

**ROCHESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
August 23, 2023  
675 WEST MAIN STREET  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14611**



**August 23, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Rosalie Remarais, Chairperson  
Florine Cummings, Resident Commissioner, Vice Chair  
Shanai T. Lee, Commissioner  
Kabutey Ocansey, Commissioner  
Henry Rubin, Commissioner  
Willie Otis, Resident Commissioner  
James Water, Jr. Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT**

Melissa Berrien  
Shawn Burr  
Diana Colon  
Robert Croston  
Pierre Dorancy  
Julie Fox  
Cynthia Herriott  
Kimberly Huffman  
Joyce Kinsey  
Celeste Langston  
Shawanna Lawrence  
Daniel Long  
Mariam Rodriguez –  
Machuca  
James Senger  
Evhen Tupis  
Harolda Wilcox

**OTHERS PRESENT**

H. Todd Bullard, RHA Legal Counsel  
Amy Blum, Tipping Point Communications

Commissioner Rosalie Remarais called the August 2023 Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) Regular Board Meeting to order at 12:01 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 was a resident that present to share his concerns regarding safety and security, laundry room hours and the repair of the pool table in the community room at Kennedy Tower. They were told that Board will investigate an that Executive Director Burr would get back to them.

2. **Approval of Minutes:**  
**July 26, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to approve the July 2023 Regular Board Meeting Minutes Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Ocansey, 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 as follows:

Mr. Burr congratulate the Board on their new appointments.

Mr. Burr gave highlights follow up items. We followed up on the last public comments and executive session after the planning committee meeting, but I will have a further update after maybe an executive session and everything else is in progress.

Mr. Burr wanted to Continue to recognize staff for continuing to do a great job at RHA.

Mr. Burr wanted to cover a couple of things. He wanted to say thank you to those that attended the groundbreaking, it was a great event. There was a lot of excitement by those that attended especially those from HUD those from HCR and OTADA. It's just it's like he said at the at the groundbreaking it does take a village to get these projects to floration.

Mr. Burr stated we are on our way. We've got pipelines setup and it's coming. So hopefully there'll be another groundbreaking coming up later this year and have had several meetings recently.

Mr. Burr share that the morning of August 23, 2023, he met with Senator Gillibrand's office. They reached out to RHA and sent some of her folks meet with Mr. Burr, Cynthia, Harolda, Melissa and Pierre to talking housing. Of course, we brag about RHA. They said that it sounds great things we're doing, but also talk about some of the issues that participants our residents are having in the community and offer a further conversation to that via teams remote to two people from Washington and one locally. We are looking forward to the continue conversation.

Mr. Burr share that August 24, 2023, he will be meeting with Congressman Morelle, that is hosting a housing roundtable 12:45 pm. He would be leaving the town hall right after he kicked the townhall. He was leaving the Townhall in the capable by hats that our senior team they have been rehearsing and practicing and he was sure that they will pull it off without any issues.

Mr. Burr stated that this is an extremely important topic for the Congressman. He has been planning that seed with the staffers over the years. He is also happy that he will be having a one-on-one with the Congressman coming up in the near future where he wants to visit our RHA because he couldn't attend the groundbreaking. Therefore, he wants to meet with Mr. Burr, and he would like to tour that site. The Congressman has, given RHA letters of support and other questions that all of our all of our asks that was important to keep those relationships going.

Mr. Burr mention to Senator Gillibrand's folks is the advocacy that we've been doing. State level through NYSPHADA and one of the staffers had previously worked for Assemblywoman Clark, and he's very familiar with what's going on hopefully and what's going on at state level. So that kind of helps knowing the need that state level to help plant that seed at the federal level with, you know, funding allocations, so. You know, that's the only cap. Mr. Burr expects the trickle down to be affecting us in this next budget season. Let's keep our fingers crossed that our voices are heard and then there is adequate funding appropriated for our programs that in our budgeting project.

Mr. Burr gave kudos to the staff again, all the extra activities every one of them's involved with too numerous to list here, but again had to take those without saying that they do a remarkable job.

Commissioner Rubin stated: told Mr. Burr that he does a wonderful job at developing and representing the budget whenever we have discussions about it. But you just raise an issue here that is a sort of it's a board level sort of question and that is prioritizing budget enhancements or changes over the course of the next few years projecting out so that we could be proactively pushing our legislators for whatever we need to be pushing for it.

