contract, with an option of 4 additional renewals, to Tsunami/Oceans10 Security in the amount of \$108,000 – Capital Projects

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

- v. Spraying of Vegetation Killer in the North Zone - Authorize the Executive Director to award this 1st renewal of a possible 4 renewals contract to Cardinal Lawn and Landscaping in the amount of \$5,880.00 – Maintenance

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

- vi. Lawn Spraying of Vegetation Killer in the South Zone - Authorize the Executive Director to award this 1st renewal of a possible 4 renewals contract to High Falls Tree Service in the amount of \$20,692 – Maintenance

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

- vii. FY 2025 2nd Quarter Vacated Arrears Write-off – Authorize the Executive Director to approve the write-off of the FY 2025 2nd Quarter Arrears in the amount of \$147,035.77 – Public Housing

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

- viii. Ratification of Vote from Finance Committee Meeting Executive Session

This action item was tabled and discussed in the Executive Session. The action item was voted on when the Executive Session ended.

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

7. Human Resource Report

Loretha J. McCullough

Ms. Dicks stepped in to cover Ms. McCullough's report which shared information about RHA's Strategic Plan, and that HR is focused on key activities such as building organizational capacity through hiring and promotions and creating a positive culture.

Ms. McCullough's report showed recruitment, new hire, promotions, transfers, and separations. It also reviewed our recruitment strategies and results.

Ms. McCullough's report discussed employee performance, engagement initiatives and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion activities.

8. Compliance/Legal Report

Cynthia Herriott

Ms. Herriott reported on the following activities and progress:

- Inclusion Activities
- Compliance Matters
- Department Operations

9. Finance Report

Kara Ryan

Mr. Burr stepped in to cover Ms. Ryan's report which showed the January 2025 actual vs. budgeted figures, income and expenses, and variances for COCC, Public Housing, Section 8, and RAD.

10. Information Technology Report

Shawn Burr

Mr. Burr reported on the following:

- IT Operations
- Resident Computer Lab upgrades
- Resident Internet Initiative (NYS ConnectALL program)
- Staff Development & Upgrade Preparation
- New Projects

11. Public Housing Report

Celeste Langston

Ms. Langston presented the following:

- Public Housing Activities
 - HUD PH Occupancy Monthly Meeting

- Town and Country Extermination Monthly Meeting
 - Path stone/Providence Housing/Family Services of Rochester Monthly Meeting
 - PH management staff and CVR bi-weekly meetings
 - Enriched Housing monthly meetings
 - Fire drills will be scheduled for PH high risers
 - Incorporating HHAP residents to participate in our strong families' events to establish communication, identify their needs, and provide resources.
- Public Housing Matters:
- The PH Team continues to do an excellent job of keeping things moving despite being short- staffed and many continue to work overtime to help with the workload.
- Rent Arrears – the rent arrears statistics were presented.
- Application Processing Center: Waiting List Management:
- Wait List Management
 - Current Department Operation Status
 - Unit Offers
 - Current Applications in Screening and Intake Phase
 - Staffing

12. Maintenance Report

Robert Croston

Mr. Croston presented monthly updates on the following:

- Vacant Unit Report
- Annual Plan and Site Beautification
- Work Orders and Training of New Staff

13. Leasing Operations Report (Section 8)

Danielle Huertas

Ms. Huertas presented the following:

- Leasing Operations Matters:
 1. The RHA Administrative Plan is currently under review to update required and discretionary changes, as required, by HOTMA and NSPIRE and other relevant HUD regulations.
 2. The 2024 HCV application process closed on Friday, June 14, 2024, at 4:00 PM, with 9,909 preapplications received through the extended deadline, of which 4,000 were selected. All applicants were notified of selection on September 12, 2024. The RHA's Housing Choice Voucher (**HCV**) **Waiting List** is currently being processed. The intake team is working with the top 350 applicants. Currently, **98 families have**

- moving papers** and an additional 7 submitted Request for Tenancy Approvals (RFTA's). An additional 39 have completed their submission for background processing. An additional 139 families are in the process of completing their submissions for background checks and 70 have been removed or rejected.
3. Leasing Operations' voucher and funding utilization goal is between 95% to 98%. We are currently at 84.53% utilization of vouchers and 102.06% utilization of funds.
 4. The monthly inspection goal has been 780-960. The Inspection Unit conducted 650 inspections in March 2025.
 5. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Utilization report was updated and attached with data as of 3/30/2025.
 6. Staff Highlights
 7. Staff Training

14. Resident Services Report

Melissa Berrien

Ms. Berrien reported on the following:

- Participant Highlights: We have 175 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program.
- Section 3 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.
 - RMAPI Housing Subcommittee Co-Chair Update
 - Home Fair, Monroe County/Housing Council, March 29th, 2025
 - Closing the Gaps
 - City of Rochester - Rochester Housing Stability Fund Board
 - Homeownership Program Update

15. Resident Relations Committee Report

Melissa Berrien

Ms. Berrien reported on the following:

- Resident Councils – President Reports
- Public Housing Update
- Commissioner's Report
- Executive Update
- Family Activities
- Senior Activities
- Presenter – Mr. Vickers from the University of Rochester presented information on prostate cancer screening.

13. Capital Projects Report

Daniel R. Long

Mr. Long reported on the following:

- The Planning Committee Meeting Follow up items.
 - There was one action item.
 - Current Project Status
 - Our MWBE & Section 3 Contracts report
- The status of our current CFP's Budgets: 501.22 is 100% Obligated and 31% Expended. 501.23 is 97% Obligated.
- We then discussed our A/E status report, and no issues were present.
- Project Planning

16. Interagency Relations Committee

Commissioner Rubin

Commissioner Rubin presented his monthly update.

****full reports are available upon request****

14. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Ocansey: Thanked Board Chair Remarais for her guidance & leadership.

Commissioner Lee: Thanked Board Chair for her service, leadership, and mentorship.

Commissioner Rubin: Thanked Board Chair.

Commissioner Cummings: Thanked Board Chair for her patience and for all her work.

Commissioner Remarais: She thanked the Board and RHA staff for their hard work. She expressed how proud she was to have served on this Board.

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

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Lee seconded the motion to end Executive Session at 2:48 pm. Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Davis, and Commissioner Lee voted yes. The motion passed seven to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to end the Regular Board Meeting; Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Lee seconded the motion to end the Regular Board Meeting at 2:55 pm. Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Cummings and Commissioner Lee voted yes. The motion passed seven to zero.

15. May Regular Board Meeting

The April Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,
Secretary to the RHA Board, Executive Director