

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
READING HOUSING AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 – 5:00 PM

The Reading Housing Authority Board of Commissioners held a Workshop and Commissioners Meeting on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at the William W. Willis Center for Administration, 400 Hancock Boulevard, Reading, PA.

**WORKSHOP MEETING**

The meeting commenced with the board recognizing the following RHA employees for service, promotions, and new hires: David Oley, Maintenance Foreman at South Campus was honored for 30 years of service. Emmanuel Ventura was promoted from a Maintenance Mechanic to Assistant Foreman for Center City Campus. Ashton Stapes and Mario Herrera Torres were promoted from Maintenance Mechanics to Inspectors. Jarred Johnson and James Gregro were hired as Maintenance Mechanics for South Campus and Center City Campus, respectively.

**Department Updates**

Anders Smith, IT Manager, and Greg Zawilla, Safety Coordinator presented updates on outdoor lighting and security camera upgrades at Oakbrook and Glenside Homes. Funded by HUD through a safety and security grant, these improvements include enhanced night vision capabilities with wider camera views reducing the number of cameras needed, and improved video quality benefiting staff and local law enforcement in ensuring resident safety. Cameras are equipped with pan, tilt, and zoom functions, allowing for automatic adjustments within minutes. Low lying tree branches will be trimmed to allow increased camera visibility.

Greg Snook, Assistant Superintendent, discussed updates regarding HUD's NSPIRE (National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate) inspection process. Since 2021, RHA inspections have adhered to NSPIRE's resident-focused approach, prioritizing health and safety. Inspections evaluate three key areas: the unit's interior, exterior, and the unit itself, with a score reflecting deficiencies in each area. On September 13, NSPIRE Inspectors assessed 26 units at Hensler Homes, yielding a 92% high-performance rating. Upcoming inspections at Oakbrook Homes, scheduled for October 8, will be accompanied by a HUD representative.

**President's Report**

Stacey Keppen, President, provided an overview of the RHA Strategic Plan for 2025-2029, which outlines the goals and objectives necessary for optimizing RHA's performance. The plan serves as a framework for the Five-Year Plan (FY 2025-2029) and will be reviewed in detail during the October 22 workshop. Ms. Keppen offered additional highlights of the monthly President's Report, including:

1. RHA continues to collect tenant receivables at a high rate evidenced by less than 5% of the 30-day notices issued progressing to court filings.
2. Property Management and the Inspections team have successfully reduced bedbug-affected units from ten to six, with only one lease termination.
3. Following RHA's rejection of Honeywell International's 2023 report, Honeywell confirmed a savings shortfall of \$37,085 for the overall project.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** An Executive Session was held to discuss a personnel matter.

**COMMISSIONERS' MEETING**

Ms. Lorena P. Keely, Chairwoman then called the REGULAR MEETING to order and upon roll call those present and absent were as follows:

Commissioners Present: Chairwoman Lorena P. Keely  
Vice-Chairwoman Myra Maldonado  
Commissioner Ineavelle Ruiz  
Commissioner Maria Delgado

Commissioners Absent: None.

RHA Staff Present: Stacey Keppen, President & CEO  
Mya Hornberger, Communications Manager/Recording Secretary  
David C. Talarico, Vice President & Director of Facilities  
Josh K. Smith, Director of Programs  
Jonathan P. Runkle, Director of Administration  
Theresa A. Reustle, Comptroller, Secretary-Treasurer  
Rory Ulrich, Maintenance Superintendent  
Nydia Runkle, Property Manager, South Campus  
Grisel Saez, Property Manager, Center City Campus  
Yasaira Modesto, Property Manager, North Campus  
Tom Stianche, Voucher Programs Manager  
Jack Knockstead, Resident Services Manager  
Steve Notario, Purchasing Officer  
Anders Smith, Information Technology Manager  
Gregg Snook, Assistant Maintenance Superintendent  
Matt Smith, Maintenance Foreman, North Campus  
Dave Oley, Maintenance Foreman, South Campus  
Derek DeLong, Maintenance Foreman, Center City Campus  
Gregory Zawilla, Neighborhood Safety & Engagement Coordinator  
Raquel Cedeno, Customer Service Specialist

RHA Staff Absent: Leonilda Feliciano, Applications Manager  
Tad Geisler, Inspection Manager, Center City Campus

Legal Staff Absent: Edwin Stock, Solicitor

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS:** Matthew Hester, Shelter Plus Care Program Participant (see Mr. Hester's attached notes)

### **APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES**

Regular Meeting – August 27, 2024

MOTION TO APPROVE: Vice-Chairwoman Maldonado  
SECOND: Commissioner Ruiz

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** None

### **APPROVAL OF THE SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT**

MOTION TO APPROVE: Commissioner Delgado  
SECOND: Commissioner Ruiz

**DISCUSSION:** None.

## **APPROVAL OF THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

MOTION TO APPROVE: Commissioner Ruiz  
SECOND: Vice-Chairwoman Maldonado

**DISCUSSION:** None.

## **RESOLUTIONS AND BOARD ACTION**

### **RESOLUTION NO. 6530: Acknowledging the Promotion of a Maintenance Mechanic to an Assistant Foreman (Emmanuel Ventura)**

