



**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING:
Thursday, August 27, 2020; 5:30 p.m.**

Conference Call Phone Access Dial 888-788-0099 Code 889-4630-1162

In accordance with Executive Order 20-46, the meeting was held entirely by video and telephone conference call. Members and anyone else speaking identified themselves when speaking.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Nicolas Retsinas called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Nicolas Retsinas
Mary Kay Harris
Vivian Medina
Jessica Cigna
Lonzie Doggett
Rochelle Lee
Roger Giraud
Lawrence D'Alfonso
Siri Colom

Absent:

John Igliazzi
Thomas Ryan

Nine members were present, constituting a quorum to conduct business.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Retsinas called for a motion to accept and approve the minutes of the July 23, 2020 meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Lee and was seconded by Commissioner Medina. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Resident Comments:

None

Executive Director Report:

Director Sanzaro updated the Board on the following items:

1. RECENT ACTS OF VIOLENCE:

- a) The PHA has been bombarded with acts of violence over the last two months. The Providence Police Department has their hands full with crimes and murder within the last 2 ½ weeks. The PHA is working diligently to effectively communicate with the community and police in the attempts to maintain safety.
- b) On August 20th at about 7:30pm, a shooting occurred at Parenti Villa's parking lot. The victim, Kadeem Moore, was not a PHA residents but the grandson of one of the tenants. The shooting is still under investigation & the shooter is thought NOT to be a resident. The victim went into surgery and was pronounced dead at 1:30am taking the City's death toll to 10th of the year, 5th in the last three weeks.
- c) The PHA is saddened by this loss and the act of violence that took place making the community feel uneasy and afraid. The PHA opened a hotline for the residents of Parenti Villa who needed assistance and was informed that the family member was provided victim services.

2. **FUNDING:**

- a) HUD released to Housing Authorities its second round of HUD CARES ACT FUNDING FOR HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER ADMINISTRATIVE FEES: \$599,443
- b) PHA has successfully spent its \$75,000 from RI Foundation/United Way COVID-19 grant on food and is now utilizing a city \$34K Community Development Block Grant and pursuing other funding. Among other opportunities, The PHA is going back to RI Foundation because of their Housing and Food Security grant.

3. **AUDIT UPDATE:**

Engagement letters have been forwarded for review and signature as planning work began around July 9, 2020 with RSM. Included in this year's engagement terms is a noted change in the performance of the audit due to COVID-19. The actual "field work" will be in September/October when the requests for files and other information is done.

Planning work is high level review to assess the level of detail that will be requested and if there are new major programs introduced to the funding. Due to travel restrictions, on site work is not planned to occur. Should circumstances require in person work, rescheduling and/or suspension of certain tasks may be required. Written notice by either party would be provided.

4. **PCOC YEAR END STATEMENT:**

The PCOC's year-end comparative income statement shows little activity in the past fiscal year. Grants that were processed through PCOC in FY2020 were Providence Rotary \$1,000 for technology for youth and RI Foundation \$5,000 for Census work.

5. **EVICTION & HOUSING PRESERVATION PROGRAM:**

On August 20th, HUD Secretary Ben Carson announced the Eviction Prevention and Stability Toolkit to encourage Public Housing Authorities and Housing Choice Voucher landlords to plan for and implement strategies to keep families stably housed and mitigate economic hardships due to COVID-19. The toolkit is composed of a Public Housing Authorities best practices guide, tenant brochure with tips to avoid eviction, Housing Choice Voucher landlord flyer to encourage engagement with tenants, repayment agreement guidance and examples, and a needs assessment tool.

Internally, the PHA team continues to await any federal extension for eviction moratorium beyond the previously established moratorium that ended on July 24th. The Governor is also waiting for Congress to take a position before she considers establishing any local orders in the meantime:

- Has halted all court filings due to non-payment in both programs.
- Will implement effective communication with residents and participants to enter rental re-payment agreements.
- Will offer Financial Literacy coaching through a referral system.
- Residents, Participants and landlords will be also be referred to the newly established Housing Preservation staff who are assigned to assist with the application to the State Relief or Safe Harbor Funds. Please keep in mind that the money for said relief funds has not been received by the state and has not been made available to anyone yet.
- Developing a tracking system.
- The PHA is seriously pursuing evictions for violence and crime in the developments.

