

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**May 20, 2026  
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**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
May 20, 2026  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**May 20, 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  
Natasha Dicks  
Cynthia Herriott  
Danielle Huertas  
Joyce Kinsey  
Celestine Langston  
Thomas Levens  
Daniel Long  
Loretha McCullough  
Marylin Morales  
Mariam Rodriguez-Machuca  
Peggy Robinson  
Kara Ryan  
Maria Sharp

**OTHER'S PRESENT**

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

Commissioner Cummings called the May 20, 2026, Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting, to order 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**

The following people came in to observe: Ms. Thomas, Ms. Ryndock, Mr. Wright, Ms. Thomas, Ms. McQueen, Ms. Gary, Ms. Rawlins, Ms. Murray, Ms. Cliff, Mr. Perry, Ms. Scott, Ms. Houston, Ms. McKnight, Mr. Kaddah. Ms. Cliff, Mr. Perry and share some Public Comments and were advised that someone would reach out in 48 hours.

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

Commissioner Tolefree moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to approve the April 2026 Regular and Special Board Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Tolefree and Commissioner Ocansey, 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 bring us all together.
- Mr. Burr recognized the extra efforts of staff involved in various community projects.
- Mr. Burr shared that on a federal level, PHAs are beginning to receive their individual funding numbers. Since we ended 2025 in a HAP shortfall, we start 2026 in the same shortfall and cannot issue any new vouchers until we know our funding and HUD's shortfall team determines we have the funds available to get out of shortfall. Unfortunately, it's still a wait and see game. And On April 29th, I was invited to attend HUD's Homeless Strategy Forum that was held in Rochester. The presentation was good and successful efforts nationwide were presented and open discussion facilitated. The collaboration amongst local leaders was encouraging and HUD will take the results of these forums and issue a summary of best practices nationwide.
- Mr. Burr shared that the development projects Development projects continue to move forward with Parliament/Fairfield nearing full occupancy. The Fernwood closing process is well underway with a closing date targeted for mid-June 2026 and a groundbreaking to follow. DGA Builders has been selected and qualified as the general contractor and is gearing up to start the project. Glenwood Gardens RAD project is moving forward and is slated to close in summer-fall 2027. Resident and

neighborhood group meetings have been held, and we will continue to update both. We will stop leasing units here in an effort to minimize relocation costs. This is a 4% tax credit deal that will redevelop the entire site and create more housing units. 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 exceeded our MWBE and Section 3 goals nicely in both projects, with exception of WBE 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. 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 HUD Secretary **Scott Turner** faced questions from lawmakers during a House budget hearing this week as he defended the administration's proposed HUD budget and its broader shift in homelessness policy.

**b. Board Action Requests**

- i. Video Safety Systems for Danforth Tower East – Authorize the Executive Director to awarding a contract to **Tsunami/ Oceans10 Security** for the sum of **\$139,680** for the Video Safety System Project to run (3) three years (\$46,560/year). – Capital Projects

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

- ii. 54 William Warfield Drive Flood Damage Restorations – Authorize the Executive Director to increase the contingency amount to 40% of the contract due to discovered structural and HVA/C deficiencies – Capital Projects

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

- iii. Wearable Recording Devices Policy #326 – Authorize the Executive Director to implement the policy and notify the employees – Human Resource

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

- iv. Internal Transfers Policy #430 – Authorize the Executive Director to implement the policy and notify the employees – Human Resource

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

- v. Internal Promotions Policy #431 – Authorize the Executive Director to implement the policy and notify the employees – Human Resources

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

- vi. Vehicle Use and Driver Safety Policy #501– Authorize the Executive Director to implement the policy and notify the employees – Human Resources

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

- vii. Illegal Passing of a Stopped School Bus Violation Policy #502– Authorize the Executive Director to implement the policy and notify the employees – Human Resources

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

- viii. Vacation Leave Policy #170– Authorize the Executive Director to implement the policy and notify the employees – Human Resources

Commissioner Davis moved, and Commissioner Waters seconded the motion to approve the action item. Commissioner Strickland, Commissioner Davis,

Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

- ix. Call Nights and Weekends - – Authorize the Executive Director to awarding a contract Omari's Home Improvements in the amount 75,000.00, with four possible renewals - Maintenance

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

#### 4. Human Resource Report

Loretha McCullough

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

Ms. McCullough 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:

##### **Fraud Investigations:**

- **Leasing Operations** Repayment Agreement payments total YTD as of May 2026, \$23,514.00 collected (with a total of \$5,927.00 collected in May 2026). A total of \$710,856.76 has been collected to date.
- **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for vacated arrears and collection loss as of May 2026, with \$6,108.10 collected (with a total of \$618.26 collected in May 2026). A total of \$100,315.02 was collected to date.
- **Tax Credit** Repayment Agreement payments total YTD as of May 2026, \$2,086.00 collected (with a total of \$268.00 collected in May 2026). A total of \$2,086.00 has been collected to date.

##### **Court Proceedings:**

- **Payments Received:** In May we received a total of \$17,184.20 in payments related to residents involved in the eviction proceedings.
- **Judgements Awarded by Court:** Total YTD awarded as of May 2026 was \$111,343.00. A total of \$208,100.00 was awarded by the court in judgements to date.

**Operations**

**Audit and Review-** Confidential audits are not listed below.

- Public Housing File Audit.
- VAWA and Reasonable Accommodation Leasing Operations Audit -In progress.
- VAWA and Reasonable Accommodation Public Housing - In progress.

**6. Finance Report**

**Kara Ryan**

Ms. Ryan presented the March 2026 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:

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

**8. Public Housing Report**

**Celeste Langston**

Ms. Langston presented the following:

- Public Housing Activities:
  - The public Housing Department conducted fire safety presentations in collaboration with the Rochester Fire Department.
  - The Public Housing Department will continue to coordinate High Rise Fire Safety
  - Presentations, general fire safety presentations, and fire drills with the Community Risk Reduction Division for our sites.
- Training:
  - The Public Housing team continues to provide training for staff through both internal and external resources. Administrative staff attended training with HAI on Evictions of Public Housing Residents
- Public Housing Matters:
  - Updates were given regarding University Tower and William Warfield.
    - CVR has 4 part time dedicated associates, and 1 Senior Associate assigned to the project. 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
- 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
- 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 Gantt, Kennedy Tower, Hudson Ridge, University Tower, Bronson Court, Bay Zimmer Townhouses, Holland Townhouses, Harriett Tubman Estates, and Seneca Manor.
- CVR had 4 part-time dedicated associates and 1 Senior Associate assigned to the project

➤ 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**

**Thomas Levans**

Mr. Levans presented monthly updates on the following:

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

**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 for board review.

- **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. Shanna Cranmer continues to monitor and resolve PIC errors and monitoring inspections. Jeanette Lynman has taken the lead in resolving the deceased tenants' reports bringing it down to zero. Danielle Huertas is providing PBV program oversight while RHA identifies a supervisor for the program. Late annuals are the lowest since COVID, 207. This speaks to the reduced caseloads, continued capacity development, and the support staff has received during overtime hours.
- **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 The monthly HQS inspections target is 780–960 inspections. In May 907 the HQS Inspections Unit completed 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 5/4/2026. RHA has requested new referrals for the various programs. The team is working towards one hundred percent occupancy.
- **HUD 2026 NOFO Update** – No further updates at this time.
- **Housing Provider Engagement** – The Housing Provider Committee is actively preparing for 2026 events. On May 6, 2026, RHA hosted the Housing Provider Development and Recognition Event, which was both well attended and informative. Housing Providers received education on Fair Housing requirements, the RHA lease-up process, rent reasonableness and comparables, reasonable accommodations, and the new NSPIRE inspection standards scheduled for implementation in February 2027. Providers also had the opportunity to network with staff and participate in raffles featuring gifts donated in part by Wegmans.
- **Community Partnerships** – Leasing Operations remains committed to strengthening and expanding community partnerships. Leasing Operations has partnered With Enterprise Community Partners on a rental assistance assessment project. The goal is to research, develop, and where feasible, implement strategies to improve lease-up success and outcomes for voucher holders. Enterprise will be onsite on May 21 & 22 to interview staff, participants, and housing providers.
- **Staff Training and Development** – Supervisors and Senior Housing Specialists continue to lead weekly Housing Specialist training sessions every Tuesday, with topics guided by current quality control trends. Leasing Operations also continues to offer biweekly Skill Builder sessions for staff, with topics identified based on departmental needs. Effective May 11, the Leasing Operations Department engaged MRI to provide a series of nine targeted Tenmast training sessions. Staff were invited to participate based on their respective roles and responsibilities. A special thank you to Ann Zheleznyak for coordinating these training opportunities with MRI and staff.