MOTION TO APPROVE: Vice-Chairwoman Maldonado  
SECOND: Commissioner Delgado

**DISCUSSION:** None.

VOTES IN FAVOR: Keely, Maldonado, Ruiz, and Delgado  
VOTES AGAINST: None

### **RESOLUTION NO. 6531: Acknowledging the Promotion of a Maintenance Mechanic to an Inspector (Ashton Staples)**

MOTION TO APPROVE: Commissioner Ruiz  
SECOND: Vice-Chairwoman Maldonado

**DISCUSSION:** None.

VOTES IN FAVOR: Keely, Maldonado, Ruiz, and Delgado  
VOTES AGAINST: None

### **RESOLUTION NO. 6532: Acknowledging the Promotion of a Maintenance Mechanic to an Inspector (Mario Herrera Torres)**

MOTION TO APPROVE: Commissioner Delgado  
SECOND: Commissioner Ruiz

**DISCUSSION:** None.

VOTES IN FAVOR: Keely, Maldonado, Ruiz, and Delgado  
VOTES AGAINST: None

### **RESOLUTION NO. 6533: Acknowledging the Hiring of an Maintenance Mechanic (Jarred Johnson)**

MOTION TO APPROVE: Vice-Chairwoman Maldonado  
SECOND: Commissioner Delgado

**DISCUSSION:** None.

VOTES IN FAVOR: Keely, Maldonado, Ruiz, and Delgado  
VOTES AGAINST: None

### **RESOLUTION NO. 6534: Acknowledging the Hiring of an Maintenance Mechanic (James Gregro)**

MOTION TO APPROVE: Commissioner Ruiz  
SECOND: Vice-Chairwoman Maldonado

**DISCUSSION:** None.

VOTES IN FAVOR: Keely, Maldonado, Ruiz, and Delgado  
VOTES AGAINST: None

**RESOLUTION NO. 6535: Approving Travel to Erie, PA to Attend the 2024 PAHRA Conference & Awards to be Held October 27-30, 2024**

MOTION TO APPROVE: Commissioner Delgado  
SECOND: Vice-Chairwoman Maldonado

**DISCUSSION:** None.

VOTES IN FAVOR: Keely, Maldonado, Ruiz, and Delgado  
VOTES AGAINST: None

**RESOLUTION NO. 6536: Approving the Terms and Authorizing the Execution of a Contract with Muhlenberg Greene, Ltd. for Architectural Design Services for the Exterior Accessibility Site Improvements at Glenside Homes**

MOTION TO APPROVE: Vice-Chairwoman Maldonado  
SECOND: Commissioner Ruiz

**DISCUSSION:** None.

VOTES IN FAVOR: Keely, Maldonado, Ruiz, and Delgado  
VOTES AGAINST: None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Commissioner Ruiz  
SECOND: Vice-Chairwoman Maldonado



Minutes Respectfully Submitted By  
Mya M. Hornberger, Communications Manager/Recording Secretary

Attachment

**09/24/2024**  
**Reading Housing Authority Board of Commissioners Meeting**  
**Visitor – Matthew Hester (S+C Program Participant)**

Mr. Hester's remarks to the Board:

The 2021 PHA Administrative Plan does not explicitly address the scenario where voucher holders lose their housing due to landlords being unwilling to make repairs to meet increased HQS. However, it does provide a framework for handling situations where a tenant's current unit fails to meet HQS, which can be applied to this scenario with some adjustments.

Current PHA Policies (Based on the 2021 Plan)

- \* Owner Responsibility for Repairs: The plan clearly states that the owner is responsible for maintaining the unit to HQS standards. If the unit fails inspection, the owner is given a timeframe to make necessary repairs.

- \* Reference: Chapter 8, Part I.D.

- \* PHA Action for Non-Compliance: If the owner fails to correct the deficiencies, the PHA may abate or terminate the HAP contract.

- \* Reference: Chapter 8, Part II.G.

- \* Tenant Protection: The tenant will be issued a new voucher to find another unit that meets HQS. They will not be penalized or lose their assistance due to the landlord's non-compliance.

- \* Reference: Chapter 8, Part II.F.

Potential PHA Actions to Help Voucher Recipients

While the plan doesn't specifically address the scenario of landlords refusing to make repairs due to increased HQS, the PHA can take several actions to assist affected voucher holders:

- \* Proactive Communication and Education:

- \* Inform landlords and tenants in advance: The PHA should proactively communicate the upcoming changes in HQS to both landlords and tenants, emphasizing the landlords' responsibility for compliance and the potential consequences of non-compliance.

- \* Provide resources and support: Offer landlords information and resources on how to make the necessary repairs, including potential funding sources or technical assistance.

- \* Educate tenants on their rights: Ensure tenants understand that they are not responsible for the unit's failure to meet HQS and that they will be assisted in finding new housing if necessary.

- \* