

**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING: Thursday, March 26, 2015; 5:00 p.m.**

Codding Court

144 Dodge Street

Providence, RI 02907

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nicolas Retsinas called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Nicolas Retsinas
Thomas Ryan
Mary Kay Harris
Ricardo Patino
Gilberta 'JT' Taylor
Dorothy Waters

Absent:

Roger Giraud
John Iglizzi
Kevin Jackson
Hilary Silver

Six members were present, sufficient to commence an informational meeting, but not a sufficient number for a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Retsinas recognized only six members were present and asked for the minutes of February 26, 2015 are tabled until the next board meeting on April 23, 2015.

RESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Waters, a resident of Codding Court, commended employee, Juan Espinal, for his diligent efforts during the snowstorms. Commissioner Waters then voiced her concerns of not enough help for plowing during the snowstorms and inaccessibility to the dumpsters. She also mentioned concerns with modernization not being tended to by maintenance for the past 3-4 years. Allan Pacific, Director of Facilities Management, spoke to the issues she raised. He indicated that repairs have been done and more needs to be done. Some of the modernization is contingent upon capital funding.

The Chairman asked Commissioner Waters and Allan to have a meeting with the Residents Advisory Board (RAB) and Director Tavares to determine what needs to be done at Codding Court and to report to the board at a future meeting.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Retsinas received a congratulatory letter from HUD stating the PHA has completed the requirements of the Action Plan dated December 19, 2012 and Progress Plans dated December 3, 2013 including its recovery from a substandard physical designation.

Executive Director Tavares explained the REAC inspection in 2012 on certain properties, received a substandard inspection. A plan of action was submitted to HUD of how the PHA was going to address and rectify the situations in question. This letter is the culmination of our efforts. We received above traditional scores in 2014; however, HUD

rescinded several of the scores questioning the inspector. HUD has since scheduled re-inspections.

Commissioner Taylor commented there is a huge problem with dogs not being on leashes at Hartford.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Tavares apologized to the commissioners regarding an inoperable link to view our 244 scattered site units. He said it should be fixed in the next few weeks. He went on to clarify that of those units, we have 113 duplexes and 18 single families for a total of 131 buildings throughout the City of Providence. Those are in addition to our major developments.

Secondly, the Deputy Director's position was posted and we have received 45 responses; six internal, 39 external. We are in the review and interviewing process. Additionally, we have received 19 responses for the Associate Director of Resident Services position; 11 external, eight internal. In addition, on March 12, Director Tavares met with DARE (Direct Action for Rights and Equality) about our policy for admitting tenants who may have had criminal records in the past. Their concerns are if our policy is fair and equitable, is it timely and is our appeal process functioning well. The Director asked DARE to submit what they feel is a current proposal based on what is happening in other housing jurisdictions.

Finally, he shared with the Commissioners that at times, we receive mandates from HUD with no funding attached. As an example; HUD passed a green physical needs assessment requirement. We sent an RFP to eight firms of which three replied with bids ranging from \$78,000-\$121,600. HUD will not be providing funds, therefore, we have to take the money out of our Capital Funds, thus approximately \$80,000 less for property improvements.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Budget and Finance: (Comm. Giraud)
- Resident Services: (Comm. Silver)
- Capital Improvements: (Comm. Cascella)
- Executive Committee: (Chair Retsinas)

Budget & Finance: Commissioner Ryan stated the Auditors would be presenting at the April board meeting. Finance is working on final certifications prior to submitting the audit. Finance worked on the summary to make it easier to read. The AMPS and the COCC are running in the black in terms of cash. Congress is passing the budget on the National level including housing authorities. In the MMR the rents that are budgeted for the tenants is less than \$7.5 million and the operating subsidy is a little over \$14 million. The Vice Chair asked that all commissioners attend the April meeting as the audit will be presented.

Chairman Retsinas reiterated the importance of the commissioners attending the April board meeting for the audit presentation.

