



**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING: March 23, 2006**

PHA Conference Room

100 Broad Street

Providence, RI 02903

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Low called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The Executive Director called the roll:

Present

Theodore Low
Paul Waldman
Jaime Castillo
Dolores Cascella
Dorothy Waters
Rita Williams

Absent

Dr. Thomas J. Anton (Excused)
Paul Lewis (Excused)
Raymond Murphy (Excused)
Balbina Young

Six members were present constituting a quorum.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

There were no residents in attendance at the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (January 26, 2006)

The Vice Chairman called for approval of the January 26th meeting minutes. Commissioner Williams moved approval. Commissioner Waters seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Vice Chairman Low declared the minutes approved.

VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

General Remarks

The Vice Chairman began by thanking everyone for their attendance. He stated that Chairman Anton sends regrets for his absence as he is undergoing treatment for a serious illness. Vice Chairman Low asked that his home address be sent to each Commissioner should they want to contact him.

Groundbreaking for Williams Woods

The Groundbreaking Ceremony for Williams Woods took place on February 13th at the Roger Williams Daycare Center. Speakers at this event included the Mayor of Providence, Senator Lincoln Chaffee, Bill Hatfield of Bank RI, Richard Godfrey of RI Housing, Chris Star of Winn Development, Vice Chairman Low, representing Chairman Anton, and Joe Buchanon, whose mother the development is partially named for. The event was well attended. An article written in the Providence Journal has been included in each Commissioner's packet. Construction on this project is well underway. Arrangements for Commissioners to visit the site will be arranged in the next month or two.

Discussion of Annual Training & Development Retreat

Vice Chairman Low stated that the Board has attended many successful training and development retreats over the past few years. However, with current budget constraints we are

looking for ways to decrease spending for this year's retreat. It has been agreed that we will hold a one-day session at either the Alton Jones Campus in West Greenwich or at Brown University in Providence on a Saturday in late May or early June. A date preference notice will be sent to each Commissioner within the next week. Vice Chairman Low encouraged everyone to respond to the notice immediately so this very valuable training can be arranged.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

▪ Budget, Finance & Audit Committee

The committee did not meet.

▪ Asset Management/Capital Improvements Committee

Commissioner Williams reported that the committee met with Facilities Management Director Marvin Carmody and were briefed on the following:

- Fire at Hartford Park - no injuries – damages covered by insurance minus \$10k deductible.
- Parenti Villa evacuation due to as yet unidentified odor went smoothly.
- Ameresco - contracted to conduct energy audit – guarantee savings.
- Capital Fund Plan has been completed and delivered to the Executive Director.
- Spring Clean-up has begun – will be involving residents as we did last year.

Commissioner Williams also briefed the board on recently completed projects and those currently underway. **(See attached detailed meeting summary.)**

▪ Resident Services Committee

Commissioner Waldman stated the committee met prior to the board meeting and were provided with an overview of the upcoming resident survey conducted by HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC). The PHA will assist in the promotion of this survey by including notices in rent mailers, placing articles in resident newsletters, conducting outreach to Resident Associations and through the Resident Advisory Board, and posting notices in each development office and community center. Results of this survey will be available in August.

(See attached detailed meeting summary.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE)

The Executive Director stated the PHA conducted their bi-annual Survey of Organizational Excellence. This survey asks each full time permanent employee of the Housing Authority to rate the PHA on everything from work environment, supervision, and fairness to benefits. The Housing Authority has always done well on this survey, improving slightly each year. We anticipated a decrease in rating this year as a result of the elimination of pay increases and the addition of health insurance co-payments. However, we did surprisingly well. The PHA as a whole went down in fair pay and benefits as expected, but up in 16 of the 20 constructs. Even where scores went down, we still were on the positive side of the scale. This survey is matched and benchmarked against social service agencies, hospitals and other agencies of similar size and mission. We scored higher than any other participating organizations and are quite pleased with the results. At the department level there were a few surprises. Facilities Management surprised us all by dropping points in every construct. This is attributed to their disappointment in not receiving pay increases and the new co-pay for medical.

Spring Clean-Up

Last year the PHA conducted a pilot program where we hired some of the young people from our developments to assist in Facilities Management, mainly picking up trash around the development where they live. This program worked out very well. In the next few months we will again hire 15-25 kids for this project. They will work for approximately eight weeks in July and

August. They will be paid slightly above minimum wage out of our non-profit. We are also looking for local companies to sponsor some of the children and pay their wages.