Mr. Burr said good point and we are doing that internally as the executive team we definitely focus on that now which you have to trickle down effective when can meet with the directors for budgets and you know making sure that we're putting things in the right places right and then preparing you've already talked about the plan that Ms. Wilcox and Mr. Burr working on for our reserve, for Public Housing. So those are some types of things that we work on. At advocacy level, right, because that's equally that's right. We have a this spots a legislative committee on. We have a meeting I scheduled that lead, and it's offers and DeNiscos who's the head of HCR probably, since it's their budget time. We want to get that money inserted in their budget but strictly. Earmarked or upstate PHA, it's not nice show. They've gotten involved with funding. Obviously, we kept packing on it. Now we have funding those four when the user turns set style, that's not what it is, but special funding reserve or Phase that are basically said 9% half. But the stage is really starting to hear the message from us to understand that it's not just RHA. Doing our development. It's, it's, it's, I had a conversation with Vice Grove from HCR was at our groundbreaking last evening. And these other projects around the state which are relying on these fast credit dollars, multiple millions of dollars, you have a lot of politically motivated projects, right. We're taking a back CSO speaking to I-81 project in Syracuse South and the project's been in the pipeline for a long time, but it's coming through depression and that's getting, you know, the recognition. We're not, we're not that greedy,

but you know, we still want to be Adam. Buffalo there's Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority to discuss some projects that very close to governor hopeless house. So, they're getting a priority check right. So those are the types of things that you know we have to navigate around It may not be edited to office your room. But you know, having these conversations, keep having RHA at the table as I'd like to refer to, whether it's HCR, whether it's the senator, whether it's Congressman, whether it's other left officials, you know it, it all adds up, right. And it all helps to get to that building, right. But we need to get these projects over essentially.

**b. Board Action Requests**

- i. Smoke-Free Housing Policy - Authorized the Executive Director to to revise the RHA's ACOP – Public Housing

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

- ii. Chapter 5-II.C. – Authorized the Executive Director to to revise the RHA's ACOP – Public Housing

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

- iii. Scattered Site Porch Replacements Rebid-P12 – Authorized the Executive Director to award a contract to Omari's Home Improvement in the amount of \$125,375.00 – Capital Projects

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

- iv. Scattered Site Porch Replacements Rebid-P13 – Authorized the Executive Director to award a contract to Omari's Home Improvement in the amount of \$74,425.00 – Capital Projects

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

**4. Human Resource Coordinator Report                      Shawanna Lawrence**

The Human Resource Department is continuing to: "Support our Employees to Enhance an Organizational Culture of Excellence" Please see the update below:

The HR department had a productive month in July 2023, focusing on critical activities such as recruitment and employee engagement. The department's efforts have resulted in the successful hiring of new employees and improved concentration on engagement.

**Recruitment Information:**

**New Hires:**

Position- Housing Specialist – (1) Leasing Operations Department started on July 24, 2023.

**Recruitment Strategies:**

Job Recruitment Radio Ad – August 2, 2023-September 1, 2023

Increasing Brand Awareness on social media

Employee Referral Program–Ongoing

**Key Activities:**

1. The Wellness Committee submitted its monthly newsletter to staff.
2. The employee experience is extremely important, so we continue to strive on creating a positive and engaging work environment. Some of the strategies for improving the employee experience, including employee engagement initiatives, highlighting the benefits and perks we offer.

**Events July 2023:**

Employee Summer Cookout: Thursday, July 27, 2023

**Training/ Learning Development:**

HR provided coaching sessions to two (2) managers/directors to continue developing their leadership skills.

**Opportunities:**

**Talent Retention:**

While we have successfully attracted new talent, we are also focused on retaining our employees.

While we have successfully attracted new talent, we are also focused on retaining our employees.

HR conducted four (4) stay interviews with employees. The purpose is to understand employees' level of job satisfaction, identify potential issues or concerns, and address them to increase employee engagement and reduce turnover.

HR listening tour with different departments involves meeting with various teams to gather feedback, concerns, and suggestions regarding workplace matters. It's a valuable way to enhance communication and address potential issues.

**Conclusion:**

Human Resources will continue to focus on these critical areas and address challenges and opportunities to support the organization's goals and objectives.

**5. Compliance, Inclusion, and Diversity Officer's Report Cynthia Herriott**

**Inclusion**

- COVID Strategy – We continue to work with community partners to facilitate addressing resident needs around vaccinations, testing and education.
- Language Access Plan- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is working on a Language Access Plan to adopt new procedures and to work with community organizations and Language Access Liaisons to identify opportunities to enhance RHA services. The plan draft has been provided to the board and senior staff as an FYI. No action is necessary, but feedback is welcome.
- Guardian Ad Litem Program - C. Herriott is chairing the Monroe County Court Housing Court Subcommittee to implement a guardian protocol for participants with behavioral health issues. She is going to meet with the Rochester Police Department, Law NY, and Councilmember Patterson to further discuss this project.
- On-Site Mini Libraries- The Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee is in the early stages of developing the On-Site Mini Libraries – Reading Education Program for Public Housing residents. These books will promote diversity and inclusion as well as growth, literacy, and empowerment. A meeting took place on 8/9/22. Commissioners Cummings and Rubin are members.
- Employee Summer Cook-Out- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee engaged with staff through a game in which we encouraged knowledge pertaining diversity and inclusion.

