

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



**October 21, 2025**

**MEMBERS' PRESENT**

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

**STAFF PRESENT**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT**

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

Commissioner Florine Cummings called the, October 21, 2025, Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting at 12:04 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.

**2. Resident Commissioner Swearing-In**

Commissioner Davis and Commissioner Strickland were sworn in.

**3. Approval of Minutes: September 24, 2025, Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Davis moved, and Commissioner Lee seconded the motion to approve the September 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Strickland and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed six 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 continues with no end in sight. He shared that he has been and will continue to be in contact with Congressman Morelle's office keeping them informed of RHA's status relative to the impacts of the shutdown. HUD staff are furloughed, and their workforce continues to be reduced, which will result in more work being piled on the remaining employees. HUD is contracting with third party firms to handle some of the workload and technical assistance for upcoming changes. They are also bracing for a reduction in funding but have no idea to what degree.
- Mr. Burr shared updates regarding the Enriched Housing residents remaining in their units: There are still a few residents who have not submitted all the required documentation resulting in lease violation notices being sent to them. The team is also in turning over the vacant units as quickly as possible.
- 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 Federal St. complete and 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 address their needs. We are meeting regularly on our Fernwood project and are targeting a November closing. 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 Essential advocacy Points for October 2025 article – **Government Shutdown Stretches into Second Week as Congress.**

**b. Board Action Requests**

- i. Phase 1 Elevator Upgrades – Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to Otis Elevator Co. to rebuild (6) elevator systems at (3) locations with all new equipment in the amount of \$1,370,575 – Capital Projects

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

- ii. Atlantic Townhouse Fire Alarm System Upgrade – Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to West Fire Systems for the replacement of the obsolete emergency fire alarm equipment at 117 Atlantic Avenue, Building #2 in the amount of \$73,998.56. Capital Projects

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

iii. Lake Tower 10<sup>th</sup> Floor Abatement – Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to Siera Environmental Solutions for the asbestos abatement on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of Lake Tower, in the amount of \$96,850.00 – Capital Projects

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

iv. A&E Proposal for the 1-3 Thomas Street Interior Unit Upgrades Project – Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to Peter L Morse & Associates (PLMA) in the amount of \$66,850 – Capital Projects

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

v. Elevator Service Bridge Contract for Maintenance – Authorize the Executive Director to issue a PO to the Otis Elevator Company to cover Maintenance while the new contract is out to bid, in the amount of \$24,950 – Maintenance

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

vi. Fall and Spring Clean-Up Contract for 2025-2026 – Authorize the Executive Director to award the contract to Cardinal Landscaping in the amount of \$72,985 – Maintenance

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

vii. Renewal 2-of4: BPO for Verizon Cell Phone and Related Services – Authorize the Executive Director to exercise a second renewal and approve a Blanket PO titled “Cell phone related services” to Verizon to cover the time period from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, in the amount of \$60,000 – IT

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

viii. FY 2025 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Vacated Arrears Write-Off – Authorize the Executive Director to approve the write-off of the FY 2025 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Vacated Arrears in the amount of \$55,867.38 – Finance

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

**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's report showed August 2025 actual vs. budgeted figures, income and expenses, and variances for COCC, Public Housing, Section 8, and RAD. She also shared the Balance Sheets for each program/site.

**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:
  - Staff volunteered to assist with the commissioner elections that took place on September 30, 2025.
- Training:
  - The public Housing Team continues to provide training to staff through both internal and external resources. Topics for September include:
    - Housing Protections for Survivors under VAWA and Related Requirements for Public Housing Agencies - Online training for Property Managers took place on September 25, 2025.
- 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
    - Attend weekly meetings with property managers and internal CVR meetings about the project
    - Update and maintain CVR Tracker
    - 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, Jonathan Child, Bronson Court, Bay Zimmer Townhouses, Holland
- 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
- Work Orders
- Harriet Tubman/William Warfield Emergency Water Project

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

**Danielle Huertas**

Ms. Huertas 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). This is the official submission to HUD and 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%.
  5. The monthly **inspection's** goal has been 780-960 and will be reassessed for the upcoming Fiscal Year. The Inspection Unit conducted 993 inspections in September 2025.
  6. **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** - Utilization report was updated and attached with data as of 9/30/2025.
  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
  - Voter Registration Drive (September 16, 2025)
  - Monroe County Home Fair (September 20, 2025)
- Homeownership Program Update

**13. Resident Relations Committee Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

Ms. Berrien reported on the following:

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

**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.
- We then discussed our A/E status report, and no issues were present.
- Project Planning

**15. Commissioners' Reports**

**Commissioner Strickland: None.**

**Commissioner Davis: None.**

**Commissioner Waters: None.**

**Commissioner Ocansey: None.**

**Commissioner Lee: None.**

**Commissioner Cummings:** Thanked everyone for the work that they've done during these difficult times. She thanked Executive Director, Shawn Burr, for his hard work and acknowledged that he's had to wear more than one hat and has done a great job. She also thanked the Assistant Director of Public Housing, Celeste Langston, as well as the Public Housing Staff.

**16. Executive Session:**

Board Chair Cummings requested a motion to go into Executive Session at 1:55 pm. Commissioner Lee moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded. Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Strickland and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

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

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

**17. November Regular Board Meeting**

The November Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board, Executive Director