

**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING: June 26, 2008**

PHA Conference Room 100 Broad Street Providence, RI 02903

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Waldman called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The Executive Director called the roll:

Present Absent

Paul Waldman

Dolores Cascella

Barbara Fields

JT. Taylor

Robert Clarkin

Dorothy Waters

Hillary Silver

John Iglizzi Raymond Murphy

Jaime Castillo (Excused)

Nicholas Narducci (Excused)

Eight members were present, constituting a quorum.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

There were no comments from residents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (June 26, 2008)

Chairman Waldman called for approval of the June 26th meeting minutes. Commissioner Clarkin moved 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 Comments

Chairman Waldman stated that he and Commissioner Clarkin have been working on revisions to the Board By-laws and changes to the board policies. He asked that the other commissioners let him know about any updates they would like to recommend. Mark Ouellet, board council, is also reviewing the Proxy Voting issue, which is included in our policies, but not the board bylaws. He will determine if this information should be added to the bylaws or even allowed under state law. This project will be completed at the Board of Commissioners Retreat in November.

Chairman Waldman also stated that there would be a short executive session during the meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget, Finance & Audit Committee

There is no report this month. Executive Director O'Rourke stated that the only issue relating to the Finance Department this month was the bidding for the independent public audit. We received only one bid from Fiore & Assmussen, who are our current auditors, and they were selected again. The contract will be awarded next week and they will begin their field work.

Asset Management/Capital Improvements Committee

Executive Director O'Rourke presented the report to be entered into the record. [See the attached report.] Commissioner Taylor motioned to accept the report, and Commissioner Cascella seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Waldman declared the motion approved.

Resident Services Committee

Talitha VanDenBerghe, Special Projects Officer, presented the report to be entered into the record. [See the attached report.] She also stated that the Housing Authority had received a Fire Safety grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the sum of \$95,013. The grant will be used to install the Safe-T-Element cooking system in Parenti Villa to reduce the number of cooking fires.

Commissioner Silver asked if we have experienced many cooking fires at the PHA, and Executive Director O'Rourke stated that three people had died in fires at the developments in his 21 years at the PHA. The remaining FEMA grant monies will be used to fund the Fire Safety Training Programs at the developments.

Special Projects Officer VanDenBerghe also stated that Commissioner Taylor has been re-elected to another 3-year term as the President of the Hartford Park Resident Association. Commissioner Taylor stated that she is proud of the Summer Lunch Program she and Resident Association Secretary Vivien Medina ran for the kids at Hartford this summer. They served the lunches in two locations so the children would not have to cross Hartford Avenue. They also kept their grounds clean and neat, and the program was very successful.

Commissioner Silver motioned to accept the report, and Commissioner Cascella seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Waldman declared the motion approved.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Monthly Management Report

The Executive Director directed the board to review the Monthly Management Report for detailed information about the PHA's operations, in particular the section relating to the status of current

capital improvement projects. He invited the commissioners to contact him if they had any questions about the report.

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:

- A group of articles from Affordable Housing Finance magazine about rethinking federal housing policies.
- An article from the Gotham Gazette about preserving public housing that works, using the New York City Housing Authority as an example.
- An article from the New York Times about the problems caused by Section 8 residents moving into the suburbs.

Budget Status Report

The Executive Director stated that although we were expecting the FY 2009 budget to come in at about an 84% proration, we prepared for 82%. Unfortunately, we may receive slightly less than that, but we have built in a reserve figure as well, so we should be OK. We will not have a definite answer from HUD until the end of the calendar year because they are unable to estimate their budget until all 3,207 housing authorities in the country have submitted their budgets, although many of the trade organizations such as NAHRO can accurately estimate the HUD budget much sooner.

Capital Fund Financing Program Status Report

The Executive Director stated that there are details about the Capital Fund Financing Program projects in the Monthly Management Report.

Many projects are well under way. Gates Associates have been hired as the landscape architects, and they are one of the best in the state. They have completed their field work for Hartford Park, Chad Brown, Admiral Terrace and Manton Heights. Most of the landscape work will be completed in the spring.

Exterior facades will be renovated at Roger Williams, and the engineering for the project is in progress. Parking lots are being re-sealed and re-striped. There is much more taking place. He encouraged the board to follow the progress each month for each project in the Monthly Management Report.

Energy Performance Contract Status Report

The Executive Director stated that the Energy Performance Contract work is moving along quickly. Light fixtures have been changed out, showerheads changed, toilets replaced, and more energy efficient stoves have been installed in some buildings. 160 boilers will be replaced with smaller, more energy efficient boilers throughout the developments. Half of this work will be done this year, and half next year. The systems at Chad Brown and Admiral Terrace will be completely decentralized, and there will be a backup boiler for every 4

buildings. More information on these projects is available in the Monthly Management Report.

We will hold a press conference with Ameresco, National Grid, some members of the congressional delegation, and other elected officials to publicize this project and our savings of \$1.2 million a year. The Commissioners will be informed and will receive the press release. The PHA is meeting with Ameresco next week and the press conference will be planned for some time in October.

Commissioner Cascella stated that the workers have done a very neat and efficient job at Dominica Manor.

HUD 504 & FH/EEO Status Report

The Executive Director stated that since the 504 Review, HUD has come up with several recommendations, which we are currently implementing. We are doing a re-assessment of all of our developments for accessibility, and we are also doing an assessment of limited English proficiency to determine which additional documents need to be translated for residents and applicants. At the moment this is the HUD regulation du-jour. They are focusing on this now, and next year it will be something else.

Strategic Plan Status Report

The Executive Director stated that the Strategic Plan is not finished, yet, and that another month would be spent preparing it. Thirteen key

strategic issues have been identified. The plan will be organized into three different documents.

 The first document contains all the field work including assessments, surveys, focus groups, and environmental scans and situational analysis for every department.

 The second document is the strategic plan itself including a description of the process, the teams, our mission, our mandates, our vision statement for the future, the values statement, a section on the environmental scan for the housing authority as a whole, a section on the key strategic issues, and then the goals and objectives.

 The third document is the Goals Management Plan which includes the goals, objectives, tasks, and measurable results.

FY 2008 Management Operations Certification-PHAS

The Executive Director stated that the Management Operations Certification assessment must be submitted to HUD annually as part of our rating under the Public Housing Assessment System. It is worth 30% of the total points. The assessment includes a number of performance indicators, including unit turnaround days, vacancy unit turnaround, capital funds, work orders, annual inspection of dwelling units and systems, security, and economic self-sufficiency. We usually score 28 out of 30 on this assessment, maxing out each category except unit turnaround.

Commissioner Silver asked what “low unit turnaround” means and the Executive Director explained that it is a measure of how long it

takes us to get a unit ready for new occupancy after a tenant leaves, including an inspection, clearing out, cleaning, repairs, and painting. The average time is about twenty plus days, the turnover rate is about 18%, and we turned around about 355 units last year. The turnaround time is lower than we would like due to staff reductions and the number of turnarounds, in addition to the 60,000 work orders the staff completes in a year. Commissioner Taylor noted that our turnarounds are very fast, except in cases where there is a lot of damage that increases the amount of work that needs to be done to the unit.

Addendum to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan

The Executive Director stated that the PHA is submitting a new budget for refunding and that HUD is requiring specific language about fair housing. The administrative plan does include this information, but we need to use the exact language we received in a letter from Maura O'Brien at HUD.

Youth Programs

The Executive Director introduced Sorrel Devine, the Director of Resident Services, to give an update on the youth programs.

Director Devine stated that we have had to end our youth programs and lay off the staff because the funding has been eliminated. Instead, we have partnered with other organizations to provide a

variety of youth programs, matching and possibly exceeding what we have been able to provide in the past.