6. **PHA POLICY FOR VENDORS AND VISITORS:**

- a) This month, the Executive Director worked with Legal Counsel, Office of Strategy and Development, and Property Management to develop a more formal policy regarding visitors to PHA buildings during COVID-19. The policy does not change the existing practice that has been in place for several months but more clearly explains the obligations of outside service providers and vendors to make sure no employees are entering a PHA building if they have COVID-19 symptoms or otherwise are at risk for having the virus.

- b) The policy was posted on the PHA's website, referenced in a rent mailer flyer being sent to tenants at the end of August, and will be promoted via social media. In addition, the Vendor task force is following up to ensure that vendors are following the policy requirements and PHA will act with regard to vendors who do not follow it.
- c) "We are asking that all partners wishing to deliver products or provide services on site, particularly at our high rises, contact us ahead of time to plan for safe distribution and visits to our properties. This includes taking temperatures, certifying health, wear masks and other preventative measures to maintain the health and safety of our most vulnerable residents." The agency is working with partners such as Family Services and the US Census Bureau to determine the best and safest means of reaching residents. Partners can contact inquiries@provhousing.org.

7. MASKS:

Seven thousand masks are being provided over the next several weeks as part of the PHA's Phase III Operations Plan, thanks to partnerships with the Central Providence and West Elmwood Health Equity Zones who helped with providing the masks and the expensive mailing.

8. TESTING SITE UPDATES:

The PHA successfully tested two additional senior and/or elderly high-rises: Parenti Villa, Carroll Tower and Dexter Manor.

Parenti Villa Testing:

- a) On August 5th, PHA and Lifespan coordinated the testing of Parenti Villa where Central Falls Housing Authority staff were invited to be trained on all administrative and operational best practices. That day, the PHA tested 85 residents, 6 PHA employees, 1 HUD administrator and 4 people from the community for a total of 95 tests.
- b) Of this testing cohort which represented 37.5% participation rate, there were 0 positive cases. The Parenti Villa testing site represented the model operation, one that the PHA testing staff has been trying, adjusting and making adaptations as working toward a smooth, service friendly model with a very controlled flow to promote the utmost safety protocols.
- c) Parenti Villa's testing event brought residents from Sunset Village who were originally scared to test on July 22nd. The team began to include an Observation Tent within the operation for interested organizations who wanted to experience and witness testing efforts.

HUD Regional Administrator Visits Parenti Villa:

The PHA was very fortunate to have David Tille, HUD Regional Administrator visit Parenti's testing. Mr. Tille was so kind to thank staff from the PHA and Lifespan personally. He was quite impressed with the scope of the operation. The next day, Mr. Tille tweeted about his experience at the PHA and HUD highlighted the PHA multiple times in its social media.

Central Falls Housing Authority Testing:

The progress in the PHA's testing experiences and the adaptations in the testing model at Parenti Villa made it possible for the PHA to make an impact on other public housing authority communities. Central Falls is RI's hardest hit municipality in Rhode Island.

On August 6th, the PHA visited the Central Falls Housing Authority as they planned to test their largest senior high-rise, Forand Manor. The PHA walked through their testing operation with staff leaders before testing began to conduct a walk-through. Their set up operation mirrored the PHA's model and Central Falls Housing Authority and Lifespan successfully tested approximately 140 people. Mr. Tille and Nancy Smith-Greer also visited the Central Falls Housing Authority testing event.

