



**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING: Thursday, February 27, 2020;
5:30 p.m.**

Providence Housing Authority

100 Broad Street

Providence, RI 02903

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nicolas Retsinas called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Nicolas Retsinas
Thomas Ryan
Vivian Medina
Jessica Cigna
Lawrence D'Alfonso
Lonzie Doggett
Rochelle Lee

Absent:

John Iglizzi
Eddie Peguero
Roger Giraud
Mary Kay Harris

Seven members were present, constituting a quorum to conduct business.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Retsinas called for a motion to accept and approve the minutes of the January 23, 2020 meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Lee and was seconded by Commissioner D'Alfonso. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Resident Comments:

None

Chairman's Report:

Chairman Retsinas elected to withhold his remarks & turn over to Executive Director.

Executive Director Report:

Director Sanzaro updated the Board on the following items:

1. Personnel Update

- a) Retirement of Cheryl Tondreau, Associate Director of Resident Services
- b) Employee Spotlight: Jose Martinez for volunteering in organizing basketball tournament & league at Manton Heights & Hartford Park. Presented by Kim Dawley

2. Strategic Plan Update:

- a) In the month of February, the PHA's Strategy & Development and Executive Department have been working to strategically arrange the actions and the timing of those actions that support the plan's goals & strategies.
- b) The PHA is engaging the department leaders to ensure that the timelines and data collection associated with their area of operations within the plan are realistic and achievable. By mid-March, the PHA team and Bronner will be ready to clearly identify our priority efforts for year one, of course reevaluating each year.
- c) More discussion took place about Bronner's Goals Tracker and its flexibility to be able to monitor short- and long-term performance, pull out priorities and be able to input progress as well as enter notes. The PHA intends to provide the Board with

strategic plan updates with the dashboard feature & a performance progress report. The PHA intends to elicit the feedback about how they present information.

- d) Bronner provided a template strategic plan with the level of detail that the PHA felt appropriate to communicate dreams and plans. The format will capture the plan in a succinct manner. It includes:
- Introduction with a message from the Chairman and Executive Director and "about the PHA".
 - The second section will cover the Strategic Plan process overview with a timeline of all phases, highlighting the extensive stakeholder engagement.
 - The third section is labeled "Who we are" which covers the PHA vision mission and core values.
 - The following section will demonstrate "where we are going" by reviewing the main four goals with some strategies supporting the goals.
 - Then How the PHA will get there, Get involved that not only briefly describes the intentions to actionize the work and monitor it but asks stakeholder to get involved.
 - There is a thank you page, potentially a page with staff and resident quotes about the planning engagement process.
 - the Appendices may be the supporting actions and state assessment summary.
- e) Next month, the PHA will have a final draft of the Strategic Plan for Board review and approval. The main goals and strategies will also be incorporated into the HUD 5-Year Annual Plan which is due to be approved in March and submitted to HUD. Action format with a preview of the Goal Tracker User Guide and Progress Report Sample for review.

3. REAC Inspections

- a) As the PHA was moving along in the process to create an Everyday is REAC mindset at the PHA. By purchasing and testing a new mobile work order software, eliminating paper, promoting efficiency along, & conducting two full inspections of each of the 2,600 Public Housing units with the utilization of a REAC inspection module on tablets. HUD came with the new regs giving the PHA 14 days' notice.
- b) After notifying the tenants of the PHA intended inspection and the inspection of the REAC inspector, a pilot trial was in place for Codding Court and three teams of five people conducted full REAC inspections of 160 units at Codding Court and Roger Williams in 2 ½ days.
- c) The teams were creating work orders and addressing them on the spot where possible. Another 285 work orders were created, 132 or 46% completed within one week and the pending work order aim to be completed by next week.
- d) The 244 Scattered Sites were not included in the Inspection PILOT although two teams did relatively quick inspections of 200 out of 244 units and created 204 without which are being addressed currently.
- e) Property Management attended to speak to the residents about inspections, REAC, items that should be called in, fees vs. no fees and other lease related items.
- f) The show of teamwork and care was simply amazing. The Codding Court and Roger Williams properties looked amazing!
- g) The PHA had an appreciation lunch for all involved.
- h) If done on a regular basis without sudden urgency, this will be a platform that will address priority areas in our strategic plan:
- Every day is REAC mindset so that the PHA operates at a higher level to get better REAC scores.
 - The creation of a facilities management training platform to create a career path for success.
 - Promote the clarity of roles and improved communication between Property Management and Facilities Management.
 - Promotes Work order efficiency and happier tenants & touches customer service.

