

**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING: September 30, 2010**

PHA Conference Room 100 Broad Street Providence, RI 02903

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

The Executive Director called the roll:

Present: Absent:

Paul F. Waldman John Igliazzi

Delores Casella Robert Clarkin

Dorothy Waters

JT Taylor

Roger Giraud

Barbara Fields

Hilary Silver

Venez Madrid

Nicholas Narducci

Eight members were present constituting a quorum to conduct business.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (8-26-10)

Commissioner Narducci moved to approve the meeting minutes of 8-26-10. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Waters. The chairman called for a vote. The minutes were approved unanimously.

RESIDENT'S COMMENTS

There were no resident comments.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Waldman stated that there is a small change to the board policies that the Executive Director will explain later in the meeting. On page 17 the policy had stated that the Chairman must be a signatory for Capital Fund Program checks. The corrected policy states that he must be a signatory to authorize Capital Fund checks.

The Annual Board Meeting will be in October or November. At that time an election will be held for the Chairman and Vice Chairmen positions. Chairman Waldman appointed Commissioners Clarkin, Cascella and Madrid to the nominating committee. He instructed the Commissioners to speak to any of the nominating committee members if they would like to add their name, or that of another Commissioner, to the ballot.

The Executive Director stated that the spouses or significant others may be invited to the Annual Meeting this year, and that there will be

a slide presentation on the 2010 capital improvement projects, among other things.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Asset Management/Capital Improvements

Commissioner Madrid presented the committee's report citing progress on projects that are underway, in development, and completed, at all of the PHA developments. [See the attached committee report.]

Budget, Finance & Audit Committee

Commissioner Giraud stated that the committee met prior to the board meeting for a briefing from the CFO Donna Pariseau. He stated that the FY 2009 Audit is complete, the FY 2010 unaudited FDS has been submitted to HUD, and the FY 2010 Audit is underway.

The Executive Director informed the board that the difference between the 2009 Audited and pre-audited reports was only \$20,000. [See the attached committee report.]

Resident Services Committee

Commissioner Silver stated that the committee met before the board meeting. She stated that the Customer Service and Satisfaction Surveys are complete and after the resident focus groups have met there will be a complete report. She also mentioned that the 8th session of the painter training program will begin soon and that a

former graduate has started a painting company and hired three more graduates to work for him. [See the attached committee report.]

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Monthly Management Report

The Executive Director reminded the board that the board committee reports only highlight the PHA's activities and invited them to review the MMR for greater detail on all PHA activities.

Items in Board Packet

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

- Remarks at the Federal Reserve Conference on REO and Vacant Property Strategies for Neighborhood Stabilization, by Eric S. Rosengren, President & CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.**
- A Wall Street Journal article about the bureaucratic obstacles involved in spending stimulus funds.**
- A HUD Media Advisory announcing the release of the results of the 2009 American Housing Survey.**
- A Providence Business News article about the limited availability of affordable homes in Rhode Island.**

Board Policy Amendment

The Executive Director further explained the mistake in the board

polices that were amended at the last meeting. Under the “Finances” section, it stated that the Chairman was one of four eligible signatories for signing Capital Fund Program checks. This was an error. What the board chair is required to sign is the “authorization” of Capital Fund expenditures for the Capital Fund Financing Program.

Commissioner Fields motioned to accept the changes, with Commissioner Silver seconding. As there was no opposition by members present, the changes were accepted by two-thirds of the board.

FY 2009 PHAS Score

The Executive Director stated that we received our FY 2009 PHAS score from HUD. The PHA received a PHAS score of 88%, which is two points short of “High Performer” status. The PHA scored as follows on the four PHAS Indicators: Physical 22 out of 30, Financial 29 out of 30, Management 28 out of 30, and Resident 9 out of 10. Many of the points we were penalized for in the physical inspection of the housing portfolio had to do with violations like blocked egresses and disconnected smoke detectors in apartments.

Status Report on FY 2010 REAC Inspections

The REAC inspections averaged 76.9%, with a high score of 96% for Dominica Manor and a low score of 59% for Chad Brown. Some of the lower scores are due to site work in progress at the family

developments, and the PHA will appeal the scores for Chad Brown, Manton, Coddington Court and Hartford Park. This will improve the scores by several points at each of these developments.

Capital Fund Project Status

The Executive Director informed the board that all Capital Fund Program projects are going well and on schedule. He stated that details on all of the completed, planned, and in-progress projects are available in the Monthly Management Report and the Asset Management Committee report. There will also be a comprehensive slideshow featuring these projects at the Annual Meeting.

Security Grant

Mr. O'Rourke announced that the PHA recently applied for a HUD Emergency Security Grant and was pleasantly surprised to have been awarded \$250,000. These funds will be used to upgrade and expand the security camera systems at all of the developments.

