



**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES:**

**Thursday, May 27, 2021; 5:30 p.m.**

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**Zoom Webinar      Phone Access Dial 929-205-2099      Meeting ID 895 6581 7977**

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*In accordance with Executive Order 20-46, the meeting was held entirely by video and telephone conference call. Members and anyone else speaking identified themselves when speaking.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Nicolas Retsinas called the meeting to order at 5:32p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Absent:</b>
Nicolas Retsinas	John Iglizzi
Thomas Ryan	Mary Kay Harris
Vivian Medina	Lonzie Doggett
Jessica Cigna	
Marcela Betancur	
Rochelle Lee	
Siri Colom	
Lawrence D'Alfonso	

Eight 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 April 22, 2021 meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Lee and was seconded by Commissioner Medina. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**RESIDENT COMMENTS:**

None

**RESIDENT SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE:**

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

- The Resident Services Department is working to develop and refine Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to evaluate program flow within the agency, department, and with partners to date. The baseline tracking will continue through March 2021. In April, the PHA had staff performance reviews, and began what will be an on-going evaluation of the Resident Services Department Referral KPI's.
- Sunset Village- A storage closet was assembled in first floor laundry room to store recently purchased gardening supplies. Residents expressed a need to have their own gardening tools so that they will not have to depend on maintenance to lend them theirs. Therefore, affording them self-sufficiency and flexibility as to when and time they can garden. A get together to open the season for the gardening group is being planned for May.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE:**

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

- Construction on the Pavilion behind 50 Laurel Hill Avenue has begun. This project should be completed by June 4, 2021.
- Manton Heights Bike Path / Greenway project will break ground in mid-June. This project will create a connection from Manton Heights to the Woonasquatucket River Greenway.
- The notice to proceed has been issued to ATG as the winning bidder for the Security Camera and infrastructure upgrade project at Chad Brown and Manton Heights. Work began on May 17, 2021.
- Sprinkler and fire suppression projects at Dominica, Hartford Tower, Carroll Tower, Parenti Villa, and Dexter are proceeding as expected and are on schedule to be completed by the end of September 2021.
- The Kilmartin Plaza elevator modernization approximately 80% completed. This project is on schedule to be completed no later than September 24, 2021.
- Scattered Sites roof evaluation project has been awarded to Aerial Insight. The evaluations are expected to start mid-June.
- Chad Brown roofing project has been delayed due to a Covid-related manufacturing delay. There is one building left to complete the project. This should be done by June 18, 2021.
- Further information is available in the monthly management report.

#### **BUDGET & FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE:**

Commissioner Cigna updated the board on the following:

#### **Financial Overview**

- AMPS: @April 30 bottom line reflects a YTD operating surplus of **\$3,768,089**
- COCC: showing an operating surplus of **\$77,770**
- Section 8 Admin: showing an operating surplus of approximately **\$1,274,794**
- Section 8 HAP: has booked **\$868,851** as underspent for FY 2021 YTD.

#### **New Funding Sources Related to COVID-19**

- \$2.54 M CARES Act for Operating Funds- **\$ 115,000 remaining**
- \$77,112 CARES Act award for Mod Rehab HAP- **\$77,112 remaining**
- \$40,000 Food Program Grant from RI Foundation - **\$18,351 Remaining**
- \$6,819,448 FY21 Capital Fund
- \$132,370 RI Housing Forgivable loan for the Manton Heights Bike Path Access
- \$25,000 One Neighborhood Builders HEZ for Community Health Worker
- \$60,000 Blue Cross grant for Section 8 Landlord Incentives and Information
- \$101,748 RI Dept of Human Services for AC units
- \$478,500 HUD ROSS Service Coordinator Grant

#### **Contract Updates**

- Delta Mechanical – Fire Protection System @ Hartford Tower – 335 Hartford Ave - \$1,653,900. CO for \$15279 for Total of \$1,707,579. Funding Source is the 2017 Bond Proceeds. **Payments processed: \$1,537,289.99 to date.**
- Delta Mechanical – Fire Protection System @ PV, DX, and CT - \$4,824,300. Funding Source is the 2017 Bond Proceeds. **Payments processed: \$2,502,760.50 to date.**
- Otis Elevator – Elevator Modernization @ Kilmartin Plaza. Funding Source is Bond. Contract total: \$485,000 plus Change Order \$120,025.25 – CO **\$96,020** + CO \$3,209.28 + CO \$120,025.25- **CO \$106,191.50** = \$523,212.83. **Payments processed: \$360,530.40 total to date**
- Otis Elevator – Elevator Modernization @ Dexter Manor. Funding Source is Bond. Contract total: \$831,000. **Payments processed: \$270,530.00 total to date**
- Otis Elevators – Elevator Modernization@ HP. Funding Source is CFP 19. Contract total is \$661,098. **Payments processed: \$0 total to date**
- Ahlborg Construction- HP Exterior Renovations - Funding Source CFP 50118. Contract total is \$339,000 plus Change Order for \$12,721= \$351,721 **Payments processed: \$334,135 total to date**