- 2023 Colors of Success DEI Leadership Award: I have been selected as a finalist for the 2023 Colors of Success DEI Leadership Award which is hosted by the Greater Rochester Chamber. The press release announcing the 2023 award finalists will be sent out on Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Compliance**

- **Fraud Investigations**
  - **Leasing Operations** Repayment Agreement payments total YTD as of July 2023, \$32,847.78 collected (with a total of \$1,962.00 collected in July 2023) A total of \$554,721.49 has been collected to date.
  - **Public Housing** Repayment agreement totals YTD for vacated arrears and collection loss as of July 2023, with \$4,669.97 collected (with a total of \$1,753.59 collected in July 2023). A total of \$55,035.66 was collected to date.
- **Termination Hearings:**
  - **Leasing Operations** – 8 Participant Hearings Scheduled: 3 Upheld; 1 No Show, 1 Overturned, 1 Reinstated, 2 Adjourned, 1 Withdrawn; 1 Pending Hearing Decision
  - **Public Housing** –0 Participant Hearings Scheduled:0 Upheld; 0 No Show, 0 Overturned, 0 Reinstated, 0 Adjourned; 0 Withdrawn.

### **Operations**

- **Case Management**
  - Program Violation Referrals Outstanding – 1,444 (Previously 1,440)– which is a total to date since 2015. Due to staffing shortages, program violation referrals will be temporarily on hold. Compliance is working with HR to fill the positions.
- **Rochester Housing Charities (RHC) – Commissioner Florine Cummings and Deputy Executive Director, Cynthia Herriott serves as RHA’s ex-officio representative on the RHC Board of Directors.**
  - Both attend monthly board meetings.
  - Board member recruitment for RHC is ongoing and staff are working on Board training.
  - The DED will work with the ED to schedule a retreat with both the Rochester Housing Authority and Rochester Housing Charities once Board members are in place.
  - RHC’s draft audit and budget have been provided to the board representatives.

**Audit and Review** – The DED works closely with Legal Counsel to address areas in need of assessment within RHA. *(Executive Session for any requested reporting)*

- Most Compliance Audits are temporarily on hold until vacant positions are filled. The DED has conducted several small-scale audits.
- **Public Safety** – Please note the attached Activity Chart for Public Safety.
  - Public Safety works with the Rochester Police Department to develop strategies to address crime trends.
  - There were several attempted break-ins to Glenwood Gardens. I am working with AP Security for them to pay special attention in that site.

6. **Finance**

**Kimberly Huffman**

Ms. Huffman reported the monthly Finance Report, the actual vs. budgeted figures, and variances for year-to-date through June 2023, for the COCC, Public Housing, and Section 8 income and expenses.

7. **Information Technology Report**

**Evhen Tupis**

*Video Safety System and Electronic Access Control (VSS&EAC) Initiative*

- Budget has been established and Finance has approved. The RFP launched on Monday, August 7 and will remain open until Friday, September 22 (representing 46 calendar days) at which time RFP evaluations will begin. The timeline-to-award will be determined by the quality of the responses and evaluation process as there may be followup interviews involved. The in-scope sites are:

Harriet Tubman Estate - 100 William Warfield Dr  
Lake Tower Apartments - 321 Lake Avenue  
Hudson-Ridge Tower - 401 Seneca Manor Drive  
Seneca Manor Townhouses – 375 Seneca Manor Drive  
Lena Gantt Estates - 86 Vienna Street  
Kennedy Tower - 666 S. Plymouth Avenue  
Danforth Tower East - 140 West Avenue  
Danforth Tower West - 160 West Avenue  
University Tower - 625 University Avenue

Bay-Zimmer Apartments – 78 Caspar Street  
Holland Townhouses – 250 Holland Street  
University Tower - 625 University Avenue  
Lexington Court - 6 Christopher Court  
Jonathan Child Apartments – 399 Colvin Street  
Administration Building - 495 Upper Falls Blvd  
Administration Building - 675 West Main Street  
Parliament Arms - 2120 St. Paul Street

- “Glenwood Gardens – 41 Kestrel St., Rochester NY” is its own initiative and is proceeding immediately as the “Glenwood Video Now” initiative. Trouble spots were identified by key stakeholders Jesse McCarthy, Bob Croston/Maintenance, and Daniel Long/Capital Projects and supported by impromptu interviews of various residents as we walked through the property. Award and launch will occur after all quotes have been evaluated.
- The Glenwood site will not participate in the more global RFP because demolition and reconstruction are planned. Instead, the updated VSS&EAC specs will be built-in to the Glenwood Reconstruction RFP when it launches and handled at that time.