Officer Paul O'Rourke stated that the cameras have been very helpful in deterring crime and apprehending suspects. He stated that it has been especially quiet at Chad Brown since the newest cameras were installed there.

The Executive Director asked the PHA's CFO, Donna Pariseau, to introduce the newest member of the PHA staff. She introduced Jeff Brown, the PHA's new Grants and Budget Manager, who was recently

hired. He was a Senior Staff Accountant for the Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency for eight years.

Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) Planning Grant

Mr. O'Rourke informed the board that the PHA, in partnership with the Providence Planning Department, LISC, and the Olneyville Housing Corporation, is applying to HUD for a Choice Neighborhood Initiative planning grant. This program is designed to replace the Hope VI program, but its scope has been expanded to also take in the neighborhoods surrounding public housing developments. This grant application will focus on the Hartford and Olneyville area, which includes the Hartford Park and Manton Heights developments. A number of other partners will also be involved to supply services needed to successfully execute the grant. There are only two full grants available in this round, so it was decided by the group to apply for a \$250,000 planning and implementation grant.

Commissioner Fields, also Executive Director of Rhode Island LISC, stated that she feels that the group has a good chance at obtaining the grant because the relationships between the partners have already been established through cooperation on past projects.

VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) Vouchers

The Executive Director stated that the HUD has issued a NOFA (Notification of Funding Availability) for project-based VASH

Vouchers. There are only 500 units available nationwide; we may apply for a maximum of 50. We will shortly advertise for letters of intent, since there is a great demand for these units.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Executive Director informed the board that the Customer Satisfaction Survey has been completed for Public Housing residents, and that the next survey will target Section 8 residents and landlords. The initial responses have been overwhelmingly positive, with the exception of the bedbug issue.

In an ongoing effort to address the bedbug issue, Mr. O'Rourke, and key personnel, met today to plan the implementation of a comprehensive pilot program. In addition to helping the residents, this program may save some money. Last year the PHA spent approximately \$42,000 in efforts to eradicate the pests.

Change in Policy Concerning Sex Offenders

Current admission policy prohibits the admission to public housing of registered sex offenders. However, there is no policy concerning current residents who are living in public housing who may be registered as sex offenders (presumably they committed an act after admission and were not incarcerated). While this is rare, we want to have a policy that would prohibit and registered sex offender from living in our properties.

Chairman Waldman asked if this would be applicable to every level of registered sex offender. The Executive Director stated yes. [See Resolution below.]

No Smoking Policy Presentation

Melissa Sanzaro from the Special Projects Office presented a PowerPoint slide presentation on the No Smoking Policy that the PHA plans to implement in the hi-rises next spring. The Mayor's Substance Abuse Prevention Council and the Rhode Island Department of Health have received \$3.3 million in federal stimulus funds from the CDC as part of a grant, which requires that a housing authority participate. The PHA will use the funds to provide education and supportive services to residents, and hopes to reduce tobacco use and exposure to second hand smoke by 10%. [See the attached reports.]

Mr. O'Rourke explained that this will be an effort to create change through education, and that it is unlikely that residents will be evicted in the near future for not following this new policy. Chairman Waldman asked if current residents would be grandfathered. Mr. O'Rourke stated that they would not be required, but encouraged, to follow the policy until their leases came up for renewal. Chairman Waldman also inquired about medical marijuana. PHA Attorney, Michelle Andrews, stated that technically it is legal to evict for that type of smoking because federal law does not allow it, even for medicinal purposes. The Executive Director noted that the efforts will

be strictly directed towards the smoking of tobacco.

Commissioner Cascella stated that she feels this is an attempt to tell tenants what they are allowed to do in their own homes. Mr. O'Rourke stated that this is a community setting and the rights of the non-smokers need to be taken into account. He further stated that many residents suffer from asthma and other lung-related diseases.

RESOLUTION(S)

Resolution #4193

Resolution approving the PHA's intentions to implement a Smoke Free Public Housing Policy in its hi-rise developments. Commissioner Fields moved approval with Commissioner Madrid seconding the motion. A vote was taken. There were three members opposed and four in favor. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.

Resolution #4194

Resolution approving a prohibition against admission and/or continued occupancy of Registered Sex Offenders. Commissioner Cascella moved approval with Commissioner Waters seconding the motion. A vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.

OLD BUSINESS

- **There was no old business**

NEW BUSINESS

- **There was no new business**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Waldman accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Fields, seconded by Commissioner Taylor. The meeting adjourned at 6:14 PM.

Minutes Submitted and Approved By:

Beth Herosy Stephen J. O'Rourke

Recording Secretary Executive Director