



**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
NOVEMBER 19, 2025  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**

**November 19, 2025**

**MEMBERS' PRESENT**

Florine Cummings, Commissioner, Board Chair  
Kabutey Ocansey, Commissioner, Vice Chair  
Robert Davis, Commissioner  
LeRoy Strickland, Commissioner  
Truman Tolefree, Commissioner  
James Waters, Jr., Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT**

Melissa Berrien  
Shawn Burr  
Diana Colon  
Robert Croston  
Natasha Dicks  
Cynthia Herriott  
Joyce Kinsey  
Romaira Layz  
Thomas Levans  
Daniel Long  
Loretha McCullough  
Marylin Morales  
Denisse Ramos  
Peggy Robinson  
Mariam Rodriguez-Machuca  
Kara Ryan  
James Senger  
Maria Sharp

**OTHERS PRESENT**

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

Commissioner Florine Cummings called the, November 19, 2025, Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting at 12:18 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**

There were no public comments. Mr. Kingston came to observe the meeting.

**2. Resident Commissioner Swearing-In**

Commissioner Tolefree was sworn in.

**3. Approval of Minutes: October 21, 2025, Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the October 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Tolefree abstained. The motion passed five to zero.

**4. 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 bring us all together.
- Mr. Burr shared that on a federal level, the government shutdown has ended, and we are to be funded until 1/30/2026. Fingers crossed that there will be an approved budget in place by then and we will receive adequate funding.
- This past month, 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 continue to move forward with Parliament/Fairfield nearing full occupancy. Fernwood planning is well underway with a closing date targeted for November 28. Holland TH's is our next RAD project and design teams are fully engaged. 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. Public housing staff continue to meet 1:1 with the residents who are moving back in to sign their lease and address their needs. We continue to meet internally on Fernwood Phase II also working on design concepts. Glenwood is moving along also with a revised concept plan, to reduce costs, that has been 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 with directors on updating our org chart from top to bottom and assessing our civil service class plan. He shared that they continue to work on the revised Class Plan with Civil Service as positions are filled and tests. HR is working with Civil Service to accomplish our goals.
- Mr. Burr shared that our SEMAP score appeal has been submitted to HUD and we are still awaiting a response.
- Mr. Burr shared NAHRO's article pertaining to **CoC and YHDP FY25 NOFO Released with Major Changes**
- Mr. Burr spoke about the following: **Congress Passes Clean CR, Ending Longest Shutdown in History**

**b. Board Action Requests**

- i. Bronson Court – Site Improvements, Phase 3 (Electrical) – Authorize the Executive Director to award the contract to Szulgit Electric in the amount of \$99,000 – Capital Projects

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

- ii. Bronson Court – Site Improvements, Phase 3 (General) – Authorize the Executive Director to award the contract to Loyal Nine in the amount of \$459,890 – Capital Projects

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

- iii. A/E Services for Jonathan Child Renovations/Site Improvements – Authorize the Executive Director to sign contracts with CJS Architects in the amount of \$75,334 – Capital Projects

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

- iv. Video Safety System Contract (Tsunami/Oceans10Security) for HRT, Lake Tower, and Harriet Tubman Estates – Authorize the Executive Director to award the contract to Tsunami/Oceans10Security in the amount of \$136,500 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Davis moved, and Commissioner Waters seconded the motion to approve the action item. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Tolefree abstained. The motion passed five to zero.
- v. 54 William Warfield Drive Flood Renovations – Authorize the Executive Director to award the contract to Omari's Home Improvements in the amount of \$89,250 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Davis moved, and Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion to approve the action item. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Tolefree abstained. The motion passed five to zero.
- vi. Security Services Contract Renewal 1-of-4 for 2026 (AP Security) – Authorize the Executive Director to award a 1 of 4 possible annual renewals to AP Safety and Security in the amount of \$1,248,715 – Compliance

This action item was tabled for Executive Session.
- vii. 2025-2026 Snow Plowing Services (South, Scott., Admin.) – Authorize the Executive Director to award the contract to Washington Properties for the 4<sup>th</sup> and final year in the amount of \$208,581 – Maintenance

Commissioner Davis moved, and Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion to approve the action item. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Tolefree abstained. The motion passed five to zero.
- viii. 2025-2026 Snow Plowing Services (North & Central) – Authorize the Executive Director to award the contract to AA Blades for the 4<sup>th</sup> and final year in the amount of \$119,217 – Maintenance

Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion to approve the action item. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. Commissioner Tolefree abstained. The motion passed five to zero.
- ix. Snow Removal Equipment Purchases – Authorize the Executive Director to award the contract to Bobcat of the Finger Lakes/DJM Equipment in the amount of \$107,493.83 – Maintenance

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

- x. Human Resource & Payroll Information Systems (ADP) – Authorize the Executive Director to renew the contract with Automatic Data Processing, Inc (ADP) in the amount of \$80,000 – Human Resources

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

- xi. 2026 Temporary Employment Services (AppleOne) – Authorize the Executive Director to renew the contract with AppleOne in the amount of \$75,000 – Human Resources

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

- xii. 2026 Retiree Medicare Insurance (Excellus BCBS) – Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield in the amount of \$202,674 – Human Resources

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

- xiii. a. 2026 Lincoln Financial Group Insurance (NYS Disability Insurance) – Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to Lincoln Financial Group, in the amount of \$25,800 – Human Resources

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

- b. 2026 Lincoln Financial Group Insurance (Basic/Voluntary Life Insurance, and Short Term/Long Term Disability Insurance) – Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to Lincoln Financial Group in the amount of \$157,650 – Human Resources

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

xiv. 2026 Employee Dental Insurance (MetLife) – Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to MetLife in the amount of \$125,000 – Human Resources

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

xv. 2026 Employee Medical Insurance (MVP) – Authorize the Executive Director to renew the contract with MVP Healthcare, for active employees and retirees under 65 years of age, in the amount of \$3,500,000 – Human Resources

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

xvi. 2026 Workers' Compensation Carrier (Berkshire) – Human Resources

Tabled until more information is received from Berkshire regarding the cost.

xvii. Microsoft 365 License Renewal – Authorize the Executive Director to award a 1-year renewal contract to SHI International Corp. in the amount of \$105,690.69 - IT

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

xviii. FY 2025 SEMAP – Authorize the Executive Director to submit SEMAP data to HUD – Leasing Operations

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

xix. Resolution – Executive Office

Tabled to discuss during Executive Session.

**5. Human Resource Report**

**Loretha J. McCullough**

Ms. McCullough reported 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 shared information regarding recruitment, hires, promotions, transfers, and separations. It also reviewed our recruitment strategies and results.

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

**6. Compliance/Legal Report**

**Cynthia Herriott**

Ms. Herriott reported on the following activities and progress:

- Inclusion Activities
- Compliance Matters
- Department Operations

**7. Finance Report**

**Kara Ryan**

Ms. Ryan did not present a Finance Report due to the closing of FY25.

**8. 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
- System Security

**9. Public Housing Report**

**Celeste Langston**

Ms. Langston presented the following:

- Public Housing Activities:
  - PROPIO Language line follow-up – we met the administrative staff to get feedback about the service. The staff has expressed satisfaction with the response time.
  - A Security Survey was conducted on October 20, 2025, at Hudson Ridge Towers and on October 23th at Lake Tower. One will be conducted on November 17,

2025, at University Towers and on November 18 at Kennedy Towers.

- Training:
  - The public Housing Team continues to provide training to staff through both internal and external resources. Topics for November include:
    - All PH administration staff are registered to take the HOTMA refresher training, which is scheduled for November 6, 2025.
    - As of October 16, 2025, the Director of Public Housing, Celeste Langston, has completed leadership Training with United Way.
- Public Housing Matters:
  - The Public Housing management team meets frequently to strategize on how to increase the PH occupancy rate. An occupancy plan was developed and submitted to HUD for review.
  - CVR – The following are tasks performed monthly:
    - Packaged and sent out all annual recertifications 90 days before the due date
    - Processed all incoming US Postal/inner office mail
    - Maintain recertification email distribution and field all incoming phone calls from residents
    - Sent follow-up notices via US Postal Mail to residents
    - Provide weekly status reports from the tracker to the Director and Assistant Director
    - Reviewed and processed Annual recertifications received by residents at the following sites: Glenwood Gardens, Scattered Sites, Lexington Court, Lake Tower, Danforth Tower (East and West), Lena Gant, Kennedy Tower, Hudson Ridge, University Tower, Bronson Court, Bay Zimmer, Townhouses, Holland Townhouses, Harriett Tubman Estates, and Seneca Manor.
- Rent Arrears – the rent arrears statistics were presented.
- Application Processing Center: Waiting List Management:
  - Wait List Management
  - Current Department Operation Status
  - Unit Offers
  - Occupancy Rate
  - Current Applications in Screening and Intake Phase
  - Staffing