Resident Services: Melissa Sanzaro, Director of Special Projects stated PHA was awarded the Ross Grant for \$738,000 to support resident service coordinators in the family developments for three years. Sorrel Devine, Director of Resident Services submitted a grant to the United Way for \$15,000 for Financial Stability. Resident Services is holding a job fair on April 17, at Perry Middle School, the Adult Education & Training program has 22 students registered, Sherwin Williams Painters Training program is April 6, the DIGI Club computer classes now has 30 members, and Live Well Viva Bien food truck will be going out to Dominica Manor the 1st Monday of every month.

Special Projects: the nine 75th Anniversary events are still underway with planning. Emails were sent to the board members informing them that they will be recognized at the Dominica event on April 28. Resident Commissioners will also be recognized at the Kilmartin Plaza event on April 2. The website design is underway, the Annual Plan is also underway three meetings were held

with the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) as is required by HUD who have received the presentation and a public viewing of the FY2015 5 Year Annual Plan will be held on April 8th, at 100 Broad Street; an additional requirement of HUD. Manton Heights had a successful Tax Free File event for people who meet certain income requirements can have their taxes done at no cost, which was attended by Congressman Langevin, Senator Whitehouse, and Treasurer Seth Magaziner.

Funding: The PHA together with the City of Providence, the Mayor's Substance Abuse Prevention Council, and a Healthy Communities office applied for the Department of Health's Equity Zone grant that initiates environmental change through policy. In collaborating with the City, we are going to implement a smoke free policy at Manton Heights. Manton and Hartford Park are the only two sites that do not have smoke free policies. We are also partnering with the Cities Comprehensive Needs Assessment which is designed to see what the community needs around their vicinities. We are partnering with Olneyville Housing for funding for the next three years for the Youth Police Initiative Program. Additionally, we submitted the 2015 Emergency Safety and Security Grant for \$250,000. If awarded we will install 140 cameras in high rises and in the family developments. A FEMA Grant for the Fire Safety program is being submitted. Through this program, the PHA has reduced residential fires by 89%. Lastly, we received \$35,000 grant for the seatbelt safety program to do an online website showing the multicultural communities the importance of seatbelt safety.

Director Tavares noted it is telling when Olneyville Housing and the City of Providence reach out to the PHA to be part of grant applications. It speaks volumes as to the strength and value of the PHA.

Chairman Retsinas asked Mellissa to notify the commissioners of the Job Fair at Perry Middle School.

Capital Improvements: Commissioner Patino stated a contract has been awarded to Thyssen-Krupp Elevator Co. for elevator modernization at Carroll Towers; the lump sum base bid was \$433,900. New security cameras were installed in the workout rooms at Carroll Towers and Dominica Manor; the Camera at Carroll Towers was funded through a legislative grant. Sub floor and vinyl tile replacement is currently on going at many Scattered Site units; Union Hall Carpenters are performing this work. Vinyl siding installation is complete at one Scattered Site Duplex; more vinyl siding installation will be scheduled in the spring. Construction is complete converting one unit at Dominica Manor to handicap accessibility; this unit has been turned over to Management for leasing. Information that is more complete is provided in the Monthly Management Report.

Allan Pacific, Director of Facilities Management stated the cost for the modernization of two elevators is \$517,000. Director Tavares stated several years ago the PHA was cited for not having sufficient handicap units. To date we are in compliance as we are adding units on an annual basis as required. As for the elevators, it is a challenge with the price of \$517,000 to modernize two elevators and we need modernization of eleven elevators.

RESOLUTIONS

#4227 – Resolution to Pass FY2015 5-Year and Annual Plan

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

In keeping with the monthly presentations, Chairman Retsinas introduced Melissa Sanzaro, Director of Special Projects to present the FY2015 5-Year and Annual Plan. He also asked Melissa to focus on why we do the Annual Plan and the differences between 2014 and 2015. Melissa gave a presentation on the FY2015 5-Year and Annual Plan.

The Chairman requested the board to retain the presentation, as the FY2015 5-Year and Annual Plan will need to be voted on at the April meeting.

Executive Session

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Retsinas accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Patino, seconded by Commissioner Harris. Said motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Minutes Submitted and Approved By:

Lisa Cancelliere
Recording Secretary

Paul Tavares
Executive Director