



**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING: August 24, 2006**

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**PHA Conference Room**

**100 Broad Street**

**Providence, RI 02903**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Low called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The Executive Director called the roll:

**Present**

Theodore Low  
Paul Waldman  
Dolores Cascella  
Dorothy Waters  
Rita Williams  
Barbara Fields  
Hillary Silver

**Absent**

Raymond Murphy (Excused)  
Jaime Castillo (Excused)  
Balbina Young

Seven members were present, constituting a quorum.

**RESIDENTS' COMMENTS**

Antonio Ferrera, President of the Dexter Manor Tenant Association introduced himself and stated he was proud to be part of the PHA organization. He stated that as Tenant Association President he has an office in Dexter Manor open daily from 9:00 – 12:00. Antonio, along with his Vice President, assists tenants with their needs and organizing activities for them. The Executive Director stated that Antonio is a retired public housing police officer from New York.

JT Taylor, President of the Hartford Park Tenant Association and Chairwoman of the Resident Advisory Board, stated that book bags were distributed to children in the development. She mentioned that handicapped children are often left out of this distribution. The Tenant Association corrected this oversight, and at its own cost, provided these children with book bags. She further stated the tenants of Hartford Park are becoming more responsible and she is proud of them.

Cheryl Medeiros, Parenti Villa Tenant Association President, stated the tenants are enjoying the new Gazebo immensely. They are also very pleased with the new parking lot lighting. She sends thanks on behalf of the tenants.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (July 27, 2006)**

Chairman Low called for approval of the July 27<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Commissioner Waldman motioned for approval of the minutes. Commissioner Cascella seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Low declared the minutes approved.

Chairman Low then called for ratification of the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Commissioner Williams motioned for approval with Commissioner Waters seconding the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Low declared the minutes approved.

**NEW COMMISSIONERS**

Chairman Low welcomed Mayor Cicilline to the meeting, thanking him for coming to swear-in the Providence Housing Authority's two newest Commissioners, Hillary Silver and Barbara Fields, and to renew the expiring terms of Chairman Low, Vice Chairman Waldman and Commissioner Cascella. Mayor Cicilline thanked the Board and staff members of the Housing Authority for the excellent work they do providing decent, safe and affordable housing. He said this agency does a tremendous job and never causes any heartache to the City of Providence. He thanked the Executive Director and Board stating they have the gratitude of the City.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT****General Remarks**

Chairman Low welcomed Hillary Silver, a professor at Brown University and Barbara Fields, Director of Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC), to the Board. An invitation was issued to all present to attend a small reception following the meeting.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**▪ **Budget, Finance & Audit Committee**

Commissioner Waldman stated the Committee was briefed by Lou Tomasso, the PHA's new Chief Financial Officer, who has completed FY06 accounting records and filed them electronically with HUD. He also stated the firm of Fiore and Assmusen has been awarded the contract to perform our annual audit.

▪ **Asset Management/Capital Improvements Committee**

Commissioner Williams briefed the Board on projects recently completed and those currently underway. Most notably, the energy audit being conducted by Ameresco. She stated once the repairs and updates are complete, the Housing Authority should realize a savings estimated at \$1.4 million. Also noted were repairs and updates to four scattered site units. The Executive Director stated he had recently toured the PHA's scattered site units and feels many are in need of repair and updating to better fit with new construction in surrounding areas. He has met with the Facilities Management Director to prioritize a schedule for repairs. See attached Sub-Committee Meeting notes for more detailed information.

▪ **Resident Services Committee**

Commissioner Waldman stated the Committee met with Maria Gianfrancesco who stated she has been working with tenant associations closing out their budgets. Commissioner Waldman also stated that HUD has conducted its resident survey and the PHA received a good rating overall, especially in maintenance and services.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT****Award of Appreciation**

The Executive Director stated the Housing Authority and Board of Commissioners wishes to thank Commissioner Paul Lewis for his years of service on the Board. A plaque has been prepared for him. Commissioner Lewis was unable to attend the meeting and receive this award but sends his sincere thanks.

**Monthly Management Report Highlights**

Monthly Management Reports were distributed and Commissioners were invited to review in detail, forwarding any questions to the Executive Director's office. The Executive Director did mention that occupancy remains high and collections are adequate.

**Board Packet Information**

The Executive Director stated several articles of interest have been included in each Commissioners packet and directed their attention to them.