Distribution of FY05 Annual Report on Operations

The Executive Director distributed a copy of the Annual Report on Operations for fiscal year 2005 further stating that detailed information on Housing Authority operations for this past year can be found in this report. He invited Commissioners to review the report and contact him with any questions they may have.

Monthly Management Report Highlights

The Executive Director distributed Monthly Management Reports for the past three months inviting Commissioners to review them and forward any questions to his office. He did state that an error was found in maintenance costs in the February report. This will be corrected and Commissioners will receive an updated page.

New England Regional Council/NAHRO Winter Conference – Providence

The Housing Authority hosted this event at the Westin Hotel in Providence on February 6–8th. Approximately one hundred and forty Housing Authority representatives from throughout New England attended this event. The PHA provided four of the presentations. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. NERC/NAHRO would like to come back to Providence next year for this event. They have also asked us to expand our Disaster Preparedness Presentation into a full day training session at the summer conference.

NAHRO Legislative Conference – Washington, DC

The Executive Director attended the NAHRO Legislative Conference in Washington DC earlier this month. As newly appointed president of the Public Housing Association of RI (PHARI), Executive Director O'Rourke arranged for the RI Delegation (RI Housing Authorities) to meet with Congressmen Kennedy and Langevin and Senators Reed and Chaffee to discuss the effects HUD budget cuts are having on Housing Authorities in Rhode Island. Although the Congressmen and Senators have always been strong supporters of affordable housing in RI, it was important to stand together as a group to stress the impact current and future reductions in the budget are having and will have on public housing and the Section 8 program. The March Monthly Management Report will include more detailed information on this trip.

New Grouping of Developments (for Project Based Budgeting)

The Executive Director explained that in preparation for the change to project-based budgeting/accounting, Housing Authorities are required to realign or group developments together for accounting purposes. Most groupings at the PHA will remain the same. All scattered site units will be combined to form one group. We will be switching to this new accounting system gradually over the next few years.

Annual & Five-Year Plan

HUD requires that housing authorities submit an Annual Plan by April 17th and a Five Year Plan for the current year. These plans, which have no substantial changes from the previous year, have been prepared with the participation of the Resident Advisory board (RAB). The RAB approved these plans at their meeting on March 23, 2006 (earlier today). HUD requires these plans also be approved by board resolution (see below).

Development Status

Williams-Woods Place

As previously reported, the Groundbreaking Ceremony was held last month. Due to the relatively warm we've been experiencing, construction on the project is ahead of schedule.

The Board will be given a tour of the site in the near future. The Executive Director also mentioned he has scheduled a meeting on March 24th with Sister Duffy of the Roger Williams Daycare Center to discuss expansion of the daycare.

New Funding Available

The Executive Director was recently contacted by the Eisenhower Foundation. They were researching organizations that provide specific types of programs and came across our website. They were very impressed with our Annual Report data and want to meet with us to discuss possibly funding some of our programs. If approved, programs would be funded for five years. Our responsibility would be to track information and report results to them. This would enable the Housing Authority to continue and possibly reinstate programs which have been or will be eliminated due to budget cuts. The Executive Director will keep the board informed of the status.

RESOLUTION(S)

Resolution #4139

Resolution #4139 asks the Board of Commissioners to authorize the Executive Director to submit to HUD the Annual and Five-Year Plan for FY 2006. Commissioner Williams motioned for approval with Commissioner Castillo seconding the motion. After some discussion, a vote was taken. There being no opposition, Vice Chairman Low declared the resolution passed. [See attached]

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution #4137

At request of Commissioner Waldman: Resolution #4137 asks the Board of Commissioners to authorize the Executive Director to execute any and all contracts for the Housing Authority for goods and services provided to or by the Authority in the ordinary course of business, unless specifically prohibited by HUD. [See attached] The Director stated the PHA must follow procurement policies and that there are specific documents which must be signed by the Chairman and with board approval. Commissioner Waldman stated it is important the Executive Director have the ability to execute contracts during the normal course of business. Further stating there should be no concerns passing this resolution as the PHA is audited by HUD. Vice Chairman Low also mentioned that many times outside contractors need to see that the Executive Director has the authority to execute contracts. Commissioner Waldman motioned for approval with Commissioner Cascella seconding the motion. After some discussion, a vote was taken. There being no opposition, Vice Chairman Low declared the resolution passed. [See attached]

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice Chairman Low accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Williams which was seconded by Commissioner Waters to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Kimberly Dawley
Recording Secretary

Stephen J. O'Rourke
Executive Director