

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
May 21, 2025  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**May 21, 2025**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**STAFF PRESENT**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT**

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

Commissioner Hank Rubin called the May 2025 Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:25 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. Wallace attended the May Board Meeting to share some concerns.

**2. Approval of Minutes: April 23, 2025, Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Lee seconded the motion to approve the April 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Rubin, 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 and highlighted as follows:

***CONTINUED***

- 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 with onboarding and training new employees! 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 that build morale and brings us all together.
- 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 HUD notified us that we would be receiving a little over \$7 million in the capital Fund Programs grant awards for 2025-26!
- 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 sent for review. It is with the Mayor's office also for their review and sign-off.
- Mr. Burr shared that our SEMAP score appeal has been submitted to HUD and we are awaiting a response.
- Mr. Burr shared information that Trump's FY 26 "Skinny Budget" contains steep cuts for HUD programs. The Trump Administration released its FY 26 "Skinny Budget" request, marking the beginning of the FY 26 budget process in Congress. A "Skinny Budget" lays out the spending priorities for a President ahead of the release of the full budget, expected in late May. The budget proposes the elimination of the HOME and CDBG programs while also significantly cutting and block granting rental assistance programs, including Public Housing and HCV (Section 8), to the states.

**Proposed Cuts to Programs:**

- **Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, Public Housing, Project-Based Rental Assistance, Housing for the Elderly, and Housing for Persons with Disabilities:** -\$26.718 billion, a 43% cut (remainder of funds to combined and block granted to states with a two-year cap on assistance for able bodied adults). The budget does include \$25 million specifically allocated in housing grants for youth aging out of foster care.
- **CDBG:** – \$3.3 billion, eliminating the program.
- **HOME Investment Partnerships Program:** -\$1.25 billion, eliminating the program.
- **Homeless Assistance Program Consolidations:** -\$532 million, a 12% cut (ESG, HOPWA, and CoC grants would be combined into one program).
- **Self-Sufficiency Programs:** -\$196 million, eliminating FSS, Jobs Plus, and ROSS.

Historically, presidents, including Trump in his first term, have made similar reduction requests and Congress has typically funded the programs anyway. A President's Budget Request is an aspirational document, and Congress will likely pass a budget very different from what the President requests.

NAHRO anticipates work on FY 26 to begin in earnest soon after Republicans in Congress wrap up their work on a Budget Reconciliation process. Now is the time to tell Congress and the White House to not make dangerous cuts to crucial affordable housing programs and that now is NOT the time for dangerous cuts to rental assistance programs.

The President's full budget request is expected to be released in late May, but in the meantime:

- Send a letter to your representatives and Senators, urging them to Stand with PHAs and Protect lifesaving affordable housing programs. **Visit our Action Alert Center to Send your Letter Today.**
- Call your elected officials directly and speak to their offices about the importance of HUD programs in your community and tell them to stand with housers. Use these talking points from NAHRO to ensure that your message is heard loud and clear on the Hill. **NAHRO FY 26 Talking Points.**

**Twin Bills Strengthening LIHTC, Reintroduced in House and Senate** Sen. Todd Young (R-Ind) and Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash) reintroduced the bipartisan Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act (AHCIA) in the Senate in late April. Rep. Darin LaHood (R-IL) and Rep. Susan DelBene (D-Wash) reintroduced the House version of the bill earlier in the month.

With the House and Senate versions of the popular LIHTC expansion legislation now back in play, the hope is that Republicans will be able to include it in their Budget Reconciliation package. There's a lot of competing priorities lawmakers want to include in the package, so LIHTC expansion is NOT a guarantee, making NAHRO's Advocacy around it crucial. **Send a letter to your Reps and Senators asking them to sponsor the bill.**

Democrats and Republicans both see LIHTC expansion bill as Congress' most effective tool to address housing supply. The bill would help create about 1.6 million affordable homes over the next decade and increase the total tax credits granted to states and ease some public financing requirements that can hinder construction of new affordable homes.

AHCIA had strong bipartisan support in the House and Senate last year with over 300 lawmakers in the House and Senate signing on to cosponsor the bill. Tell your Members of Congress that LIHTC expansion is crucial to addressing the housing affordability crisis and urge them to cosponsor the bill with this **(customizable) letter from our Action Alert Center.**

#### **b. Board Action Requests**

- i. Communication Services Contract Award – Authorize the Executive Director to award a one-year contract, out of a possible four, to Tipping Point Communications in the amount of \$70,000 – Compliance

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

- ii. Admission and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) – Authorize the Executive Director to update the ACOP in relation to the Housing Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA) – Public Housing

