**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**REGULAR MEETING:**

**Thursday, December 10, 2020; 5:30 p.m.**

**Zoom Webinar Phone Access Dial 301-715-8592 Meeting ID 822-9914-0358**

***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 5:40 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present: Absent:**

Nicolas Retsinas John Igliozzi

Thomas Ryan Mary Kay Harris

Vivian Medina Marcela Betancur

Jessica Cigna

Lonzie Doggett

Rochelle Lee

Lawrence D’Alfonso

Siri Colom

Eight 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 October 22, 2020 meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner D’Alfonso and was seconded by Commissioner Medina. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Approval of 2021 Meeting Schedule:**

Chairman Retsinas called for a motion to accept and approve the Meeting schedule for 2021. A motion was made by Commissioner D’Alfonso and was seconded by Commissioner Medina. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Resident Comments:**

None

**Resident Services Sub-Committee**:

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

* The Resident Services Department’s financial literacy and coaching program has been important for residents having trouble paying rent due to COVID and for families transitioning off the Jobs Plus Earned Income Disallowance (JPEID). The Property Management Department spearheaded an initiative designed to link residents with rental repayment agreements to RSD financial literacy programming. Residents engaged in the program received a combined financial assessment, followed by workshops focused on developing a manageable budget, money management skill building, and creating financial goals. The PHA has contracted with HarborOne Bank to provide financial literacy and money management workshops, as well as financial coaching specifically for residents who participated in the Jobs Plus Program (JPP) and have transitioned off the Jobs Plus Earned Income Disallowance (JPEID) when it ended on 9/30/20. The JPEID allowed for rent stabilization (no increase in rental amount when residents increased income due to employment for the period of March 2017 – September 2020).
* The Dreams to Reality Program piloted at the Chad Brown Apartments that was provided to 10 youth ages 11 to 16 this fall. The program was designed to combine basketball skills training with life skills training. The program came into being with the assistance of a professional basketball player, Lamont Thomas, who volunteered to help establish the program. Staff from the Wellness Resource Center, including the State Opioid Reduction (SOR) Coordinator (Nelson Morales), Health Outreach Worker (Kathy Morel), Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Coordinator (Melissa DaRosa), and Clinical Social Worker (Eric McKnight) participated in the program that addressed issues including nutrition and substance use.

**Capital Improvements Sub-Committee:**

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

* Chad Brown roofing project has been awarded and is under way. Work on 35 March, 61 March, and 65 March has begun. Estimated time of completion is early Spring 2021
* With help from CDBG funds from the Providence City Council, PHA can upgrade a computer server and add several cameras at Carroll Tower. This is a collaboration between the City of Providence and PHA that we are currently exploring.
* Dominica Manor is in the process of receiving all three boilers through the efforts of RISE Engineering. RISE is covering all costs associated with the project.
* Deck and ramp replacements at Scattered Sites are about 85% complete
* The lock replacement project at Manton Heights is 100% complete. All residents received new locks and keys over the course of about 3 weeks.
* Further information will be provided in the monthly MMR report

**Budget & Finance Sub-Committee:**

Commissioner Cigna updated the board on the following:

**Financial Overview**

* AMPS: @ October 31 bottom line reflects a YTD operating surplus of **$979,205**
* COCC: showing an operating surplus of **$48,666**
* Section 8 Admin: showing an operating surplus of approximately **$648,100**
* Section 8 HAP: has booked **$1,328,630** as underspent for FY 2021 YTD

**New Funding Sources Related to COVID 19**

* $75,000 Grant through Strategy and Development to fund food distribution during the crisis-Expended
* $2.54 M CARES Act for Operating Funds- $ 313,772 remaining
* $513,800 CARES Act for Section 8 Administrative Fees – Expended
* $542 CARES Act for Mainstream Administrative Fees- Expended
* $34,000 CDBG for food distribution - Expended
* $599,443 Round 2 CARES Act Section 8 Administrative Fees- $ 260,723 remaining
* $10,018 Round 2 CARES Act Mainstream Administrative Fees- Expended
* $1,349,437 CARES Act award for HAP for Extraordinary Circumstances- Expended
* $77,112 CARES Act award for Mod Rehab HAP- $77,112 remaining
* $15,000 Food Program Grant from Amica Insurance – being used for current months food boxes