Department supervisor will be development has been identified as a departmental priority, and the Director is working to support additional growth opportunities. A leadership series has been identified for department leaders. We're currently working with the vendor to schedule the training. Bi-weekly skill builders are being presented to the department that will increase Staff's knowledge on the different protocols designed for programs that are contained in Leasing Operations' overall process.

- **Honoring the Work; Advancing the Mission** – Leasing Operations continue to make meaningful improvements. The HCV Department is now fully staffed, and PBV caseloads were redistributed following a recent retirement. Two Housing Specialists were recently hired. The department is actively recruiting ten vacancies, including one supervisor, five clerks, and four Housing Specialists. Through program restructuring, the number of required positions was reduced from 21 vacancies to 12, resulting in an approximate **43% reduction in staffing needs**. The Dept. Hired two temporary clerks to support operations. Hiring efforts continue.
- **Housing Choice Voucher (HCV Waiting List)** – The 2024 HCV application period closed on June 14, 2024, at 4:00 PM, following an extended deadline. A total of 9,909 pre-applications were received, and 4,000 applicants were selected. All applicants were notified of their selection status on September 12, 2024. RHA's HCV waiting list and voucher issuance remain paused in accordance with HUD shortfall guidance. The Department met with the HUD Shortfall Team on March 4, 2026. The non-issuance guidance and cost-saving measures have been extended through 2026, or until further guidance is provided by HUD. Additionally, RHA is not engaging in new PBV projects currently. The RFP has been removed and replaced with public notice.
- **Shortfall Funding** – The PHA remains under shortfall guidance, and staff continues to work closely with the HUD Shortfall Team to ensure full compliance with all applicable requirements. Financials will be updated to account for future funding.

## 11. Resident Services Report

Marvel Carter

Ms. Carter reported on the following:

- Participant Highlights: 140 participants are currently enrolled in our FSS program.
- Section 3 Updates – no 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
  - Connected Communities Spring Housing Expo
  - Greater Rochester Association of Realtors
  - Rochester Board of Realtist
  - City of Rochester - Rochester Housing Stability Fund Board
  - Eviction Prevention Study
- Homeownership Program Update

**12. Resident Relations Committee Report**

**Marvel Carter**

Ms. Carter reported on the following:

- Resident Council Reports
- Commissioner Reports
- Public Housing Report
- Senior Activities
- Family 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 80% obligated and 11% expended.
- A/E status report (no issues were present)
- Project Planning

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

**14. Commissioners' Reports**

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Commissioner Strickland:</b> | None                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Commissioner Davis:</b>      | None.                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Commissioner Waters:</b>     | None                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Commissioner Tolefree:</b>   | None                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Commissioner Ocansey:</b>    | <b>none</b>                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Commissioner Cummings:</b>   | Thanked staff for doing their part and acknowledged the efforts of each department individually. Encouraged everyone to keep up the great work. |

**15. Executive Session:**

Chair Cummings requested a motion to go into Executive Session at 1:15 pm. Commissioner Tolefree moved, and Commissioner Waters 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.

**16. End Executive Session:**

Chair Cummings requested a motion to end Executive Session at 2:23 pm. Commissioner Tolefree moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to end Executive Session. Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

**17. End Regular Board Meeting Session:**

Chair Cummings requested a motion to end the Regular Board Meeting at 2:21 pm. Commissioner Tolefree moved, and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to approve the to end the Regular Board Meeting. Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Tolefree and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed five to zero

**18. June Regular Board Meeting**

The June Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for Wednesday, June 24, 2026, at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board, Executive Director