

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY
February 25, 2026
675 WEST MAIN STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



February 25, 2026

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
Patrick Cunningham, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT

Melissa Berrien
Shawn Burr
Marvel Carter
Diana Colon
Robert Croston
Natasha Dicks
Cynthia Herriott
Celestine Langston
Daniel Long
Marylin Morales
Denisse Ramos
Maria Sharp

OTHERS PRESENT

Taville T. Francis, RHA Legal Counsel

Commissioner Florine Cummings called the February 25, 2026, Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting, to order at 12:07 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

Margaret Austin and Jabrel Gause introduced themselves and stated that they were present to observe the meeting. There were no other public comments.

2. Approval of Minutes: January 2026, Regular and Special Board Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Davis moved, and Commissioner Waters seconded the motion to approve the January 2026 Regular and Special Board Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree, Commissioner Cunningham, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed six 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 **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 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, HUD is now funded and he included a breakdown of the approved funding is at the end of his report.
- Mr. Burr mentioned that Diana is in the process of updating the Conference Calendar for 2026. He encouraged commissioners to attend a conference per year, as they are a great place to learn and network.
- 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 Spring 2026 due to a change in the general contractor and RHA's decision to bid the GC services out. Bids are in and under review and our closing calls have resumed weekly. We were informed by HCR that Glenwood Gardens RAD project is slated to close in 2027. This is a 4% tax credit deal that will redevelop the entire site and create more housing units. We held two resident meetings on 2/9 with decent attendance. Diana and he also attended the Edgerton Neighborhood Association meeting on 2/5/26 and gave them an update on the project. 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. We 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 NAHRO's article: *Congress Passes Full Year 2026 THUD Bill, Ends Partial Government Shutdown*

b. Board Action Requests

- Scattered Site Roof Replacements R-24 – Authorize the Executive Director to award a contract to Allstate Roofing and More LLC, in the amount of \$184,755 – Capital Projects

Commissioner Tolefree moved, and Commissioner Waters seconded the motion to approve the action item. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree, Commissioner Cunningham, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed seven to zero.
- Consent to the Transfer of the Managing General Partner Interest – Authorize the Executive Director to give consent to the Interest Transfer of the managing general partner from co-general partner; Conifer Realty, LLC to co-general partner; the Young Women's Christian Association of Rochester and Monroe County, NY (YWCA) for the Housing Assistant Payment (HAP) contracts – Executive

Commissioner Davis moved, and Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion to approve the action item. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree, Commissioner Cunningham, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed seven to zero.
- Brown & Hutchingson LLP. BPO Request – Authorize the Executive Director to award a one-year contract to Brown and Hutchinson LLP in the amount of \$35,000 – Compliance

Commissioner Strickland moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to approve the action item. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree, Commissioner Cunningham, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed seven to zero.
- Spraying of Vegetation Killer in North Zone – Authorize the Executive Director to award a 2nd renewal contract to Cardinal Lawn and Landscaping in the amount of \$5,888 – Maintenance

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

- v. Spraying of Vegetation Killer in South/Central/Scattered/Admin Sites – Authorize the Executive Director to award a 2nd renewal contract to High Falls Tree Service in the amount of \$20,692 – Maintenance

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

- vi. 2026 Plumbing Bulk Bid Contract – Authorize the Executive Director to award a renewal contract to Ryan’s Plumbing to provide plumbing repairs throughout the Authority in the amount of \$160,000 – Maintenance

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

- vii. Purchase Order for Nights and Weekends Maintenance Coverage – Authorize the Executive Director to create a one-time purchase order for Night & Weekends On-Call Coverage in the amount of \$24,950 – Maintenance

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

4. Human Resource Report

Natasha Dicks

Ms. Dicks reported, in Ms. McCullough’s absence, 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. Dicks shared information regarding recruitment, hires, promotions, transfers, and separations. She also reviewed our recruitment strategies and results.

Ms. Dicks also 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

Shawn Burr

Ms. Ryan presented the December 2025 actual vs. budgeted figures, income and expenses, and variances for COCC, Public Housing, Section 8, and RAD, financials.

7. Information Technology Report

Shawn Burr

Mr. Burr reported on the following:

- Strategic Planning
- Operations
- Hardware Projects
- Software, Systems Security & Staff Development
- Supported Projects
- Resident Internet Initiative (NYS ConnectALL program)

8. Public Housing Report

Celeste Langston

Ms. Langston presented the following:

- Public Housing Activities:
 - The Public Housing Department is in the process of coordinating High Rise Fire Safety Presentation, general fire safety presentations, and fire drills with the Community Risk Reduction Division.
- Training:
 - The Public Housing team continues to provide training for staff through both internal and external resources. Topics for January include:
 - Administrative staff attended training with CVR on the following topics:
 - Annual Adjusted Income
 - ACOP Requirements
 - Caseload Management
 - Interim recertification
 - Resource Development
- 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.
 - CVR – The following are tasks performed monthly:

