**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**REGULAR MEETING:**

**Thursday, June 25, 2020; 5:30 p.m.**

**Zoom Video and Conference Call**

***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 5:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present: Absent:**

Nicolas Retsinas Thomas Ryan

Mary Kay Harris Eddie Peguero

Vivian Medina

Jessica Cigna

Lonzie Doggett

Rochelle Lee

Roger Giraud

Lawrence D’Alfonso

John Igliozzi

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 May 28, 2020 meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Lee and was seconded by Commissioner Doggett. 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. **HUD Resources & Guidance:** 
   1. The PHA has learned that HUD intends to release a second Waiver Notice soon. The waiver will include a few additional provisions and include extensions to end dates for waivers from the original notice.
   2. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, Public Housing Authorities are juggling operations and implementing evolving guidelines to help keep staff and residents healthy. To support our stakeholders, the HUD Office of Public & Indian Housing (PIH) created and is making available the COVID-19 Emergency Planning Toolkit, which includes:

* COVID-19 Quick Guide
* COVID-19 Interaction Playbook for Housing Partners
* COVID-19 Guidance for Housing Partners
* Coronavirus Prevention Flyer for Residents

1. **New Employee Assistance Plan** was presented by Kimberly Dawley- Director of Human Resources
2. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many people to struggle with mental health issues. The PHA is doing everything they can to ensure employees have the services they need to get through this crisis. One way to do that is by offering an Employee Assistance Program. These types of programs are offered as benefit to assist employees with personal problems and/or work-related problems that may impact their job performance, health, mental and emotional well-being.
3. On July 1, 2020 the PHA will implement an Employee Assistance Program. This plan will be incorporated into the existing Group Life Insurance Plan with Mutual of Omaha and will offer the following services to employees and their dependents:

* 24/7 access to information and referral services
* Face to face (one on one) sessions
* Follow-up services and case management
* Immediate support and guidance (confidential/respectful services)
* Emotional well-being
* Family and relationships
* Legal & financial
* Healthy lifestyles
* Work and life transitions
* Access to library of education and information

It will also offer online resources for:

* Substance abuse
* Dependent and elder care
* Legal library and online forms
* Financial assessment and online tools

1. The PHA’s cost for this added service will be approximately $183 per month and can be offset by CARES Act funding.
2. **New Data Security Policy** was presented by PHA Legal Counsel, Louise Marcus, Esquire:
3. For several months, the PHA has researched and drafted a PHA Data Security Policy that satisfies components of these 3 Strategic Plan categories. It complies with HUD requirements and the RI Identity Theft Protection Act.
4. But it goes beyond those requirements by also complying with the FTC’s published Best Practices. This is where the tie-in to the Strategic Plan comes in. Instead of the Policy stating that the PHA is HUD- and RI law-compliant, the PHA team decided to Leverage Technology and to further Improve Internal Management and Operations by including these additional Best Practices. Because it is so important to safeguard the Personal Identifiable Information (PII) of our residents, participants and employees, adding these Best Practices also Improves the PHA’s Customer Service.
5. The new PHA Data Security Policy includes:

* HUD Requirements such as:

Safeguard PII by employing specific training and practices;

Implement security controls to prevent and detect improper file sharing;

Use NIST standards for system risk and impact assessments.

* RI law components such as:

Follow a risk-based information security program regarding all PII;

Specific breach notification protocols;

Include PII protection language in all vendor contracts.

* The FTC case Best Practices such as:

Secure passwords and authentication;

Encrypt PII while it is stored and during its transmission;

Secure remote/telecommuting access to the PHA’s network;

Protect paper and electronic files;

Securely retain and dispose of PII data.

1. **Barbara Jordan 2:**
   1. Rhode Island Housing released a Request for Proposals last year for a housing development team to redevelop the Barbara Jordan 2 neighborhood. In March, as part of the review and selection committee to select a development team for said project, the PHA participated in the review of 5 in person proposals. 4 of them were local developers while 1 was a national developer.
   2. The Committee narrowed down the propels to two viable proposals most aligned with the goals of the project and interest garnered from community engagement process conducted in the neighborhood. Another round of interviews/proposals was conducted and on June 8th. The selection committee selected the local OMNI Development Corporation and Wingate team to redevelop Barbara Jordan 2 with a very responsive proposal that will include the financial support of an undetermined amount of Project Based Vouchers. The PHA would not have to conduct a competitive process to award PBVs to this project as HUD regulations will allow an award if the project has already undergone a competitive process.
2. **Housing Choice Voucher Short Fall Notification:** 
   1. The PHA was notified by HUD on May 21, 2020 of an anticipated shortfall in funding for the Housing Choice Voucher or Section 8 Program.
   2. To determine funding, HUD adds a proration factor to the previous year’s use of funds. Because the Housing Choice Voucher Program was so highly leased, the rental market was increasing and the addition of the Project based units towards the end of CY2019, the amount of HAP that HUD had projected the department needed for CY2020 was not enough. When COVID-19 hit and the participants began losing their jobs, the amount needed in HAP increased $40,000 per month.
   3. Cost saving measures which are common and best practices for housing authorities who experience this position were implemented immediately such as:

