**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**REGULAR MEETING:**

**Thursday, May 28, 2020; 5:30 p.m.**

**Conference Call Phone Access Dial 888-788-0099 Code 892-6673-0795**

***In accordance with Executive Order 20-25, the meeting was held entirely by telephone conference call. Members and anyone else speaking identified themselves when speaking.***

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Nicolas Retsinas called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present: Absent:**

Nicolas Retsinas John Igliozzi

Thomas Ryan Eddie Peguero

Vivian Medina Lawrence D’Alfonso

Jessica Cigna Mary Kay Harris

Lonzie Doggett

Rochelle Lee

Roger Giraud

Seven 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 April 30, 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

**Chairman’s Report:**

Chairman Retsinas elected to withhold his remarks & turn over to Executive Director.

**Executive Director Report:**

Director Sanzaro updated the Board on the following items:

1. **Food:**

The PHA’s Senior Food Program is an amazing and heartfelt story about the work that the PHA is doing. There are teams of people working day in and out to make the work possible. Three important notations:

* 1. It is with great excitement that the PHA Task Force and Senior Box program was included in HUD’s most recent publication called HUD Happenings.
  2. The PHA has expanded the work to supply food boxes for families who have tested positive and need the food to get situated with other resources and assist them to shelter in place.
  3. The PHA welcomed the assistance of the YMCA who is to start providing the families of Codding Court boxes of food that can be easily turned into hot meals. They will be a regular resource for that development.
  4. The PHA has formulated and finalized a Standard Operating Procedure for other Housing Authorities who are interested in external delivery method.

1. **Mainstream Vouchers:**
2. The PHA applied for more Mainstream vouchers recently and was awarded 15 new Mainstream Vouchers to the Housing Choice Voucher program.
3. **Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Angel:**
4. Providence Housing Authority (PHA) will utilize a full-time AmeriCorps member from the Accessing Home program to provide supportive services, referrals, application assistance and more to Rhode Islanders who have previously experienced homelessness and to existing Section 8 voucher holders struggling to maintain housing. PHA will also develop educational materials, provide technical assistance and develop incentives for more Providence landlords to participate in the Section 8 program.
5. **EOP Phase 2 Public Statement:**

On May 7th, the PHA released its Phase 2 of the Emergency Operations Plan. Where the first plan was the immediate response to the pandemic, Phase 2 called for adjustments and additional precautions while waiting for HUD guidance. Some highlights from the second phase included:

* Worked with federal, state and local leaders
* Establishing a COVID-19 hot line,
* Continued extensive emergency outreach efforts to more than 5,000 households
* This included connecting with RAB and assisting them to acquire zoom skills
* The Food Task Force fed the elderly and disabled households and any COVID-19 positive households that needed it to shelter in place.
* Strict orders were put in place in all high-rises stating that due to positive cases in the buildings, residents and visitors were required to wear masks, supplying 174 masks for those who needed them, ordering visits to be limited to medical care, food deliveries and wellbeing checks and a reminder to stay home. The PHA worked closely with the security vendor to be more interactive in the process in lobbies from 4-12AM.
* The PHA brought back most of the ranks for Facilities Management team and created a strictly monitored administrative staff to office to do some ranks
* The PHA worked with the unions to minimize the Overtime costs by establishing low-risk and high-risk tasks and workspaces
* Office staff settled into their work activities from home
* The team also began taking temperatures and surveying our employees before every work shift.
* As part of Phase 2, the PHA completed the HUD Waivers—the table of HUD waivers is also in your package this evening: The leadership studied the HUD waiver released on 4 out of 10 and adopted about half of the 44 waivers or flexibilities that HUD allows. Some of the waivers have either a July or October expiration date. Some flexibilities also have alternative requirements. The PHA included a document demonstrating the available HUD waivers and PHA’s adoption or lack thereof in your packet this evening.
* During this phase, there were many standard operating procedures and protocols around safety put in place.