*Affordable Internet for Residents*

- RHA is coordinating with Literacy Rochester to deliver on-site resident sign-up workshops for at Lexington Court (Aug 16), Parliament Arms (Aug 23), and Glenwood (Aug 30). Significant thanks to Jesse McCarthy for his site-based leadership in helping to make these events successful.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension has been contacted and has agreed to run a similar event in Orleans County for our Section 8/Leasing Operations participants there. Dates are still TBD.

*Tenmast Upgrade/Replacement*

- At HUD's direction, RHA is unable to renew its existing agreement as it extends beyond HUD's 5-year maximum. RHA has sent a "letter-of-non-renewal" to Tenmast (an MRI company). Once an RFP is released, HUD will allow us to engage in a "stop gap" agreement to continue to use Tenmast WinTen2+ until the RFP's outcome is determined. That RFP is well under way and expected to be released within 30 days..

**8. Public Housing Report**

**Harolda Wilcox**

**Public Housing Activities:**

- On the 24th and 31st of July we had RAD meetings with the Parliament Arms & Fairfield Luther Circle residents, to update them on the construction renovation project. We had a good turnout in both meetings. Residents understood the process and express being happy about the renovations.
- In conjunction with Willow, on July 14, our staff completed the domestic violence training. We are currently looking into another training, one that's more in-depth. We want to thank Commissioner Florine Cummings for inviting us to the Lena Gantt Summer cookout. It was a great event.
- On July 25th, we held a strong family event, with a good turnout, despite the rain. The upcoming up events are going to be held at the following sites: Bay Zimmer, Bronson Court, and Fairfield Village. These will be within the month of August.
- Customer Service hours at the sites are beginning in the month of August. This is to hear concerns and answer resident questions.
- Survey for Town and Country is going out to residents for feedback and to be returned by September 1, 2023. Will report on the results at September's Public Housing Committee meeting.

**Public Housing Matters:**

The **TEAM** continues to do an **excellent** job of keeping things moving within the department.

**RENT ARREARS**

- To avoid eviction and to assist residents in becoming current with rental arrears, the team will have the resident sign a repayment agreement along with applying for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).
- RHA Public Housing department Received \$2,086.00 in EPPI2.0 monies for July 2023.
- As of July 2023, the total delinquent rent amount owed is \$522,867.65, which is an increase of 71,548.22 for the past two months (June & July).
- Our arrears are larger due to not taking partial payments from residents anymore. This is due to the residents choosing not to pay the rent in full, which is not in accordance with RHA policies. Rent is due on the first of the month and residents have a grace period to the tenth of each month. After the tenth, the resident incurs a late fee.
- RHA is sending all partial payments back to the resident with a letter of explanation as to why RHA is not accepting their payment.
- 9– 30-day notices were served by the City Marshal in July.
- We are continuously collaborating with residents to address arrears in lieu of court proceedings. As of July 2023, RHA has entered into ninety-six repayment agreements year to date.
- We are still encountering vacant units where the resident has skipped out. This affects both Public Housing arrears and vacancy rates.
- As of July 31st, PH zones have the following number of evictions in the process:
  - North – zero residents and twelve residents are in delinquent status.
  - South – zero and eleven residents are in delinquent status.
  - Central – zero and nine residents are in delinquent status.
  - Scattered Sites – one and nine in delinquent status.

**Parkside**

- 3 Vacant Units
- 3 Units Ready to Lease (1 unit move-in for August)
- 1 Offer, 1 accepted

**Parkside Arrears**

- \$ 50,209.40            outstanding rent
- \$ 6,750.75            0-30 days
- \$ 3,025.00            31-60 days
- \$ 2,623.00            61-90 days
- \$ 37,126.00            over 90 days (represents six tenants)

**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

**Staffing**

- 4 positions open – Housing Specialist
- 4 positions are open (waiting on civil service results)

**Application Processing Center: Waiting List Management:**

- Housing Specialists are still making unit offers to applicants for the promo high-rise offers. APC will begin pulling from the studio waitlist to address the number of vacancies at DT and UT. A studio waitlist pull will be conducted every two weeks until the studio wait list has been exhausted. PC anticipates the studio wait list will be exhausted by late September/early October 2023.
- Next Studio Wait List Pull: 8/11/23 and 8/25/23.

**Current Department Operation Status:**

- As Betty Colon and Patricia Cuvelier's temp assignment has ended, Sheila Rivera is now establishing an intake caseload in addition to managing wait lists, prequals, and unit offers. She will be expected to maintain a caseload of 25 applicants. Lisa Colon has been temporarily assigned to assist Scattered Sites with catching up on Annual Recerts. Her caseload for APC will be monitored to ensure that while assisting Scattered Site, she is processing intakes in a timely manner.
- No updates to report as of 8/2/23.

**Unit Offers:**

- APC Manager and designated staff continue to extend offers to 'ready drawer' applicants to fill vacancies. We are now establishing an approved 1-bedroom waiting list (ready drawer) for applicants to fill upcoming 1-bedroom vacancies.
- Current applications in the Screening and Intake Phase as of 7/6/23:

Currently being screened - 11 applications\*

- ❖ Studio -9
- ❖ Regular 1-bdrm – 2
- ❖ High Rise 1-bdrm canvas - 0
- ❖ 2+ bedrooms – 0

Currently going thru intake (w/Intake Specialists): 34 applications

- ❖ \*studio/1-bedroom – 33 applications
- ❖ \*2+ bedrooms – 1 application

**Renovation Projects:**

- Fed/Scattered Site – From the 37 household that will have their units demo'd or renovated, we have 25 residents that have accepted unit offers. Maintenance Chief, Bob Croston has been notified of each accepted unit offer to follow up on to ensure units are ready for move-in. Many high priority residents (those that have a project start date within the next 6 months) have been given a final offer.
  - As of 9/27/22 – All residents, except for the Section 32 resident, have received a final relocation unit offer, per the Relocation Plan.
  - As of 8/2/23 - NO OTHER UPDATES

- Bond St. – As of 5/2/23 - All families have been extended an offer. All have accepted their offers except 2 residents. Property Manager is currently addressing this issue.
  - As of July 5, 23 – no updates
- Luther Circle -all residents have been assigned a unit to relocate to. APC is waiting on transfer paperwork/preferences from Property Manager and residents to officially add them to wait list and extend offer according to transfer policy and relocation plan.
  - No Updates to report as of 8/2/23.

**9. Maintenance Report**

**Robert Croston**

**1. Vacant Unit Report**

- The Maintenance Department continues to work hard to keep up with the number of new vacancies. This is to prepare for the upcoming projects at Fairfield Village and Parliament Arms and the need to move residents temporarily to other units while this is going on.

**2. Site Beautification**

- Maintenance has started outside work at the buildings and some of the sites as it is needed. We will be checking for any plants that need replacing and upgrading the mulch. To bring up the curb appeal at the sites. This has started and we will provide the board with pictures as they are completed. Pictures of University Tower, Lena Gantt, Lexington Ct, Capsule dwelling, Kennedy Tower, and Atkinson Ct have been completed.
- Maintenance after upgrading the flooring in common areas throughout parts of the building, will be painting the walls and replacing the flooring on the 11th floor. This will finish the repairs to the floor after there was a fire in unit 1117. The unit is still being worked on by Capital Projects.

**3. Meeting with NYC Housing authority**

- The Maintenance department was asked to help with some summer events by a few different departments last month. I would like to recognize their hard work in helping to prepare for this year's summer company event, down at the beach. All the staff who helped with the Strong Family's events at the sites. The upcoming Senior's event at the beach this year. We look forward to helping with the groundbreaking event at Federal Street coming later this month. I hope we see many of you there to celebrate the long-awaited start to this project.

10. Leasing Operations Report (Section 8)

Pierre Dorancy

Leasing Operations Matters:

1. The Administrative Plan language changes have been approved. Staff is working on implementing the changes. Robocall has been used to notify participants and landlords of the changes that affect them.
2. Currently, there are 1,332 active applicants on the Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List.
3. Leasing Operations' voucher and funding utilization goal is between 95% to 98%. We are currently at 83.74% utilization of vouchers and 95.16% utilization of funds. Leasing Operations Department has a Leasing Plan for 2023 to maximize HUD funding for Housing Assistance Payments. Staff continues to work overtime to issue vouchers and to maintain utilization.
4. The monthly inspection goal has been 780-960. The Inspection Unit conducted 751 inspections in July 2023.