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

- iii. Rehab of 26 Cutler St – Authorize the Executive Director to spend money from Local works, to try pilot program using in-house labor and possibly contractors to assess and train Maintenance staff, in the amount of \$103,053 – Maintenance

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

- iv. Vehicle Fleet Maintenance 2025-2026 – Authorize the Executive Director to enter into this contract (first year of possible three more renewals), for vehicles, small equipment maintenance and fuel, with the City of Rochester, in a not to exceed amount of \$80,000 – Maintenance

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

- v. Snow Plowing 2024-2025 – Authorize the Executive Director to approve a change order to close out the outstanding invoice for AA Blades for plowing and salting the North and Central Zones in the amount of \$13,006.11 – Maintenance

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

- vi. Scattered Site Roof Replacements R-23 – Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to Nuvista Design LLC. in the amount of \$98,000 – Maintenance

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

- vii. Executive Search Firms Contract Award – Authorize the Executive Director to award the Executive Search Firms contract to Gomez Partners, TalentAge and Datrose for a combined amount of \$150,000 (Gomez Partners - \$100,000, TalentAge - \$25,000, Datrose - \$25,000) – Human Resources

Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to approve the action item. Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Lee and

Commissioner Rubin voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

**4. Human Resource Report**

**Loretha J. McCullough**

Ms. Robinson 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.

**5. Compliance/Legal Report**

**Cynthia Herriott**

Ms. Herriott reported on the following activities and progress:

- Inclusion Activities
- Compliance Matters
- Department Operations

**6. Finance Report**

**Kara Ryan**

Ms. Ryan's report showed the March 2025 actual vs. budgeted figures, income and expenses, and variances for COCC, Public Housing, Section 8, and RAD.

**7. 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

**8. Public Housing Report**

**Celeste Langston**

Ms. Langston presented the following:

- Public Housing Activities
  - HUD PH Occupancy Monthly Meeting
  - Town and Country Extermination Monthly Meeting
  - PathStone/Providence Housing/Family Services of Rochester Monthly Meeting
  - PH management staff and CVR bi-weekly meetings
  - Enriched Housing monthly meetings
  - Fire drills scheduled for PH high risers

- PH Property Managers training with NAHRO
- PH staff training on MRI systems
- 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

**9. 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

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

**Danielle Huertas**

Ms. Huertas presented the following:

- Leasing Operations Matters:
  1. The revisions of the **Administrative Plan** as required by HOTMA and NSPIRE, are in process, to comply with 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, **102 families have moving papers** and an additional 7 submitted Request for Tenancy Approvals (RFTA's). An additional 38 have completed their submission for background processing. An additional 79 families are in the process of completing their submissions for background checks and 119 have been removed or rejected. Leasing Operations' voucher and funding utilization goal is between 95% to 98%. We are currently at 83.5% utilization of vouchers and 103.64% utilization of funds. Leasing Operations Department met with HUD's Field Office to review the Two-Year Tool on 4/7/2025 to discuss voucher issuance and funding utilization. Going forward we will meet bi-monthly to review the Two-Year-Tool. HUD has established higher FMRs for FY 2025.

3. The monthly inspection goal has been 780-960. The Inspection Unit conducted 660 inspections in April 2025.
4. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Utilization report was updated and attached with data as of 4/30/2025.
5. Staff Highlights
6. Staff Training

**11. 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
  - Civil Rights Heritage Park Project, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025
  - Closing the Gaps
  - City of Rochester - Rochester Housing Stability Fund Board
  - Homeownership Program Update

**12. 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

**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



**14. Interagency Relations Committee**

**Commissioner Rubin**

Commissioner Rubin presented his monthly update.

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

**15. Commissioner Comments**

**Commissioner Cummings:** Commented on the progress of APC.

**Commissioner Lee:** Thanked staff.

**Commissioner Ocansey:** Thanked staff for stepping up when needed.

**Commissioner Davis:** Thanked the transition and search committee for their efforts.

**Commissioner Rubin:** Assured everyone that the board is working hard alongside the staff to continue to push RHA forward.

Board Chair Rubin requested a motion to go into Executive Session at 1:20 pm. Commissioner Lee moved, and Commissioner Cummings seconded. Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Rubin voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

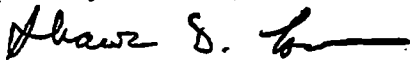
Board Chair Rubin requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Lee moved, and Commissioner Waters seconded the motion to end Executive Session at 2:05 pm. Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Lee, and Commissioner Rubin voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

Board Chair Rubin requested a motion to end the Regular Board Meeting; Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to end the Regular Board Meeting at 2:05 pm. Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Lee, and Commissioner Rubin voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

**16. June Regular Board Meeting**

The June Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board, Executive Director