- The resident engagement and information sharing were priceless.
 - Meet inspection requirements and be prepared for a new HUD initiative called NSPIRE that is coming.
 - An effort that will bring across the message that the PHA is serious about being the best landlord in Rhode Island.
- i) REAC score came in for Coddling Court, Roger Williams, and Scattered Sites was 69c. The same exact score the PHA received in 2017. The score did not reflect the passion that went into the pilot, but there were other factors involved.
 - j) In 2017, the PHA had a two-month lead time for the REAC inspector to come. Also, this year, when the inspector left the Coddling Court and Roger Williams score was 83.
4. **VASH Voucher Administrative Fees**
 - a) In July 2019, HUD sent a notice of the availability of set aside funding not to exceed 4% of the current admin fee funding to utilize for the VASH program. The PHA submitted a request for \$96,800 to maintain one staff person dedicated to serving the veterans and their special needs. This would assist in processing, briefing and leasing homeless veterans more quickly. On December 19, 2019, the PHA received notice of \$100,028 to use for this purpose.
 5. **Mainstream Voucher Update**
 - a) 40 out of the 50 vouchers have been leased which meets HUD requirements for this award have been leased. All 38 vouchers targeted for those at risk of Homelessness and 2 of the 12 vouchers for those in Nursing Homes.
 6. **Project Based Vouchers Update**
 - a) The PHA successfully executed 4 Housing Assistance Payment contracts with 4 project owners for existing units that support 48 vouchers in our program.
 - b) An Agreement to enter into Housing Assistance Payment contract supporting the 7 new construction units on King Street with One Neighborhood Builders was signed on December 24, 2019.
 - c) The project is scheduled to officially close in February 2020 and the Housing Assistance Payment and units scheduled to be completed by Spring of 2021.
 7. **Wait List Opening**
 - a) The PHA team has been working diligently to create online application feature for the Project Based Voucher system where one large wait list a HUD requirement for Project Based Voucher program will be managed. The team decided that they would modernize the open public housing waitlist, it will be the first time taking online applications through this portal.
 - b) All current Project Based Voucher residents, Centralized Wait List applicants, Public Housing residents and the public were properly notified of the opening. The PHA is conducted a staff training and a partner training on how the online portal works.
 - c) Other community housing resource agencies such as United Way 211, Rhode Island Legal Services and Providence Public Library were informed of our opening.
 - d) The PHA met with all the Project Based Voucher project owners/management companies to review the wait list application portal and the eligibility's processes and requirements.
 - e) Anyone who requests a reasonable accommodation can receive assistance in filling out paper applications and other types of assistance. The team created a bilingual palm card for distribution for the public that outlines the application benefits.
 - f) The official opening day is March 2, 2020.

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution #4289 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Community Center Public Service Application

Status; Vice Chairman Ryan made a motion and Commissioner D'Alfonso seconded the motion.

Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, D'Alfonso, Doggett, Medina, Lee (7)

Votes opposed: none

Resolution #4290 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Facilities Improvement Applications

Status: Commissioner Lee made a motion and Vice Chairman Ryan seconded the motion.

Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, D'Alfonso, Doggett, Medina, Lee (7)

Votes opposed: none

Resident Services Sub-Committee:

Commissioner Cigna reported on the following updates relating to Resident Services:

Program Updates / Discussion:

- On January 21st, members of the PHA Leased Housing, OSD, and Executive Director Sanzaro met with representatives of Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI to discuss our BCBSRI BlueAngel funding application for \$75,000, which was submitted earlier in the month. Decisions are expected by end of February. If awarded, funds would allow the PHA to engage in more landlord outreach and Section 8 tenant resident services.
- In November of 2019, Yohelina decided to join our After-School Youth Program, which focuses on college prep, college essay writing, and goal setting. Together Yohelina and JPP Employment Case Manager, Melanie Rosso, reviewed the application process and created an action plan. Yohelina expressed she was having a tough time with her college essay, and she was missing recommendation letters from her teachers. First, Melanie provided her with some strategies on how to approach her teachers, especially because deadlines were approaching. Yohelina started her college essay but had no one to assist her in editing and could not work on it from home because she did not have access to a computer. Our JPP Employment Case Manager was able to help her revise about 3 essays and upload them into her common application, therefore, enabling her to meet her deadlines.
- In January of 2020, Yohelina walked into the office with a folder and a big grin on her face. When she handed Melanie the folder, it was full of college acceptance letters! All of the letters came accompanied by scholarships and grant award letters. Yohelina was accepted into 10 universities, so far. Amongst the colleges, she was accepted into UMASS Dartmouth, Curry College, and Bridgewater State University. We are very proud of Yohelina and all her hard work. We are excited to continue to be part of her success and support her on her journey in pursuing higher education.

Capital Improvements Sub-Committee:

Commissioner D'Alfonso provided the following summary of Capital Improvements Projects:

- The fire alarm/sprinkler installation project at 335 Hartford is approximately 97% complete; completion of this project is expected in March.
- A bid package was awarded to install automatic sprinklers and fire alarm upgrades to Carroll Towers, Parenti Villa and Dexter Manor.
- The heat pumps, air regulators, high energy roof top exhaust fans and high efficiency ECM pumps for domestic hot water installation at Kilmartin Plaza is 99% complete; this was funded by RISE Engineering.
- The Authority is working with a roof consultant to create a plan to replace the roof at 335 Hartford H-rise and Hartford Park and Chad Brown buildings.
- Further information will be provided in the Monthly Management Report.

Budget & Finance Sub-Committee:

Vice Chairman Ryan updated the board on the following:

Financial Overview

- AMPS: @ January 31 bottom line reflects a YTD operating surplus of \$3,130,137
- COCC: showing an operating deficit of \$ 6,053
- Section 8 Admin: showing an operating surplus of approximately \$ 331,140

- Section 8 HAP: has booked \$ 66,412 as unspent for the 2020 YTD.

Contract Updates

- Delta Mechanical – Fire Protection System @ Hartford Tower – 335 Hartford Ave - \$1,653,900. Funding Source is the 2017 Bond Proceeds. **Payments processed: \$1245509.37 to date**
- Otis Elevator – Elevator Modernization @ Kilmartin Plaza. Funding Source is Bond. Contract total: \$485,000 plus Change Order \$120,025.25 = \$605025.25. **Payments processed: \$00.00 total to date**
- Otis Elevator – Elevator Modernization @ Dexter Manor. Funding Source is Bond. Contract total: \$831,000 **Payments processed: \$00.00 total to date**

ACCEPTANCE OF FY2019 AUDIT REPORT

Status: Commissioner D'Alfonso made a motion and Commissioner Doggett seconded the motion.

Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, D'Alfonso, Doggett, Medina, Lee (7)

Votes opposed: none

PRESENTATIONS:

ADMISSIONS & CONTINUED OCCUPANCY PLAN PROPOSED REVISION

Presented by Michelle Rocchio, Director of Property Management

Adjournment:

Commissioner Lee made a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 6:21pm, seconded by Commissioner Medina. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Minutes Submitted and Approved By:

Taisha Capo
Recording Secretary

Melissa Sanzaro
Executive Director