



**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING: March 29, 2007**

PHA Conference Room

100 Broad Street

Providence, RI 02903

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Waldman called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The Executive Director called the roll:

Present

Paul Waldman
Jaime Castilloc
Dolores Cascella
Nicholas Narducci
Dorothy Waters
JT. Taylor

Absent

Raymond Murphy (Excused)
Hillary Silver (Excused)
John Iglozzi (Excused)
Barbara Fields (Excused)
Robert Clarkin (Absent)

Six members were present, constituting a quorum.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

There were no resident comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (January 25, 2007)

Chairman Waldman called for approval of the January 25th meeting minutes. Commissioner Narducci motioned for approval of the minutes. Commissioner Waters seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Waldman declared the minutes approved.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

General Remarks – Legislative Conference

The Chairman stated it was his pleasure to attend the NAHRO Legislative Conference in Washington DC with Executive Director O'Rourke and several staff members. He stated how proud he felt to be a part of an organization that others have so much respect for. A number of representatives from RI Housing Authorities attended the conference and met with the RI congressional delegation. Jim Reed of the Newport Housing Authority led one group and met with representatives of Senator Jack Reed and Congressman Patrick Kennedy. The other group, led by Executive Director O'Rourke met with representatives of Senator Whitehouse and Congressman Langevin, who took time to meet with us directly. He expressed much interest in our housing concerns.

General Remarks – Welcome New Board Members

The Chairman introduced "JT" Taylor to the board. JT has resided in the Hartford Park development for twenty-five years. She has spoken on behalf of tenants for many years and is currently serving as President of the Hartford Park Tenant Association and Chair of the Resident Advisory Board. The Chairman then welcomed Commissioner Robert Clarkin back to the board. He stated Mr. Clarkin previously served on the Board from January 1991 through June 2002 as a

member of the City Council. On behalf of the entire board, the Chairman welcomed Commissioner Clarkin to the board. Both are wonderful additions to the board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

▪ Budget, Finance & Audit Committee

Commissioner Castillo stated the committee met with Chief Financial Officer Lou Tomasso. The finance department is transitioning to asset based management, allocating staff by project and central office, determining front line and fee type costs as well as identifying assets and liabilities by project. Mr. Castillo also stated the independent audit for FY07 has been completed with no findings. See attached report for more details.

▪ Asset Management/Capital Improvements Committee

Councilman Narducci stated the committee met with Director of Facilities Management, Marvin Carmody, and were briefed on projects currently underway as well as those recently completed, specifically the energy savings projects, work on the domestic hot water system at Sr. Dominica Manor and authority-wide inspections of the water based fire protection systems and elevators as well as emergency generator testing. See attached report for more detailed information

▪ Resident Services Committee

Commissioner Waters stated the committee met with Special Projects Officer, Maria Gianfrancesco, and were briefed on the current status of the EPA Grant for the Asthma program and rodent remediation and tenant participation in the upcoming media event to raise awareness of affordable housing. See attached report for more detailed information.

RESIDENT ASSOCIATION REPORT

Maria Gianfrancesco, Special Projects Officer, presented the Resident Association Report. She stated the Asthma Program at Hartford Park continues to be a success and the Tenant Association continues to address issues including alcohol, trash removal and enforcing compliance of tenant leases. She also mentioned many developments are participating in fire safety activities and have held St. Patrick's/St. Joseph's Day dinners. See attached report for more detailed information.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Monthly Management Report Highlights

Monthly Management Reports were distributed. This month's highlights are as follows:

- FY07 Audit is complete with no findings for the 12th year running
- Occupancy is at 98%
- 4,500 work orders completed during the month
- Collections are slightly behind
- Budget projects \$600k deficit

The Executive Director invited Board members to review this report and contact him with any questions.

Attention to Articles in Board Packet

Each month one or more articles related to public housing will be included in each commissioner's packet in order to provide Commissioners with information on housing issues. This month's packet includes the following:

- ◆ Feature story/profile on new Commissioner JT Taylor.
- ◆ Resident Characteristic Report

The Executive Director invited Board members to review these articles and contact him with any questions.

Budget Update/Status of Action Taken to Reduce Deficit

The Housing Authority has taken the following steps to reduce its \$600k deficit:

- Stopped all but essential supply purchases
- PHA to Shut down for five Fridays before 6/30/07 (emergency crews only)
- A number of employees have volunteered to take a month-long layoff
- Only filling critical positions
- Moving staff off the operating budget onto the Section 8 budget and to the non-profit
- Asked our business partner (Winn Development) for monies – Expect to receive \$50-80k
- Meeting with unions/staff
- Expect a few permanent layoffs – but we may be able to bring employees back in new fiscal year

We project these actions will result in savings of \$300k and plan to use our reserves for the remaining \$300k. The alternative would be to layoff 40 people which would critically affect the operations of the PHA.

