

**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING: Thursday, July 28, 2016; 5:00 p.m.**

100 Broad Street

2nd Floor Conference Room

Providence, RI 02903

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present:

Nicolas Retsinas
Dolores Cascella
Hilary Silver
Gilberta 'JT' Taylor

Absent:

Jessica Cigna
Roger Giraud
Mary Kay Harris
John Iglizzi
Ricardo Patino
Thomas Ryan
Dorothy Waters

Four members were present, sufficient to commence an informational meeting, however, not enough to conduct business.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Retsinas stated because there is no quorum the minutes will not be approved and will be moved to the August board meeting.

RESIDENT'S COMMENTS

None

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

None

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chairman Retsinas asked Executive Director, Paul Tavares to present the Executive Director's report. Mr. Tavares thanked everyone for the curtesy extended to him and his family for the last few months. He thanked Deputy Executive Director, Melissa Sanzaro and the PHA team for all their efforts in maintaining the daily operations of running the PHA efficiently while he was out.

The Director commented the PHA score has increased by 2 points from 89 to 91. Meaning, we are now a high performing housing authority. Mr. Tavares noted the 2-point difference was due to the improvements in finance during the audit that elevated the 2 points. The Director asked the Executive Deputy Direct Melissa Sanzaro for her report.

Melissa also thanked everyone for their assistance in aiding her during the time the Executive Director was out. Terri Green, Associate Director of Property Management has taken a position with the Boston HUD office after 21 years of service with the PHA.

Melissa stated as a follow-up to safety and security and the multiple shootings in June at Chad Brown and Hartford Park, the assailants were apprehended; noting one was a gang member.

Commissioner Taylor commented more security is needed. She would like to see the police reserves come back. The Chairman asked Melissa to forward Commissioner Taylor's comments to Jack Costa, Director of Security to get his feedback.

Melissa continued the PHA through funding is committed to keeping the youth busy this summer with 50 placements for membership in the Boys and Girls club. The PHU officers received feedback that the youth would like an outlet to talk and possibly have other activities such as basketball.

The Carpenters Union long-standing impasse regarding the PHA and the union contract has resulted in their request for mediation, which is required, however, non-binding. The PHA is obligated to participate and the assignment of a mediator will occur through the Federal Courts. No date has yet been determined.

Melissa stated the RI State Labor Relations Board has finalized the documentation and official certification for a new security guard unit on July 13. The unit will not include part-time, supervisors or managers. A date will be set for negotiations on their contract.

The 2016 Employee Appreciation Day is scheduled for Friday, September 2, 2016 at Twelve Acres. Invitations will be going out soon.

The PHA continues to review the revisions regarding admissions and continued occupancy for those with criminal backgrounds regarding the Reentry Initiatives Program. DARE thanked the PHA for our commitment with reentry initiatives along with their suggestions regarding eligibility changes being proposed in Chapter 3. Our changes propose that our 10 and 5-year look-back are reduced to 5 and 3 years. DARE was clear in stating that they cannot support our policy changes if it does not reflect their recommendations. However, the PHA in the spirit of collaboration and community will further consider their ideas, HUD guidelines and the health and safety of the residents in our community. HUD has released a Toolkit, "It Starts with Housing-Public Agencies Are Making Second Chances Real", specific to those leaving incarceration. We are reviewing the toolkit to see what other housing agencies are doing to make positive changes in the community.

Melissa said Resident Services and Property Management met with RI Legal Services to outline and promote the JRAP program with the design of a new referral form in order to track it. We will report to the board on how the initiative and grant are working.

Barbra Jordan II Relocation Project, 31 units are leased with 1 pending waiting for a five bedroom unit. Additionally, PHA was awarded \$78,000 for a Section 8 program for Extra Ordinary Administrative Fees in order to support personnel and marketing associated with the VASH program. In addition, The PHA's public notice period regarding the Joint Wait List opening in collaboration with RI Housing, ended on Tuesday, July 26. RI Housing notice should end mid-August. Through an RFP, RI Housing is seeking assistance from a new software company that will assist our agencies with the online application services. Based on the public notice comments and the new software system, the opening for the wait list has been pushed back to October 2016.

Commissioner Silver had many questions, more particular with the Barbra Jordan property and the PHA and ACOP Chapter 3. Director Tavares and Melissa answered her questions and explained the Barbara Jordan building situation to the board. Commissioner Taylor expressed her concerns with the abundance of non-resident cars parked at Hartford Park whereas an ambulance could not enter the parking lot to assist an elderly tenant. Chairman Retsinas stated Jack Costa would be invited to a future meeting to get his insight and expertise on how to handle the issue.

Budget & Finance: Linda Poole, Director of Finance commented the detailed financials are not included in the MMR because finance is not done closing, it is the end of the year, and the audit is in progress.

Resident Services: Commissioner Silver stated the Jobs Plus Initiative and FSS grants have been submitted. Some residents attained jobs through Job Plus program and one obtained a house through the Home ownership program. Back to school event is in August; level funding was obtained for the CDBG Community Center and the Employment and Training center will be relaunching. Sorrel Devine Director of Resident Services commented the FSS program actually received a grant for \$196,000.

Capital Improvements: Commissioner Cascella stated \$23,000 of emergency repairs was made to the fire alarm system at Dexter Manor due to a flood; this was paid through capital funds. The Authority is currently working with National Grid for funding to upgrade the heating system at Roger Williams. The handicap modernization project for one unit each at Carroll Towers and Parenti Villa is 95% complete. A pre-construction meeting took place on 7/14/16 regarding the relocation of the electrical sub stations at Admiral Terrace. Further information will be provided in the Monthly Management Report. Director Tavares added we are proceeding with the financing of the sprinkler system to go out to bid for one of the high-rises and use it as a templet going forward. We are exploring with refinancing of our bonds, we may be able to borrow additional funds for the repair of as many elevators as possible.

AD HOC Committee:

The Chairman reported the committee met and the waiting list is targeted to open late October to correlate with the administrative requirements of RI Housing. A discussion ensued on a pilot program, regarding project-based vouchers, to start at the end of the calendar year, if we can coordinate with other funding sources such as RI Housing.

RESOLUTIONS:

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

In keeping with the monthly presentations, Director Tavares asked the Deputy Executive Director Melissa Sanzaro to introduce the presenters. Melissa introduced Miriam and Azade Perin, Fiscal Coordinator of City's Healthy Communities Office.

Azade gave a very informative presentation on health, summer meals, and youth outreach programs including Tobacco Free Providence. Some important notes Azade made was the summer meals program that served over 173,000 meals. Another important note is the Tobacco Free Providence whereas smoking is prohibited in all parks, playgrounds, and recreation areas. Additionally, the use of nicotine and chemicals that come in different colors and flavors for smokeless e-cigarettes, hookahs and vaping devices is very popular with the youth, in fact, some parents are allowing their children to smoke these devices because they felt they were better than cigarettes not understanding the dangers and addictiveness.

Director Tavares mentioned Donna De La Rosa, Director of Section 8, and Leased Housing along with Daniel Murphy, PHA Investigator, met with Melba DePina, Director of DHS to discuss a possible pilot program and information sharing to increase program integrity and reduce fraud.

After the presentation, commissioners addressed their questions and concerns and thanked Azade for a very informative and interesting presentation.

Executive Session

None

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Minutes Submitted and Approved By:

Lisa Cancelliere
Recording Secretary

Paul Tavares
Executive Director