* Refraining from both issuing new vouchers and
* Absorbing vouchers from other housing authorities.
  1. The Leased Housing Department contacted Nehemiah Johnson, the HUD Shortfall Prevention Team leader for the PHA who explained that three times as many housing authorities are in a potential shortfall situation than in the past 12 years due to COVID-19.
  2. The PHA also will apply for an additional category of set aside funds. The PHA applies each year for and receives additional funding of varying amounts based on HUD’s calculations of what is available. This year, since the PHA is in an anticipated short fall situation, they will have a higher priority for obtaining additional funds and would ultimately avoid terminating participants from the program.

1. **Partner & Collaborations Updates:**
   1. The PHA continues to keep close communications with renters of our space and service providers to keep on top of the ever-changing regulations and partner plans.
2. **Providence School Department:** 
   1. On June 17th, the PHA’s team held a zoom meeting with Harrison Peters, the new superintendent of the Providence School Department. It was a meet and greet and a nice way to give him the inside scoop in the PHA’s commitment to the residents beyond housing, the improved connections to the 3,500 youth between the ages of 5-18 years and families served in this great City and provide insight on the PHA’s new Strategic Plan. He shared the school department’s preliminary plan that will be soon released to the public. The PHA agreed that connecting regularly and early on obtain feedback from parents and students was essential and the PHA is devising a plan based on the new resident outreach survey system that is working so well.
   2. The PHA plan to offer a couple of methodologies to elicit residents’ thoughts and challenges and become a part of the school department’s improvement plan.
3. **Department of Health:** 
   1. The PHA has continued its relationship with the RI Department of Health team.
   2. The PHA recently tried to synch up their own self-reported positive cases in a high-rise with the Department of Health to compare with their known case numbers to see if there was a concern. There seemed to be more self-reported cases than the Department of Health could confirm.
   3. The Department of Health continues to work with the PHA on post planning and environment assessments at Carroll Tower so that the PHA can do their best to discontinue the spread in that building.
   4. The PHA did get a good sense on how to screen residents AFTER being tested positive, since not all people get tested again depending on their own circumstance and we must consider food delivery and work order interaction in the building.
   5. The PHA’s request for testing at the high-rise building in May was also addressed by Michelle Wilson of the Department of Health Office of Equity and a follow up call is pending scheduling.
   6. Currently, the Department of Health is prioritizing hot spots or condensed community testing where they find a high volume of positive cases.
   7. The collaboration with the Department of Health resulted in first leadership and then front-line team meetings to develop and after-action report by feedback about what worked well and what did not.
   8. The PHA developed a Testing Site Standard Operating Procedure for condensed communities that can be used/shared across Rhode Island.
4. **Testing Site Announcement:** 
   1. The PHA and Lifespan conducted another building wide testing site at Dominica Manor, on June 24, 2020.
   2. This is the very first time that Lifespan conducted a testing site.
   3. 130 residents were tested in 3.5 hours, including 1 home bound resident.
   4. The PHA’s talents and expertise brought interest and alignment with important systems and agencies.
   5. The PHA leveraged a community resource that will impact residents beyond typical service provision. Testing is more powerful strategy than ever planned, as it saves lives, deepens our embeddedness in the community, connects the PHA with residents beyond any customer service plan, builds sense of purpose and team mindset and improves the way the departments synergize operations.
5. **Phase 3 Planning:**
   1. Our focus on coordinating testing sites for our public housing sites will continue relentlessly.
   2. We will continue to monitor and proactively seek self-reported positive cases in PHA communities to offer assistance to residents, and to seek to reduce the spread. We need to continue to be diligent---this is not over.
   3. Increased communications with residents and participants: Using an all department approach to connecting with residents. Also utilizing the callmax robo calling system, social media and mailings, the PHA keeps a steady flow of information flowing: eviction moratorium and residents rights, well-being checks, how to fill out a money order, hallway cleanings, keeping trash out of the hallways and trash rooms, food deliveries, other programming and resources such as summer school registration and Safe Box Plus registration among other things. Leased Housing, in partnership RSD and PM reached 78% of their households and are sending surveys to the remaining 22%.
   4. Continue internal departmental integration to address COVID—Such as the COVID Response Rental Program, A/C program, Hallway cleaning, calls for post testing, pre-testing and various special projects are constantly ticking—this is where teammates are coming together to assist with new emergency operations.
   5. Thermal temperature stations/kiosks for employees are on order for future, consistent fogging underway.
   6. As the PHA plans to bring employees back to work, they have prioritized department returns based on operational need. We have created safe spaces and schedules that will limit the spread of the virus and isolate certain teams for rank preservation in the case someone does get COVID-19. The PHA is developing the format and components of the state’s control plan and reopening guidelines and in contact with partners who typically rent or utilize space to align with their plans. The PHA is also refraining from seeing the public at this time since the space is limited and may not accommodate staff and visitors.
   7. Strategic Plan alignment and tracking design is underway to recalibrate the COVID-19 miracles with the magical Strategic Plan
   8. Additional Funding and program development to respond to COVID-19, another award from RIF and Mainstream voucher award.
   9. Technology advances such as vulnerability scans, data breach policy and cybersecurity Request for Proposal are underway. It will also support other tools that make business easier like docusign & online rent & landlord software is underway.
   10. Vendor improvements, extensions and enhancements and other considerations and protocols are a focus. plans to have some high-rise work continued depending on testing outcomes.
   11. Beautification projects and recreational spaces are being advanced with the outside eating areas and new exterior meeting pavilion, Hartford Park Tot Lot, Chad Brown Playground and more.