Report from RI Department of Education on PHA's ABE, ESL and GED Programs

The Executive Director reported the Housing Authority received a letter from the RI Department of Education assessing our Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language and General Equivalency Diploma programs as excellent, specifically praising Education and Training Manager Kathleen Knight on her leadership skills. We were quite pleased to receive such high praise. We are very concerning about the future of the Resident Services Department and our ability to continue to provide these services. We recently lost out on two grants, which we are working with our congressional leadership to appeal.

NAHRO "Awareness Campaign" Update

Providence has been selected as one of eight media markets by the Washington DC based National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) to conduct an awareness campaign about the issue of affordable housing. "Housing America 2007" is an effort to raise public awareness of the critical role of public and affordable housing initiatives. A press conference is being held on Wednesday, April 4th at 10:00 a.m. at Conley's Warf on Allens Avenue in Providence. Representatives from many RI Housing Authorities, the Institute of Real Estate Management, Staff, Commissioners, Union Representatives, Congressional Delegation, Mayor Cicilline and other will be in attendance. The Governor is giving a proclamation and may be in attendance to present it personally. Councilman Narducci was asked if the City Council would also give a proclamation. Local media, newspaper, television and radio, have been informed and invited to attend. Executive Director O'Rourke will be meeting with the editorial staff of the Providence Journal and writing an op-ed piece. This event will take approximately one hour. There will be 6-7 speakers. Coffee will be provided by the Canteen Truck and pastry will be provided by the Public Housing Association of RI. Commissioners are encouraged to attend.

Entrepreneurial Activity

The PHA has been meeting with Dr. Adam Thermos, Security Consultant, to discuss the option of setting up a non-profit organization to monitor security systems. Many areas in the city are equipped with security cameras but have no-one trained to monitor them. We are currently working on a business plan to begin this enterprise. Upon initial investigation, there appears to be a great need for these services and monies earned could be used to fund our own security services.

PHAS Score

The Public Housing Assessment Score (PHAS) is how we are rated by HUD. It is broken down into four categories; physical, financial, management and resident services. For Fiscal Year 2006, the Housing Authority received a score of 80, designating us a standard performer. The breakdown of this score is as follows:

- Physical inspections – Scored 22 out of a possible 30
- Management Operations – Scored 28 out of a possible 30
- Financial – Scored 21 out of a possible 30
- Resident Survey – Scored 9 out of a possible 10

As mentioned in the past, physical inspections are subjective. This year we had two individuals conducting the inspections. We were also hurt in the financial section because our reserve is so low. Detailed information on these scores is included in each Commissioners packet. The Executive Director invited Commissioners to review and contact him with any questions. It should be noted that the scoring system will change next year in that each development will be scored individually.

Update: Project Based Budgeting/Accounting and Management

An in-house Transition Team has been established and are working to transition to asset based accounting/management. They will be reporting to the Executive Director in April.

PHA Annual Plan Presentation and Discussion

The PHA's Annual Plan, required by HUD, is complete. The Housing Authority worked with the Resident Advisory Board putting this plan together. The plan includes a list of policies, details what our housing needs are as well as goals and objectives for the future. Commissioners are invited to review the plan and contact the Executive Director with any questions.

RESOLUTION(S)

Resolution #4146:

Resolution #4146 asked the Board of Commissioners to authorize the Executive Director to submit the PHA Annual Plan to HUD. Commissioner Cascella motioned for approval with Commissioner Castillo seconding the motion. After some discussion, a vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilman Narducci stated there is a group willing to donate items to the recreation center at Chad Brown. Their question is if the recreation center were to shut down for any reason, would they get their equipment back. The Executive Director stated they absolutely would and that it could be formally written into an agreement. Councilman Narducci also asked if funds were raised for the recreation center would all monies be used to provide services to the tenants. The Executive Director explained the funds would be put in the Housing Authority's non-profit (PCOC). Funds from this account are used only for residents.

The Housing Authority has been approached by Kevin Marchman, former Assistant Secretary at HUD – Office of Public and Indian Housing, to set up a paint company with residents. The Executive Director stated that twice before this has been tried unsuccessfully. "Homeworks" is a program that will train interested tenants to paint. Sherwin Williams will provide the training and the paint. There is no cost to the PHA. The PHA need only provide the space to train and places to paint. They will begin recruiting tenants in the next few weeks. Our hope is, once they have been trained, to set-up non-profit organization and send them out on jobs.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Waldman accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Castillo which was seconded by Commissioner Taylor to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Kimberly Dawley
Recording Secretary

Stephen J. O'Rourke
Executive Director