The articles cited were:

- Projo article about renaming the community center at Hartford Park after Dr. Anton
- Projo article about the Williams-Woods development
- NYT article about security cameras

#### Presentation: REAC Resident Survey Results FY06

The Executive Director explained that each year HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) surveys a representative sample of public housing residents as a way to measure Housing Authority performance. The results represent one of four areas (see below) Housing Authorities are rated by HUD. The PHAS (Public Housing Assessment System) score consists of the following:

- Physical Inspection – 30%
- Financial Management – 30%
- Management Operations – 30%
- Resident Survey – 10%

HUD sent out 936 surveys. Two hundred thirty-seven (237) were returned indicating a response rate of 29% (23% is the national average). The Housing Authority received a score of 88% in Maintenance and Repair; 73.4% in Communication; 68.9% in Safety; 93.8% in Services and 66.7% in Neighborhood Appearance. All scores have improved since last year. The Executive Director stated the PHA is unhappy with the way HUD conducts this survey. In the past, the Housing Authority would re-send out the same survey to ALL residents for a better response rate. However, because of funding cutbacks and staff reductions that may not be possible this year. Full details of the REAC survey and PHAS score will be presented at this year's Board Training and Development Retreat.

#### Presentation: Survey of Organizational Excellence

The Executive Director stated the PHA surveys its employees every 1-2 years using the Survey of Organizational Excellence. This instrument was created by the University of Texas – School of Social Work and benchmarks the PHA's results against other like organizations. All employees are surveyed. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> year the PHA has conducted this survey. The survey is broken down into five dimensions that are further broken down into constructs. Results are provided for the PHA as a whole as well as by department and are used in our strategic and operational plans. This year, the Housing Authority increased its scores in 14 of the 20 constructs. Detailed results are attached.

#### Update: Project Based Budgeting/Accounting & Management

The change to project-based budgeting and accounting is a major transformation for the Housing Authority. Everything must be de-centralized and assigned to a development. Developments have been re-grouped for reporting purposes and will be reporting on a project based system.

#### Board Training & Development (Retreat Date)

The Executive Director explained that an October date for the Board of Commissioner Annual Training and Development Retreat could not be agreed upon. The Board will be surveyed again for availability in November or December.

#### Status of Bond Issue for Canonchet Cliffs

During the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board approved a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to prepare and issue bonds for an amount not to exceed \$6 million dollars for the rehabilitation of Canonchet Cliffs. Canonchet Cliffs is a 114-unit elderly and disabled development in

Hopkinton, RI. The funds will be used to renovate, refinance and pay fees for the development. However, before we could move ahead with this project, the Town of Hopkinton needed to pass a resolution allowing the PHA to come in and issue the bond. The Town recently passed this resolution and due diligence is underway. We anticipate the bond closing to be in September. The Housing Authority will earn a \$60,000 administrative fee.

Development Status:

Williams-Woods Place – A slide show depicting construction from the beginning was presented at the July 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. Executive Director O'Rourke stated he met with Chris Starr of Winn Development earlier in the day. Mr. Starr stated they have received 1,000 applications, but upon review, more than half won't qualify. They expect to have the first set of units ready for rental in November, provided the Department of Environmental Management will allow partial inhabitation. If not, rental will begin in January. This is six months ahead of schedule.

Below are three resolutions that the board approved at last month's non-quorum "meeting." Although a quorum wasn't present, commissioners who were not present were briefed and polled about the content of the resolutions and authorized proceeding. This month the board legally authorizes them.

**RESOLUTION(S)**

Ratification of Resolution #4141

Resolution #4141 asked the Board of Commissioners to authorize the Executive Director to submit to HUD the annual Management Operations Certification. Commissioner Fields motioned for approval with Commissioner Williams seconding the motion. After some discussion, a vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Low declared the resolution passed.

Ratifications of Resolution #4142

Resolution #4142 asked the Board of Commissioners to authorize the PHA to amend its Admissions and Continuing Occupancy Plan, allowing the Housing Authority to participate in a pilot program for the chronically homeless sponsored by the Center for Supportive Housing. Commissioner Williams motioned for approval with Commissioner Silver seconding the motion. After some discussion, a vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Low declared the resolution passed.

Ratifications of Resolution #4143

Resolution #4143 asks the Board of Commissioners to authorize the naming of the PHA's new community center at Hartford Park the **Thomas J. Anton Community Center**. Commissioner Waters motioned for approval with Commissioner Cascella seconding the motion. After some discussion, a vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Low declared the resolution passed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Low asked Commissioner Silver to accept temporary assignment to the Capital Improvement Committee and Commissioner Fields to accept temporary assignment to the Resident Services Committee. The Chairman also mentioned that an evaluation of the Executive Director is due in the near future and each Commissioner will be mailed an evaluation form to complete. Results will be provided at the annual meeting. The Chairman asked Dolores Cascella to act as Chair of the Nominating Committee for the Annual Meeting in October.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Low accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Williams which was seconded by Commissioner Fields to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

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Kimberly Dawley  
Recording Secretary

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Stephen J. O'Rourke  
Executive Director