**Capital Improvements Sub-Committee:**

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

* A low bidder has been identified for elevator modernization at 335 Hartford; a contract is pending Board approval.
* A bid package is currently being put together to install a young adult fitness park at Chad Brown; this is funded with a $33,000 check presented by Councilman Narducci, CDGB and CFP funds.
* Construction to vinyl side 4 bldgs. at Hartford and 6 duplexes at Scattered Sites will start approximately the week of 7/15/20.
* Porch and h-cap ramp replacement at 3 Scattered Site duplexes is expected to begin in July
* 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:

* The City-funded summer youth employment program will move forward, with the program being conducted exclusively on-line. She reported that 95 youth applied to participate and PHA will select 20 youth to participate with PHA.
* A New York artist was selected by the PHA’s partners at MyHomeCourt to paint a mural on the basketball court that is being newly constructed in the city park next to Codding Court. PHA has provided info on the project to Codding residents and encouraged them to call or email MyHomeCourt with their input.
* 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 five weeks. 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: @ May 30 bottom line reflects a YTD *operating* surplus of $3,489,132
* COCC: showing an operating surplus of $154,689
* Section 8 Admin: showing an operating surplus of approximately $515,697
* Section 8 HAP: has booked $33,635 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
* $34,000 CDBG for food distribution

**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: $23,994.00 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 $202,800. Funding source is Ops. Payments processed: **Payments processed: $116,366.88 total to date**
* PuroClean – COVID related cleaning of high touch common areas in high rises. Funding Source is Ops. Contract total is for $357,600. **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 Approval: Hartford Park Elevator Modernization, Otis Elevator, $661,098 (low bidder)**

**Funded by CFP 2019:**

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

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, Giraud, Igliozzi, Harris, D’Alfonso (9)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**RESOLUTION #4297: Approve PHA’s FY2021 Operating Budget, HUD FORM 52574:**

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

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, Giraud, Igliozzi, Harris, D’Alfonso (9)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**PRESENTATION: REVIEW OF ACOP COMPONENTS**

Presented by: Peter Asen, Director of Strategy and Development. Peter reviewed the ACOP revisions that were first presented to the Board in February but which a final vote was delayed on due to the COVID emergency. Public comments from the Resident Advisory Board were also relayed. The RAB comments were the only comments that PHA received during its 52 day comment period.

**RESOLUTION 4296 to approve new format and revisions to the PHA’s Admissions and Continuing Occupancy Plan:**

**Status;** Commissioner Igliozzi made a motion and Commissioner Cigna seconded the motion.

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, Giraud, Igliozzi, Harris, D’Alfonso (9)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**Adjournment:**

Commissioner Doggett made a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 7:01pm, seconded by Commissioner Medina. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Minutes Submitted and Approved By:**

Taisha Capo Melissa Sanzaro

Recording Secretary Executive Director