Carroll Tower Re-Testing:

- d) Carroll Tower was retested on August 19, 2020. Previously, on May 19, 2020, the PHA, Department of Health and National Guard tested 131 residents at Carroll Tower which resulted in a very high rate of positive COVID-19 cases. Since then, the PHA worked with the community to continue to assist them to isolate with monitoring of residents and visitors, provide food and constant communications with the residents.
- e) Unfortunately, the COVID related deaths in Carroll Tower are the highest of the PHA's senior high-rises. The ED of Lifespan agreed to retest the building so that the PHA and the community could understand where they stood in the fight against the virus. The PHA tested 135 residents and 5 employees. There were 5 positive results and two of the five positives had tested positive back in May.
- f) The PHA is working closely with residents to do their best to keep the community safe and promote isolation by assisting to coordinate some of their resources that will help. The PHA has reached out to the Department of Health regarding the two cases of interest for guidance.

Dexter Manor:

The PHA tested their largest high-rise on August 25th, Dexter Manor I and II. The PHA tested a total of 175 residents. 164 residents, 2 family members of PHA residents, 1 person from an outside agency, 7 PHA employees, and 1 family member of a PHA employee. The results are still pending.

Overall, the PHA has successfully tested 7 senior/elderly sites, more than 825 people and community members to date. One high-rise was tested twice had a high rate of infection which averaged to 10%. The second testing conducted was great improvement from May. The remaining 6 buildings have an average positivity rate of 1.1%.

9. LONG-TERM CARE COORDINATING COUNCIL:

- a) On Wednesday, August 19, 2020, Director of Strategy & Development, Peter Asen and Pawtucket Housing Authority Director Paula McFarland, conducted a joint presentation to the state's Long Term Care Coordinating Council on the work of the two agencies in supporting tenants during the pandemic, with a particular focus on elderly and disabled tenants. About 60 participants were at the Zoom meeting. The PHA's portion of the presentation will be adapted and utilized for PHA to share the work that's been done with other agencies and interested parties in the city, state, region, and throughout the country.

10. RETURN TO WORK PHASE:

The PHA has about one third staff on site. Once the PHA established workplace safety protocols such as safe spaces, and temperature and health screenings in May. Between July and August, the PHA brought back most department staff by operational need which was not an easy task as they are relocating many people to keep spacing. The PHA's last hurdle will be the Section 8 Department as their current space does not allow us to maintain the level of strategic staff placement and safety.

11. PARTNER AND COLLABORATIONS UPDATES:

- a) The PHA met with OMNI and Winn to discuss their development plans for Barbara Jordan 2. The PHA is arranging to bring a presentation to the Board in October about the upcoming BJ2 plans.
- b) More about the work with the Providence School Department and engaging PHA families with Resident Services Department.
- c) The PHA approached the Department of Health, Lifespan and RI Public Health Institute to request more testing in the fall.
- d) HUD, PHARI and the Department of Health are working to promote the testing model

- e) The PHA Partnered with LIFESPAN on a new health care grant from TD Bank out of Canada to build upon an existing health care model to bring into PHA communities.

Capital Improvements Sub-Committee:

Commissioner D'Alfonso provided the following summary of Capital Improvements Projects:

- A bid package is currently advertised to install a young adult fitness park at Chad Brown; the Authority received a sole bid of \$296,000 which is way over original budget. The Authority will discuss further options.
- The Elevator modernization project at Kilmartin Plaza has resumed; 1 elevator car is close to completion.
- The project to vinyl side 4 bldgs. at Hartford and 6 duplexes at Scattered Sites is in progress.
- The porch and handi-cap replacement project at 3 Scattered Site Duplexes are in progress.
- Further information will be provided in the Monthly Management Report.

Resident Services Sub-Committee:

Commissioner Cigna reported on the following updates relating to Resident Services:

- Licensed social worker hired with RI Foundation funding and will begin shortly. He was previously awarded social worker of the year and has experience in telemedicine. He begins September 14th.
- Summer youth employment has ended and 3 out of 15 of the youth completing the program have been employed.
- SOR no-cost extension requested that would allow for the PHA to spend funds beyond the official grant deadline of September 30th. The funding is a subgrant of federal funds from the State, who also asked for a grant extension for their federal funds. Final decisions about these extensions is pending.
- The outreach continues to residents including a post-experience survey and Zoom celebration. In addition, Jobs Plus staff has been working in collaboration with Property Management since February to assist residents in transitioning successfully from the program when it ends at the end of September to make sure they are connected to financial coaching and services and that they are prepared for the resumption of regular rent charges with the end of the Jobs Plus Earned Income Disregard

Budget & Finance Sub-Committee:

Director of Finance, Linda Poole updated the board on the following:

Financial Overview

- AMPS: @ July 31 bottom line reflects a YTD operating surplus of **\$430,639**
- COCC: showing an operating surplus of **\$72,463.97**
- Section 8 Admin: showing an operating surplus of approximately **\$107,751.62**
- Section 8 HAP: has booked **\$ -66,963.66** as overspent for 2020 YTD.