HUD Community Choice Demonstration (formerly Mobility Demonstration)

*As previously reported, RHA was one of nine (9) PHAs selected to join the HUD's HCV Mobility Demonstration Program. The program is now known as Community Choice Demonstration (CCD). Briefly, this is a 6-year demonstration program designed to increase participation for voucher families with children with better access to low-poverty neighborhoods and other areas of opportunity with high-performing schools and other strong community resources.*

*As of the pilot start date of October 17, 2022, the Managers implementing the program have updated the RHA website with CCD information. Interested families can reach out to a dedicated phone line and email address to communicate interest in participation. The CCD email address is [communitychoice@rochesterhousing.org](mailto:communitychoice@rochesterhousing.org) and the phone line is (585) 697-6210. The Leasing Operations staff have sent out seven (8) batches of interest to qualifying families with recertifications from May through December 2023 were randomly selected and provided with program information. As of 08/07/2023, one hundred forty-six (146) families have been enrolled in the program of which seventy-five (75) have been randomly selected for mobility services. Two applicant families from the HCV Waiting List have enrolled and one (1) was randomly assigned to receive services. CCD families have been searching for units throughout the Opportunity Areas and two (2) families have leased up in an Opportunity Areas with another moving in August. Two (2) CCD families moved into a non-Opportunity Areas; seven (7) families renewed their lease and did not move.*

**HUD Emergency Housing Vouchers**

As of 08/10/2023, out of 117 EHV vouchers authorized:

- 155 moving papers have been issued,
  - 115 applicants have been housed.
  - 10 applicants are searching for housing.
  - 4 applicants have moving papers submitted to Contracts Unit.
- No additional referral has been requested from the COC.

RHA continues to collaborate with the local CoC and consult with other housing authorities and has statistics on the status of EHV lease-ups. These reviews indicate that RHA is working at a similar pace as other public housing agencies.

The policies of the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program were approved by the Board on 9/22/21 and are reflected in the RHA HCV Administrative Plan.

**Additional Mainstream Voucher Awards**

RHA has been awarded 25 additional Mainstream Vouchers to assist households that include a non-elderly person(s) with disabilities to lease up affordable units. This award includes extraordinary administrative funding to support administrative costs, including activities to support housing search and lease-up of eligible applicants. Fees can also be used for costs related to the retention, recruitment, and support of participating owners in the form of security deposits, signing bonuses, vacancy payments, and damage mitigation.

As of 08/07/2023, out of 25 new Mainstream Vouchers authorized, 18 applicants have been housed and 7 have submitted moving papers to RHA.

**Training**

The Leasing Operations team will continue to provide training for staff in Calendar Year 2023 in collaboration with the HR department. Topics include:

- Trainings on SEMAP, HOTMA and NSPIRE have been attended and scheduled.
- Rent Calculations & HCV Program Management.
- Effective Use of HUD's Two-Year Tool to maximize voucher utilization.
- Personal and Professional Development such as effective communication.

**11. Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

**Participant Highlights**

We have 180 participants currently enrolled in our FSS program. Some of the achievements our participants demonstrated are:

- Ms. Burgos entered the FSS program on December 1st, 2015, with an employment goal. Ms. Burgos maintained employment with Instacart; her income increased 54% percent, and she is no longer receiving section 8 assistance. Ms. Burgos is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive \$1,555.00 in escrow savings.
- Ms. Harley entered the FSS program on December 1st, 2015, with an employment goal. Ms. Harley maintained her Business and her income increased 45% percent. Ms. Harley is a successful graduate of the FSS program and entitled to receive \$4,105.40 in escrow savings.

### **Section 3**

- Monthly Report – 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.
  - 2022 Stats
    1. 93 clients
    2. 286 counseling sessions
    3. \$255,000 debt reduction
    4. \$111,000 increased savings
  - FEC awarded 150K to assist RHA families, of which 30 new homeowners are eligible for a 1k grant.
  - Project approved by City Council at February council meeting. The agreement was signed by Executive Director and to the mayor for signature on 3/4/22.
  - Executed Agreement received on 3/25/2022, Meeting to discuss payment issuance with Finance on 4/25/22.
  - Homeowner grants awarded to six participants.
  - Four additional grants were awarded in December.
  - FEC is requesting additional time to assist new homeowners as the original agreement ends February 2023
  - City Council approved the extension of the HO grant project through September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2023. Amendment to Executive Director and Mayor for Signature. A signed extension was received on 4/5/2023.
  - To date we have issued 13 homeownership grants.
- **RMAPI Housing Subcommittee Cochair** – Collaborative initiative focused on making housing more accessible, affordable, and equitable in our community.