Middle School students from the Perry school participated in the PHA's first Summer AfterZone Program at Hartford Park. Sports fans from Hartford Park and Manton Heights enrolled in the PHA's Summer Youth Sports Camp for boys and girls ages 9-16 at Merino Park. And all school-age children authority-wide had the option of joining the Providence Boys and Girls Club summer program and were provided with transportation to one of three "Clubhouses" throughout the city.

At the end of the summer, the City of Providence granted the PHA about \$20,000 of funds to continue on-site programming at Hartford Park and Chad Brown until the opening of Providence schools on August 25. And for the third year in a row, with Youth Workforces Services grant funds, the PHA employed a dozen resident teens as Junior Counselors, providing them with a paid work experience, as well as job readiness training and career exploration workshops.

For the fall, The PHA and Providence Boys and Girls Club will again join forces to provide after school programming for resident youth ages 6-12 at the PHA's Hartford Park facility. The program will begin the week of September 22nd and will run concurrent with the academic year - Monday through Friday, from 2-7 pm. An annual membership fee of \$16 will open the doors for PHA youth to

participate in a wide variety of activities including daily homework help, life skills training, arts and crafts, computer instruction, performing arts classes, organized sports and general recreation. Each participant will be given a hot meal, and transportation to Hartford Park for youth residing in Manton Heights will be provided. The Boys and Girls Club will also be a presence in our other family developments this year, providing transportation after school, Tuesday through Friday, and on Saturday afternoons, for youth from Chad Brown and Coddington Court to participate in structured programs at the Fox Point Clubhouse.

The Providence Housing Authority is also partnering with the Providence After School Alliance to run after school programming for students at Perry Middle School. In addition to old favorites such as Pets and Vets, new programs offered this semester include cooking, ceramics, drumming, boxing and much, much more! A daily snack and transportation home is provided, and these activities will begin the week of September 29th.

The Executive Director stated that we went door-to-door this summer to sign up youth for the programs, and in the case of the Boys and Girls Club we have provided scholarships to cover the \$16 fee for those who could not afford it.

The Executive Director also stated that we had approached Dr. Sickenger at Providence College this spring with a plan for their

Public Service program volunteers to take over the Tavares Center at Chad Brown as a learning laboratory. Initially the college was enthusiastic about the idea, but they ultimately decided did not have the funding for the project. We will work with the Boys and Girls Club to take over there, and we are also going to collaborate with Times2 Academy's after school program that focuses on science and math.

RESOLUTION(S)

Resolution #4166

Resolution #4166 authorizes the submittal of the annual Management Assessment certification to HUD. Commissioner Igliozzi moved approval with Commissioner Fields seconding the motion. A vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.

Resolution #4167

Resolution #4167 authorizes an Addendum to the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan. Commissioner Igliozzi moved approval with Commissioner Clarkin seconding the motion. A vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.

Resolution #4168

Resolution #4168 authorizes the Executive Director to work with the Virgin Island Housing Authority under an Interagency Agreement subject to the terms and conditions negotiated by the parties.

Further, this approval is subject to a legal opinion from the PHA's General Counsel that no conflict exists, or that the agreement violates any Department of Housing and Urban Development regulation. Commissioner Clarkin moved approval with Commissioner Iglizzi seconding the motion. A vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman completed a roll call for a motion to move to Executive Session at 5:45 p.m. to discuss a personnel issue. All voted in favor.

The Chairman accepted a motion from Commissioner Fields, which was seconded by Commissioner Clarkin to move out of Executive Session at 5:58 p.m. All voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Fields stated that LISC would be hosting a coffee hour with Senator Reed next Wednesday morning from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. to thank him for his leadership on housing issues, and that the Commissioners and the Executive Director were invited to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Waldman accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Narducci, which was seconded by Commissioner Clarkin, to adjourn the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Submitted by: Approved by:

Beth Herosy Stephen J. O'Rourke
Recording Secretary Executive Director