New Funding Sources Related to COVID 19

- \$75,000 Grant through Strategy and Development to fund food distribution during the crisis
- \$2.54 M CARES Act for Operating Funds
- \$513,800 CARES Act for Section 8 Administrative Fees
- \$34,000 CDBG for food distribution
- \$599,443 Round 2 CARES Act Section 8 Administrative Fees
- \$10,018 Round 2 CARES Act Mainstream Administrative Fees

Contract Updates

- Delta Mechanical – Fire Protection System @ Hartford Tower – 335 Hartford Ave - \$1,653,900. Funding Source is the 2017 Bond Proceeds. **Payments processed: \$1,537,289.99 to date**

- Otis Elevator – Elevator Modernization @ Kilmartin Plaza. Funding Source is Bond. Contract total: \$485,000 plus Change Order \$120,025.25 = \$605025.25. **Payments processed: \$00.00 total to date**
- Otis Elevator – Elevator Modernization @ Dexter Manor. Funding Source is Bond. Contract total: \$831,000 **Payments processed: \$00.00 total to date**
- Ahlborg Construction- HP Exterior Renovations - Funding Source CFP 50118. Contract total is \$339,000. **Payments processed: \$00.00 total to date**
- Martone Construction – Scattered Sites Exterior Renovations – Funding Source CFP 50118. Contract total is \$364570. **Payments processed: \$00.00 total to date**
- Focus Technology – Managed IT Services – Funding Source is OPS/COCC. Contract total is \$143,964. **Payments processed: \$59985.00 total to date**
- Sole Source Construction – Scattered Sites Porch Rebuilt @ 3 Duplexes. Funding source is CFP 50118. Contract total is \$144,400. Change order for \$72,800. New Contract total is \$217,200. **Payments processed: \$00.00 total to date**
- NES Solutions Security- Additional Security for High Rises due to COVID. Contract total is for \$296,400. Funding source is Ops. **Payments processed: \$226,557 total to date**
- PuroClean – COVID related cleaning of high touch common areas in high rises. Funding Source is Ops. Contract total is for \$516,000. **Payments processed: \$202,800 total to date**
- Commercial Roofing - Remove and Replace Roof Hartford Park Tower. Funding Source is CFP 50118. Contract total is \$523,000. **Payments processed: \$00.00 total to date**

Company: Energy One for HVAC system work related to Elevator Projects at Kilmartin Plaza, Dexter Manor and Hartford Park Tower for total cost of \$127,500. Project funded by Capital Fund Program:

Status: Commissioner Lee made a motion and Commissioner D'Alfonso seconded the motion.

Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, Harris, D'Alfonso, Colom (8)

Votes opposed: none

PRESENTATION: PHARI Members Joint Solar Net Metering Procurement:

Presented by Alexey Cherniack, Principal Analyst for Energy Markets and Sustainability, SourceOne.

Executive Session:

Chairman Retsinas asked for a motion to enter a private Executive Session. The motion was made by Commissioner Doggett and seconded by Commissioner Lee. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Chairman Retsinas phoned in to ask for a motion to return to open meeting. The motion was made by Commissioner Rochelle Lee and seconded by Commissioner D'Alfonso. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

There were not votes taken in Executive Session.

Commissioner Harris made a motion to seal the minutes from the Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cigna. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Lee made a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 7:35pm, seconded by Commissioner D'Alfonso. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Minutes Submitted and Approved By:

Taisha Capo
Recording Secretary

Melissa Sanzaro
Executive Director

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