- Martone Construction – Scattered Sites Exterior Renovations – Funding Source CFP 50118. Contract total is \$364,570 plus CO for \$11,065 = \$375635. **Payments processed: \$324,499.85 total to date**
- Martone Construction – Roof and gutter replacement at Chad Brown. Funding source CFP 19. Contract total is \$1,089,460 plus CO for \$477,518. The new contract total is \$1,566,978. **Payments processed: \$1,215,281.74 total to date**
- Focus Technology – Managed IT Services – Funding Source is OPS/COCC. Contract total is \$143,964 plus CO for \$143,964 TOTAL \$287928.00 **Payments processed: \$167,958 total to date**
- Sole Source Construction – Scattered Sites Porch Rebuilt @ 3 Duplexes. Funding source is CFP 50118. Contract total is \$144,400. Change order for \$97,220. New Contract total is \$241,620. **Payments processed: \$217,458 total to date**
- NES Solutions Security- Additional Security for High Rises due to COVID. Contract total is for \$585,780 plus CO for \$47,580 New contract total is \$633,360. Funding source is Ops. Payments processed: **Payments processed: \$613,833 total to date**
- Commercial Roofing - Remove and Replace Roof Hartford Park Tower. Funding Source is CFP 50118. Contract total is \$523,000. Change order for \$75,412.75. New total \$598,412.75 **Payments processed: \$533,171.47 total to date**
- Energy One – HVAC for Elevator Modernization. Funding source is CFP. Contact total is for \$127,500. **Payments processed: \$0.00 total to date**
- NESCTC – Security Detail for DX, CT, and PV sprinkler projects. Funding source is Ops. Contract Total is for \$107,502. **Payments processed: \$64,147.42 total to date**
- MTG Disposal- Disposal Contract all AMPs. Funding is OPs. Start date 5/1/21. Contract total for \$405,810. **Payments processed: \$0 total to date**
- BeauSoleil Brothers – Manton Heights Greenway Bike Path Access. Funding Source is a RI Housing forgivable loan for \$132,370 and CFP for \$96,130. Contract total is for \$228,500. **Payments processed: \$0 total to date**

**CONTRACT APPROVAL:**

**COMMERCIAL ELECTRIC – CHANGE ORDER TO EXISTING PROJECT FOR ELEVATOR MODERNIZATION – ELECTRICAL SYSTEM UPGRADES AT DEXTER, KILMARTIN, AND HARTFORD PARK. ORIGINAL PROJECT WAS \$77,348 (BOARD APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED), PLUS CHANGE ORDER OF \$5,071. CURRENT CHANGE ORDER OF \$22,526 BRINGS TOTAL TO \$104,945. FUNDED BY CFP:**

**Status:** Commissioner Cigna made a motion and Commissioner Lee seconded the motion.

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, Medina, Lee, Colom, D'alfonso, Betancur (8)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:**

Director Sanzaro updated the Board on the following items:

**1. DEXTER MANOR ELEVATOR:**

- a) The PHA is doing elevator modernization projects in the aging elevators using bond money. At Dexter, the two older elevators are slated for modernization: one is being modernized now, and inoperable. The timeline for the work originally was to be completed mid-June.
- b) Last week, the second older elevator went down due to a seriously damaged major component of the elevator called the drive. This component is no longer made or sold and needs to be rebuilt. The residents from tower 1 on the 9 & 10 floor are without elevator access and must use the stairs. The rest of the building/towers can use the one elevator in operation.
- c) The elevator under modernization has been fast tracked with three major components—final electrical and fire safety was completed yesterday and today,

the pretesting and required inspections have to be timed exactly will take place on Tuesday.