## **10. Maintenance Report**

**Robert Croston**

Mr. Croston presented monthly updates on the following:

- Vacant Unit Report
- Site Beautification
- Training of New Staff

- Harriet Tubman/William Warfield Emergency Water Project
- Preparing for the Winter Season
- Work Orders

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

**Maria Sharp**

Ms. Sharp presented the following:

- Leasing Operations Matters:

1. **Administrative Plan** – Nelrod has been chosen to assist with a complete review of the Administrative Plan this fiscal year.
2. **Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP)**-Leasing Operations is preparing for the SEMAP audit per CFR Part 985. The audit began on October 6, 2025. The PHA is required to complete and submit the SEMAP Certification (HUD-Form 52648) within 60 days after the end of the PHA's fiscal year. (November 29, 2025). RHA scored 105 of a possible 135 ranking as a Standard Performer. The official submission to HUD is attached for review. The official submission must be signed by the PHA's Board Chairperson (or designee) and the Executive Director.
3. **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, **81 families have moving papers and are searching for housing** and an additional 5 submitted Request for Tenancy Approvals (RFTA's). An additional 19 have passed the background check for issuance. 67 families are in the review process. 127 have been removed or rejected.
4. **Leasing Operations' voucher and funding utilization** goal is between 95% to 98%. Please see the attached utilization report.
5. The monthly **inspection's** goal has been 780-960 and will be reassessed for the upcoming Fiscal Year. The inspection Unit conducted 875 inspections in October 2025.
6. **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** - Utilization report was updated and attached with data as of 10/31/25.
7. **The Housing Provider Committee** is hosting an informational session for Housing Providers, Thursday, October 30, 2025, from 8:30am – 10:30am.
8. **Community Partnerships**
9. **Staff Training**

**12. Resident Services Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

Ms. Berrien reported on the following:

- Participant Highlights: 146 participants are 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
  - Closing the Gaps
- City of Rochester - Rochester Housing Stability Fund Board
- Eviction Prevention Study
- Homeownership Program Update

**13. Resident Relations Committee Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

Ms. Berrien reported on the following:

- Resident Council Reports
- Commissioner Reports
- Public Housing Update
- Executive Update
- Family Activities
- Senior Activities
- Special Guests

**14. Capital Projects Report**

**Daniel R. Long**

Mr. Long reported on the following:

- The Planning Committee Meeting follow-up and action items.
- Current Project Status
- MWBE & Section 3 Contracts report
- The status of our current CFP's Budgets: 501.22 is 100% Obligated and 31% Expended. The 501.23 grant is 100% Obligated. Budgeting for the 501.24 and 504.25 grants is underway.
- A/E status report (no issues were present)
- Project Planning

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

**15. Commissioners' Reports**

**Commissioner Strickland: None.**

**Commissioner Davis: Provided an update on the AP Survey.**

**Commissioner Waters: None.**

**Commissioner Ocansey:** Thanked the Staff for providing a warm welcome to the newest Board Member, Commissioner Tolefree. He also expressed his appreciation to Shawn for all the updates.

**Commissioner Tolefree:** Shared that he was happy to be present in the Board Meeting.

**Commissioner Cummings:** Thanked everyone for their hard work and commitment.

**16. Executive Session:**

Board Chair Cummings requested a motion to go into Executive Session at 1:25 pm. Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

During Executive Session, the Board voted on the following tabled action item:

vi. Security Services Contract Renewal 1-of-4 for 2026 (AP Security) – Authorize the Executive Director to award a 1 of 4 possible annual renewals to AP Safety and Security in the amount of \$1,248,715. – Compliance

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

Board Chair Cummings requested a motion to end Executive Session at 2:32 pm. Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Tolefree seconded the motion to end the Executive Session. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

Board Chair Cummings requested a motion to end the Regular Board Meeting at 2:34 pm. Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Tolefree seconded. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

**17. December Regular Board Meeting**

The December Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board, Executive Director