**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**
* Delta Mechanical – Fire Protection System @ PV, DX, and CT - $4,824,300. Funding Source is the 2017 Bond Proceeds. **Payments processed: $730,422.00 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: $296,534.25 total to date**
* Otis Elevator – Elevator Modernization @ Dexter Manor. Funding Source is Bond. Contract total: $831,000. **Payments processed: $138,564.00 total to date**
* Otis Elevators – Elevator Modernization@ HP. Funding Source is CFP 19. Contract total is $661,098. **Payments processed: $0 total to date**
* Ahlborg Construction- HP Exterior Renovations - Funding Source CFP 50118. Contract total is $339,000. **Payments processed: $213,188 total to date**
* Martone Construction – Scattered Sites Exterior Renovations – Funding Source CFP 50118. Contract total is $364570. **Payments processed: $0.00 total to date**
* Martone Construction – Roof and gutter replacement at Chad Brown. Funding source CFP 19. Contract total is $1,089,460. **Payments processed: $0.00 total to date**
* Focus Technology – Managed IT Services – Funding Source is OPS/COCC. Contract total is $143,964. **Payments processed: $98,963.00 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: $0.00 total to date**
* NES Solutions Security- Additional Security for High Rises due to COVID. Contract total is for $443,040. Funding source is Ops. Payments processed: **Payments processed: $381,567.52 total to date**
* PuroClean – COVID related cleaning of high touch common areas in high rises. Funding Source is Ops. Contract total is for $757,200. **Payments processed: $516,000 total to date**
* Commercial Roofing - Remove and Replace Roof Hartford Park Tower. Funding Source is CFP 50118. Contract total is $523,000. **Payments processed: $286,065.00 total to date**
* A & M Sheet Metal and Roofing – Replace roof at Sunset Village. Funding source is CFP 50119. Contact total is $398,300. **Payments processed: $262,800 total to date**
* Energy One – HVAC for Elevator Modernization. Funding source is CFP. Contact total is for $127,500. **Payments processed: $0.00 total to date**

**CONTRACT APPROVAL:**

**Focus Technology- Virtual Environment (renew for 2nd year) - $143,964:**

**Status;** Vice Chairman Ryan made a motion and Commissioner D’Alfonso seconded the motion.

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, D’Alfonso, Colom (8)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**Puroclean – Extension of contract from Dec 31 to Jan 31, 2021 - $82,800:**

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

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, D’Alfonso, Colom (8)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**NES Security - Extension of contract from Dec 31 to Jan 31, 2021 - $49,920:**

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

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, D’Alfonso, Colom (8)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**Executive Director Report:**

Director Sanzaro updated the Board on the following items:

1. **TURKEYS & TOYS:**
2. In collaboration with the Providence Boys & Girls Club and the leadership of Michelle Rocchio, the Director of Property Management, the PHA delivered 167 turkeys in our family developments before Thanksgiving.
3. On Saturday, November 21, 2020, more than 35 volunteers from all PHA departments came together to deliver Thanksgiving meals and fixings.
4. In the high-rises, the food task force, led by Bartola Ovalles and George Lindell adapted the typical COVID food boxes to include a turkey breast and Thanksgiving/holiday themed foods. More than 500 boxes were provided to elderly and disabled buildings with continued safe delivery model.
   1. The PHA has received $7,500 either donated or pledged in support of the Holiday Drive!
   2. There were 457 families that responded and were chosen to receive toys this holiday. Chad/Ad/Sun had an external donation that covered 144 toys and the remainder will be covered by donations from vendors and employees.
5. **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS:**

The Executive Director updated the Board Members on the six main areas of the emergency operation plan during the second wave:

* Keeping Staff On-Site
* Facilities Management Work Orders
* Pandemic measures with vendors
* Food task force
* Eviction Moratorium
* New HUD waivers

1. **TESTING WITH LIFESPAN IN THE FAMILY DEVELOPMENTS:** 
   1. In October and November, the PHA team was committed to offer testing into the public housing family developments to broaden the impact and access to testing in the communities.
   2. In October, Lifespan received the required licensing to test children (over 4 years of age).
   3. Take-aways from the second round of testing operations coordinated and staffed by PHA and Lifespan are as follows:

* Second Round Total Tested: 898
* Guests/Community members tested: 79
* Children under 18 years tested: 66
* Employees tested: 96
* Average Age tested in family: 43 years
* Average Age tested in high-rises: 65 years
* Overall Positivity Rate: 3.5% (Family Sites: 3.8%, High-Rises: 3.2%)
* Overall Participation Rate: 25% (Family Sites:11.5%, High-Rises: 38.4%)
  1. The PHA and Lifespan combined COVID testing and flu shots except for one event at Dominica Manor. In total, residents received 407 flu vaccines:

236 in the family developments and 171 in the high-rises.