- Mission - Increase housing equity and access, improve housing stability, and close the wealth gap in Monroe County
  - Areas of focus: Housing Navigation, Displacement/Transiency, reviewing list of budget priorities aligned with RMAPI's housing policy.
  - The team is reviewing RMAPI's state level housing policy to inform our local delegation at RMAPI's legislative breakfast.
  - RMAPI presented their Policy Agenda to a delegation of local state representatives on 2/10/2023. Policy Priorities:
    1. Raise Income
    2. Invest in Families
    3. Decriminalize Poverty
    4. Reform Housing
  - RMAPI Housing Navigation – RMAPI is surveying participants, landlords, and experts to examine the navigation of our local housing systems and ways to make it easier.
  - The project has moved to the next phase of ideation after completing interviews with 56 renters, landlords, and field experts.
  - Next phase- the team is working on drafting “How Might We” statements incorporating the insights gathered from the interview process.
  - We are planning a prototyping session to review possible solutions and create a pilot around housing navigation.
- 
- **Closing the Gaps** 6 city cohort (Albuquerque, NM; Austin, TX; Memphis, TN; Minneapolis, MN; Rochester, NY; and St. Paul, MN) is a one-year initiative that brings together leaders from cities across the country who are committed to imagining what an anti-racist society might look like and playing an important role in building it through the transformation of government policies, practices, and operations.
    - CTG provides up to \$167,000 per cohort city to execute on your homeownership strategy and up to \$100,000 per cohort city to execute on your business, starts and growth strategy.
    - Mayor Evans has signed off on the proposed plan. We are awaiting an award letter from Living Cities to present it to the city council. Closing the gaps seeks to improve homeownership and entrepreneurial outcomes for people of color. The proposed plan would add outreach dollars and incentives for young families to pursue homeownership.
    - Next steps: Create collaborative outreach materials, meet with Head Start staff, explore RHA/Landbank partnership.

- City of Rochester Closing the Gaps and Buy the Block staff are tabling at the strong Families Public Housing Events.
- The City of Rochester team is planning a site visit scheduled with the Living Cities team September 13-15.

**Homeownership**

- Ms. Robinson closed on her home at 63 Mosley Road on July 5th.
- Mr. Greathouse closed on his home at 294 Brayton Road on July 26th.
- We have five families with anticipated closings and thirty-five families who have been approved for financing and are searching for homes.

**12. Resident Relations Report**

**Melissa Berrien**

**Community Rooms Resident Rental** – Community room insurance coverage confirmed, next step is to finalize the new procedure. Procedural draft is being recirculated to presidents for final comment.

**Resident Email Communications** – Resident Councils were informed of monthly cost associated with the creation of new emails. Awaiting their approval to move forward.

**Tenants on Patrol (TOP)** – Danforth Resident Council president Robert Davis presented a proposal for TOP volunteers to receive stipends. Executive Director Burr is reviewing the proposal.

**Resident Commissioner Election** – 2023 election nomination period 8/1-8/22. Election scheduled for 9/29/2023.

**Resident Council Officer Training and Travel** – We reviewed the procedure for accessing resident council tenant participation funds for attending conferences.

**Executive Overview** – ED Burr relayed upcoming project information.

**Senior Activities**

- Senior summer outing held on August 4th.
  - 159 seniors registered.
  - 130 residents attended.
  - Food catered by Jamaica Soul.
  - Resident DJ, Mr. White.
  - Common Ground Health performed health screenings.
  - LawNY gave information regarding wills and estate planning.
  - Fidelis care and Lifetime financial group assisted with health care benefits.

**Family Activities –**

- Strong Families Event –RHA is having strong family events at 7 of our Public Housing apartment complexes throughout the summer. We are partnering with Rochester Empowerment Center, Anthony Jordan, CASH, City of Rochester Homeownership program and Rec on The Move. We are creating a community fair atmosphere where residents are engaged and empowered.
  - 6/6 (Harriet Tubman) – 140 residents attended.
  - 6/20 (Seneca Manor) – 105 residents attended.
  - 7/11 (Holland Townhouses/Atlantic) – 87 residents attended.
  - 7/25 (Lexington)
  - 8/8 (Bay Zimmer)
  - 8/22 (Bronson Court/Capsule)
  - 8/29 (Fairfield Village)
- Summer Meals – We are partnering with Foodlink and our resident volunteers to bring a summer lunch program to Harriet Tubman Estates and Seneca Manor Townhouses. The meals are distributed Monday through Friday with Tubman from 7/5-9/1 and Seneca Manor from 7/10-9/1.