1. **Stages:** 
   1. The PHA is working around the clock as they attempt to keep employees and residents safe.
   2. As this pandemic was forced upon the world, the PHA has had one of the most assertive and responsive plans in the housing industry. Understanding that the PHA’s EOP phasing differs from the governor’s, to clarify the PHA’s phase distinctions.
      * 1. Management viewed the first phase as the “sheltering in place” when the PHA thought this was a short-term emergency.
        2. In the second phase, the PHA made adjustments as public health information and guidelines along with government orders to address the dangers were presented to the public about the virus.
        3. The third phase, which is being developed now, will be done as state rolls out it’s reopening stages. As some of this is yet to be determined and will unfold, the PHA must tailor its own next phase with their own experiences and circumstances. The next phase will be designed to support the next 6 -12 months.
2. **Phase 3 Planning:**
   1. Focus on coordinating testing sites for public housing sites with the Department of Health and National Guard.
   2. Continue to monitor and proactively seek self-reported positive cases in PHA communities.
   3. Increased communications with residents and participants.
   4. Continue internal departmental integration to address COVID-19, Such as the COVID-19 Response Rental Program, A/C program.
   5. Thermal temperature stations/kiosks for employees.
   6. Evaluate the PHA’s properties to bring administrative staff back to offices/redesign spaces and schedules and include proper spacing for when seeing the public in the future.
   7. Strategic Plan alignment and tracking design.
   8. Additional Funding and program development to respond to COVID-19.
   9. Technology advances such as DocuSign & online rent.
   10. Vendor protocols, beautification projects.
3. **Testing Site:** 
   1. The priority to keep the residents safe and prevent the spread of the virus, the PHA has been diligently communicating with the various offices of the Department of Health such as infectious disease, incident command and the researchers in epidemiology to persistently advocate for testing sites.
   2. It is with great pleasure to announce that the PHA was able to bring free testing to Carroll Tower on May 19th in coordination with the Department of Health and National Guard. This was the state’s first “vertical” congregate test site in Rhode Island.
4. **Incidents at Chad Brown & Parenti Villa Update:** 
   1. April 28th’s double stabbing that took place at Chad Brown neither were PHA residents and there were no fatalities. Both suspects/victims were quickly identified by PHA security and management and they were both arrested for Felony Assault while at the RI Hospital.
   2. At Chad Brown, on Mother’s Day, May 12th and again on May 15th there was gun violence that stemmed from non-residents visiting one unit, the Providence Gang Unit and PHA teams with Security, Property Management and the housing court attorney have been working tirelessly with the courts to meet obligations to keep the community safe.
   3. On April 28th, there was a stabbing that took place at Parenti Villa where a previous tenant, who no longer lived at the building, visited the building and stabbed a guest of a resident. There were no fatalities and the case is under investigation.
5. **HUD’s Eviction Moratorium Extended:** 
   1. HUD encouraged housing authorities to market the eviction moratorium FAQs to residents and participants titled Temporary Suspension of Evictions for Nonpayment of Rent, which was sent to all Public Housing residents and Leased Housing participants and landlords.
   2. The PHA reviewed all pending court cases to discuss the dismissal for many non-payment and unreported income cases and implement a new internal protocol called the COVID-19 RESPONSE RENTAL PROGRAM where the PHA will call the residents, work with them on an internal rental agreement and offer financial counseling and documents.
   3. The PHA team also decided to prioritize court cases for crimes and acts of violence that will consider the health and safety of the community.
6. **Emergency & Relief Funding:**
   1. FEMA:

The Office of Strategy and Development has been working with Finance, Human Resources and other departments to prepare an application to FEMA to cover COVID-19 related expenses incurred prior March 27th, which is the first day that the CARES Act funds could be spent. At this time, staff have documented approximately $116,000 in expenses and plan to submit the package within the next week. All expenses that are deemed eligible by FEMA may be reimbursed up to 75 percent.

* 1. CDBG:

With Board approval, the PHA submitted 3 applications for CDBG funds on May 1st in the amount of $160K for Recently, the PHA learned that were awarded $34K to support the Food Program.