1. **TESTING WITH NEW PARTNERS:** 
   1. In collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Health, the National Guard and Disaster Medical Assistance Team, the PHA began to plan offering PHA residents and participants BinaxNOW, rapid testing along with confirmatory PCR testing. Although the rapid testing has a lower accuracy rate (80% - 85%), its widespread use in the state started in November. The DOH does recommend that if someone is symptomatic and negative, confirmatory PCR test.
   2. After a walk through with both teams representing both initiatives, the PHA planned an indoor, door to door pilot with both rapid testing and PCR testing.
   3. The first endeavor will take place this Saturday at Carroll Tower from 10am-2pm. Instead of 35 PHA staffers which we have used in prior outdoor testing events, the 15 staff will assist the teams with recruitment, information sharing and administrative duties such as calling results and providing guidance.
2. **VACCINE OPPORTUNITY:** 
   1. In Mid-November, RI Department of Health reached out to housing authorities to participate in offering vaccines through a CDC initiative in collaboration with CVS and Walgreens. At the time, it aims to focus on 65 Years+ but other populations are being considered.
   2. Today, RI Department of Health confirmed that Walgreens has been assigned as our healthcare partner to administer COVID-19 vaccines. As a partner, they will host immunization clinics for our residents/patients and staff over the next few months.
   3. They are working on FDA approval/emergency use authorization of a COVID-19 vaccine and creating essential processes to safely and seamlessly deliver and administer the vaccine.
3. **NSPIRE DEMONSTRATION:**
   1. The HUD NSPIRE DEMONSTRATION is a program where HUD intends to change the way they assess the physical condition of public housing properties by making major adjustments to standards, protocols and processes. Prior to doing so nationwide, HUD is seeking participation from 4,500 properties which are being selected from a nationwide pool of interested public housing Authorities.
   2. In July, the PHA applied to participate and enter all properties. In November, HUD officially provided the approval.
   3. Benefits:

* The PHA properties will be exempt from UPCS inspections
* Previous UPCS inspection score will be the inspection of record for 2 years
* When the demonstration field work is conducted it will be an opportunity for the PHA to use this as a learning tool to prepare for future inspections and to provide feedback and input to the new inspection standards
* There will be no need to prepare for the inspection for 2 years since the goal is to review the new standards

1. **REPOSITIONING OF ASSETS:**
   1. The PHA teams worked with the free Technical Assistance consultant from RECAP Advisors, Shannon Lestan.
   2. In October, Shannon requested financial information and studied the most recent Physical Needs Assessment and determined that it left out major repair items. The PHA team was asked to review the capital needs across the portfolio to develop categories of need.
   3. She then reviewed the PHA’s financial position and health, our internal capital needs assessment and developed feasible options and various models utilizing HUD’s repositioning tools. Some of the PHA staff leadership met with Shannon to discuss various repositioning options. The PHA’s portfolio showed a variety of options and blends of the tools that include tax credit deals, debt only deals, Section 18 and RAD.
   4. The PHA is currently waiting for the models to be sent to the team. Management feels that in order to build capacity in this area and develop a well-thought out plan to take advantage of repositioning opportunities, a formal repositioning consultant would be beneficial.
   5. In November, Strategy & Development and legal are fine tuning a Request for Proposal for a repositioning or RAD consultant that should be released by early 2021.
2. **ELECTIONS, PBVs AND NET METERING:**
   1. Peter Asen reviewed the voting trends with mail in & emergency ballot utilization in our high rises, updated the board on the upcoming RFP for project-based vouchers & the progress/changes in the future NET metering initiative with other housing authorities in RI.

**RESOLUTION 4300: Authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a long-term net metering contract, subject to HUD approval:**

**Status;** Commissioner D’Alfonso made a motion and Commissioner Medina seconded the motion.

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Doggett, Medina, Lee, D’Alfonso, Colom (7)**

**Votes opposed: Commissioner Cigna (1)**

**PRESENTATION: Updates to Section 8 Administrative Plan**

Presented by Donna De La Rosa, Director of Leased Housing. Director De La Rosa presented proposed updates relating to preferences for the mainstream voucher program and relating to the housing quality standards inspection process.

**RESOLUTION 4301: Approval of changes to the PHA’s Section 8 Admin Plan:**

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

**Votes in favor: Chairman Retsinas, Vice Chairman Ryan, Commissioner Cigna, Doggett, Medina, Lee, D’Alfonso, Colom (8)**

**Votes opposed: none**

**Adjournment:**

Commissioner Lee made a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 6:46pm, 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