**13. Planning Committee Report**

**Daniel R. Long**

- The Planning Committee meeting was held on 8/9/2023. There were no follow-up items from the previous meeting.
- There were 3 action items to move forward to the Board Bid results are pending receipt from Procurement since the bid openings were the day after the Finance meeting:
  1. Scattered Porches P-9, P12 and P13
- We then discussed the status of our current projects by having staff give updates and review progress pictures:
  1. 158 Curtis Fire Loss Renovations are approved and moving forward.
  2. Final exterior renovations at UT are under contract.
  3. Bronson Ct. Roofing – project is 95% complete and is set to close shortly.
  4. Unit's 43 & 60 Wm. Warfield Dr. Fire Restoration – is at 25% with abatement and demo completed and re-installations progressing.
  5. Atlantic Townhomes Site Upgrades – project is 65% complete and on schedule.
  6. Unit 910 University Tower Fire Restoration – project is at 15% with abatement and demo nearing completion.
  7. Bronson Court Phase II project is under contract after HUD approval.
  8. Holland Townhouses Window Refurbishment is at 75% and is progressing rapidly.

- We are wrapping up obtaining 2 other quotes for compliance in small-contract purchasing for the PNA work on the CNI target sites and evaluation needs for that effort.
- Our MWBE & Section 3 Contracts report was presented and will continue to be updated each month and we continue to work on percentages of possible funds allocated/obligated.
- As we move forward with our development projects, there will be regular reporting on status of MWBE goals. We have a neutral third party that will be monitoring and ensuring compliance.
- The status of our current CFP Budgets as of August 19th are: 501.20 is 65% Obligated and 46% Expended and 501.21 is 100% Obligated and 53% Expended. With the latest projects and upcoming bid openings, we expect to meet all our deadlines.
- We then discussed our A/E status report, and no issues were present.

#### **Project Planning**

- Our Project Planning meeting followed the Committee meeting, and updates were given on our development projects starting with our RAD project at Federal St/Scattered Sites as we move forward from permitting into abatement and construction. RHA has been attending site visits to review any site issues that come up on the Scattered sites to ensure timely response to our Contractor. An official groundbreaking was held on August 17<sup>th</sup> and was well received.
- We continue to have our due-diligence meetings for Parliament / Fairfield as well as a Fernwood Development.
- Our other development projects in various stages were discussed with funding applications submitted and more being submitted prior to submission deadlines.
- Updates were given on our Change the Face of Public Housing projects with one going out to bid soon.
- Updates were then given on our pipeline of capital projects in planning and design stages.
- Updates were also given on the Hazard Related Grant and Section 32 progress.
- The rest of our project pipeline was presented, and the meeting was adjourned.

#### **14. Commissioner Comments**

**Commissioner Cummings:** Thank you It's always thanking staff for their hard work and their support. And, kudos again to Bob's staff and helping out with Lena Gant Annual cookout. It was good, and we appreciate the help that Maintenance gave us.

**Commissioner Rubin:** Thank you to the staff and I will be presenting at the next Board meeting a report on Interagency Committee. I am still interested in share the presentation for Commissioners from the NYSPHADA conference.

**Commissioner Ocansey:** To be able to before you think, thank you. Have a time do it. Yeah. Same thing. Thank you. Staff as always, now really want to recognize one person. That gives me a hard time. But I don't think she gets enough credit because I know she's been working hard to do everything between Federal St., the Board or tomorrow's town hall. So, I wanted to say thank you Diana. She takes care of us and we. I don't want her think sometimes we take it for granted. We never do. Thank you. Thank you.

**Commissioner Lee:** Thank you, everyone. It's great to be here. And I feel at home.

**Commissioner Waters:** Thank you to the staff for all their hard work every day.

**Commissioner Remarais:** For me same as my colleagues here. Thank you to staff, Shawn, our executive team. For the amazing job that they do. I couldn't be prouder. I mean, I love being out and talking about you guys all the time. So, thank you, thank you, thank you. We appreciate everything you do.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to go into Executive Session for a legal and personnel matter. Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Lee seconded a motion to go into Executive Session at 2:00 pm. Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Waters, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Ocansey, and Commissioner Remarais voted yes. The motion was passed, six to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to end Executive Session; Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 3:05 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to approve Resolution 08.23.23.01 for Andrews Tower, Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed six to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to approve Resolution 08.23.23.02 for Executive Director Shawn Burr to be granted an employment agreement for another two years, Commissioner Cummings moved, and Commissioner Waters seconded the motion. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

Board Chair Remarais requested a motion to end the Regular Board Meeting; Commissioner Waters moved, and Commissioner Ocansey seconded the motion to end the Executive Session at 3:12 pm. Commissioner Remarais, Commissioner Rubin, , Commissioner Ocansey, Commissioner Waters, and Commissioner Cummings voted yes. The motion passed five to zero.

15. **September Regular Board Meeting**

The September Regular Board Meeting of the Rochester Housing Authority Board is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 27, 2023, at 12:00 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

  
Shawn Burr,  
Secretary to the RHA Board, Executive Director