- d) The PHA teams created messaging to the building and worked closely with the two floors. There are 4 security guards working around the clock for fire watch and to assist any residents who have mobility challenges, living on the 9th and 10th floor who need help getting down the stairs.
2. **HARTFORD PARK MURAL RIBBON CUTTING:**
    - a) This was a special event that was well attended with the Mayor, the press, artists, partners, employees and residents. The PHA is so proud of the results of this collaboration. The artist's name is Agonza, who grew up in public housing and engaged the entire community. The artwork, artist engagement and the collaboration with the City's Arts Cultural and Tourism has potential to grow and expand.
  3. **SECURITY:**
    - a) The PHA's security vendor contract with NESS Security that has been steady in the high-rises through COVID, will come to an end in mid-June. The PHA's team learned different ways to operationalize security during this time.
    - b) The PHA's existing security guard team will implement a slightly different security approach with 3 roving guards in each of the three shifts to service the six PHA high-rises. The guards will spend more time actively walking the hallways and parking lots and less time posted at a desk. The new security plan will allow for staff outages and special security assignments. There is a communications plan underway for the residents of the high-rise buildings informing them of the new approach and our continued prioritization for their health, safety, and security.
  4. **FINGERPRINTING:**
    - a) For improved operations, efficiency, and customer service the Security Department will now begin submitting the fingerprints of housing applicants electronically to Accurate Biometrics starting on 6/1/2021. This vendor will be the new channeling agency between the PHA and FBI. Fingerprinting results are usually emailed back within 24 hours but could be as soon as 1 hour where it used to take 2-3 weeks to determine applicant eligibility/suitability.
  5. **EMERGENCY HOUSING VOUCHERS:**
    - a) The PHA was selected to receive 42 Emergency Housing Vouchers and funding as authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The 42 vouchers equal a funding amount of \$399K. This new HUD voucher program is for households experiencing homelessness; at risk of homelessness; fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. This program also aims to serve the recently homeless who are now being assisted by another program to create housing stability.
    - b) These vouchers have a limited time frame, the vouchers may not be turned over or reissued after September 30, 2023.
    - c) Anyone on the program at that time will continue to be funded during the time they are on the program.
    - d) In addition to regular admin fees, PHAs will be eligible for the following additional admin and services fee revenue.
    - e) The PHA recently met to plan this new program and attending the HUD webinars to support this specialized voucher program on the short term. The only other agency to have been awarded Emergency Housing Vouchers is RI who was awarded 117 Emergency Housing Vouchers.
  6. **NEW PBV ROUND CONSIDERATIONS:**
    - a) The PHAs experience serving Mainstream vouchers and regular voucher participants since the onset of the pandemic has shown that it is very difficult to find housing. The rental and real estate market has limited supply, competitive rents, and lack of realistic opportunities for applicant renters.
    - b) Therefore, the PHA is considering doing an additional, separate round of Project Based Vouchers in the near future and intends to discuss this with HUD at a panel

discussion regarding utilization of Housing Choice Vouchers and Mainstream vouchers on 6/2/2021.

**7. FUNDING:**

- a) CDBG COVID Response grant of \$112k has been awarded, need official approval, \$112K. The PHA aims to staff who support testing, vaccination and housing preservation efforts with this funding.
- b) The Rhode Island Department of Human Services awarded the PHA \$101,000 that will allow the PHA to purchase one portable air conditioner for each of the 244 scattered site families. Scattered sites were targeted for this program because they pay their own utilities.
- c) The PHA will submit a funding Application to FEMA for \$315,244 reimbursement to cover:
  - Puroclean for Jan 2021, after CARES Act was used
  - NESS for Dec 20, 2020 through April 30, 2021
  - All extra staffing costs for testing and vaccinations from May 2020 through early May 2021.

**8. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS:**

- a) New PHA Employee and Resident Plans:  
Effective on 6/1/2021, the PHA designed new health and safety protocols to align with the State of Rhode Island and the CDC guidelines. The PHA will meet with the public by appointment only and conduct inside work orders with proper PPE. Kitchens, community rooms, and meal programs closed. The community room closures will be reconsidered at the end of July. Unvaccinated employees and vendors will continue to wear face masks.
- b) Special Task Force was designed to handle the back log of Work Orders:  
There was an excessive amount of unattended work orders due to the pandemic. The PHA has created a team of leaders who are working together to try different approaches to address them quickly and systematically. The back log of work orders right now represents 30% of the total work orders open. The team has already reduced the backlog of work orders by about 60%.
- c) Housing Preservation using the PHA's internal capacity and experiences combined with Rhode Island Housing Rental Relief program. Internal meetings between Strategy & Development, Property Management, & Leased Housing continue to further develop this program around the Rhode Island Rent Relief funds and other PHA resources and community resources. The PHA is assigning employees in each program public housing/Section 8 with a referral system to Resident Services Coordinator. This system will connect residents to financial resources and counseling to sustain housing for those struggling with rent.
- d) Wait List Closing:  
The PHA team met to discuss the wait lists for public housing and project-based vouchers which were closed on 10/20/2021 during the pandemic. The PHA met to reevaluate the closing of the lists and based on a healthy wait lists to say the least, staffing and emergency planning assisted in deciding to remain closed and reevaluate at the end of the summer. The Centralized Wait List remains open for Housing Choice Voucher applicants.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

**FIRE SAFETY IN PUBLIC HOUSING**

Presented by Peter Asen, Director of Strategy and Development. Peter presented on data regarding fire incidents in PHA housing over the past five years and the work of the Office of Strategy and Development together with other departments to prevent and reduce future fire incidents, including resident education and infrastructure.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner D'Alfonso made a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 6:35pm, seconded by Commissioner Colom. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Minutes Submitted and Approved By:**

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Taisha Capo  
Recording Secretary

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Melissa Sanzaro  
Executive Director

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