- CVR has 4 part time dedicated associates, and 1 Senior Associate assigned to the project. The following are tasks performed monthly:
 - Package and sent out all annual recertifications 90 days before the due date
 - Process all incoming US Postal/inner office mail
 - Maintain recertification email distribution and field all incoming phone calls from residents
 - Send 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 Executive Director and Director of Public Housing
 - Review and process Annual recertifications received by residents at the following sites: Glenwood Gardens, Scattered Sites, Lexington Court, Lake Tower, Danforth Tower (East and West), Lena Gantt, 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

9. Maintenance Report

Robert Croston

Mr. Croston presented monthly updates on the following:

- Vacant Unit Report
- Site Beautification
- Training of New Staff
- New Snow Removal Equipment

10. Leasing Operations Report (Section 8)

Maria Sharp

Ms. Sharp presented the following:

- Leasing Operations Matters:
 - **Administrative Plan** – Nelrod has completed the regulatory sections of the Administrative Plan. The discretionary components were provided as a questionnaire. The Leasing Operations leadership team will meet to review and discuss updates, followed by a meeting with Nelrod to finalize the plan.

- **Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP)** – Leasing Operations continues to actively develop strategies and timelines to ensure all SEMAP performance indicators are met. The team continues to work diligently to ensure compliance.
- **Voucher Utilization** – Leasing Operations maintains a voucher and funding utilization goal of 95%–98%. The attached utilization report provides the monthly status update. RHA continues to be under shortfall guidance and not issuing at this time.
- **Inspections** – The monthly inspections target has been 780–960 inspections and will be reassessed for the upcoming fiscal year. In December 2025, the Inspections Unit completed 739 inspections. The detailed inspection report is attached for review.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** – The PSH utilization report has been updated and is attached, reflecting data as of January 31, 2026. PSH will begin accepting referrals to fill units in Eastman Commons and other vacancies throughout the program per guidance from the CoC leadership team. The Appropriation Bill was passed by the Senate.
- **HUD 2026 NOFO Update** – *The Community is currently waiting for a new NOFO to be released, the case is still going through the courts. The good news is that we can resume receiving referrals.*
- **Housing Provider Engagement** – The Housing Provider Committee held a meeting on Thursday, February 12th to discuss the annual housing provider event for this year. The Committee will continue to engage housing providers through scheduled in-person informational sessions. Attendance has increased, and feedback from providers has been positive.
- **Community Partnerships** – Leasing Operations remains committed to strengthening and expanding community partnerships.
- **All-Staff Meeting** – Supervisors and Senior Housing Specialists lead weekly Housing Specialist training sessions every Tuesday, with topics guided by current quality control trends. Beginning February 20, 2026, Leasing Operations will offer biweekly Skill Builder sessions for staff. These sessions will cover IT systems, customer service, compliance, calculations, SEMAP requirements, and PIC error prevention. Leadership development has been identified as a departmental priority, and the Director is working to support additional growth opportunities.
- **Honoring the Work; Advancing the Mission** – Leasing Operations continues to make meaningful improvements. From the front office receiving a makeover to decluttering and moving forward with case distribution, we are working to promote an environment of organization and collaboration. The 2025 recertifications have been resolved. We continue to work with a small group of staff to support January and February backlog from vacated position.
- **Housing Choice Voucher (HCV Waiting List)**
- **Shortfall Funding** – The Finance Department is currently developing updates related to shortfall funding. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

11. Resident Services Report

Melissa Berrien

Ms. Berrien reported on the following:

- Participant Highlights: 125 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

12. Resident Relations Committee Report

Melissa Berrien

Ms. Berrien reported on the following:

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

13. 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 Budgets as of the last November P.O.s are: The 501.22 is 100% Obligated and 97% Expended. The 501.23 grant is at 100% obligation and 84% expended. 501.24 is at 75% obligated and 11% expended.
- A/E status report (no issues were present)
- Project Planning

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

14. Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Strickland:	None
Commissioner Davis:	None
Commissioner Waters:	None
Commissioner Ocansey:	None
Commissioner Tolefree:	None
Commissioner Cunningham:	None
Commissioner Cummings:	Thanked Staff for their participation and reporting. Commended RHA for their Black History Celebration.

15. Executive Session:

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

During Executive Session, the Board voted on the following resolution:

- Approved Resolution Relating to the Executive Director Contract

Commissioner Ocansey moved, and Commissioner Strickland seconded the motion to end the Executive Session. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree, Commissioner Cunningham, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed seven to zero.

16. End Executive Session:

Board Chair Cummings requested a motion to end Executive Session at 2:45 pm. Commissioner Cunningham moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to end Executive Session. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Tolefree, Commissioner Cunningham, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

17. End Regular Board Meeting Session:

Board Chair Cummings requested a motion to end the Regular Board Meeting at 2:46 pm. Commissioner Strickland moved, and Commissioner Tolefree seconded. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Tolefree, Commissioner Cunningham, and Commissioner Cummings, voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

18. March Regular Board Meeting

The March Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,
Secretary to the RHA Board, Executive Director