* 1. Past Grant Submissions:

1. Employment & Financial Counseling

2. Domestic Violence case management and assistance

3. Food resources

* 1. HUD’s additional Operating Subsidies and Housing Choice Vouchers administrative fees, the first guidance call on Friday, May 1st. The Finance Department is currently establishing a list of eligible expenses that can be covered by the CARES Act funds that PHA received last month. Expenses incurred on or after March 27, 2020 can be used as backup for CARES fund draw down, but HUD is still determining which categories of expenses will be allowed. While HUD works on that, the Finance team has created a list of “definite” eligible expenses and we anticipate that we will be able to start drawing from these funds by next month. Finance has added to our chart of accounts in the general ledger to keep all accounting for these funds separate.

**Capital Improvements Sub-Committee:**

Allan Pacific provided the following summary of Capital Improvements Projects:

* A bid package is currently advertised for elevator modernization at 335 Hartford.
* An RFQ bid package has been solicited for a professional design for emergency generator transfer switch and emergency generator interface system at the Tavares Center at Chad Brown and the community room at 144 Dodge St.
* A contract will be signed shortly to install panic bar hardware on all common stairwell doors at Dexter I and II; funding will be CDBG from the City of Prov. and CFP funds.
* A contract has been signed to replace porches and h-cap ramps at 3 Scattered Site duplexes; construction should start in May.
* 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:

**Program Updates / Discussion:**

* The PHA’s Emergency Resident Outreach Log captures valuable information obtained in outreach calls to residents. The information is being maintained in a data base and added to PHA’s property management software system. The PHA has reached 91% of its public housing residents with outreach calls. The contact information collected during calls will allow PHA to effectively utilize its new mass messaging system.
* Similar outreach calls have been made to Section 8 participants, but the rate of success in making contact has be less than with public housing residents. Section 8 staff will assume responsibility for making calls and maintaining the log for that program, with a goal of updating contact information so that participants can be reached by our new mass messaging system.
* The YMCA has received a grant that will allow it to provide emergency food boxes to all families at Codding Court each week for the next five weeks, starting this week. The YMCA has a history of providing well-received programming to Codding Court residents. PHA provided training about our safe food distribution protocols and coached YMCA staff for this first distribution to ensure safety. She reported that despite a very short turnaround time between notification by the YMCA and the first distribution, seven families participated.

**Budget & Finance Sub-Committee:**

Commissioner Giraud updated the board on the following:

**Financial Overview**

* AMPS: @ April 30 bottom line reflects a YTD operating surplus of $3,046,916
* COCC: showing an operating surplus of $193,477
* Section 8 Admin: showing an operating surplus of approximately $551,957
* Section 8 HAP: has booked $ 73,640 as unspent for the 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

**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: $00.00 total to date**
* Sole Source Construction – Scattered Sites Porch Rebuilt @ 3 Duplexes. Funding source is CFP 50118. Contract total is $144,400. **Payments processed: $00.00 total to date**
* NES Solutions Security- Additional Security for High Rises due to COVID. Contract total is for $111,540. Funding source is Ops. Payments processed: **Payments processed: $72522.38 total to date**
* PuroClean – COVID related cleaning of high touch common areas in high rises. Funding Source is Ops. Contract total is for $202,800. **Payments processed: $76,800.00 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**

**CONTRACT FOR APPROVAL PUROCLEAN:**

**Status;** Commissioner Giraud made a motion and Commissioner Medina seconded the motion.

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, Giraud, (7)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**CONTRACT FOR APPROVAL NORTH EAST SECURITY SOLUTIONS:**

**Status;** Commissioner Giraud made a motion and Commissioner Medina seconded the motion.

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, Giraud, (7)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**PRESENTATION: PHA’S 5-Year Strategic Plan,** presented by Peter Asen, Director of Strategy

& Development and Michelle Booth, Policy and Program Evaluation Analyst.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

**Resolution #** **4295 to approve PHA’s 5-Year Strategic Plan:**

**Status;** Commissioner Lee made a motion and Vice Chairman Ryan seconded the motion.

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, Giraud, (7)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**Adjournment:**

Vice Chairman Ryan made a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 6:40pm, seconded by Commissioner Doggett. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Minutes Submitted and Approved By:**

Taisha Capo Melissa Sanzaro

Recording Secretary Executive Director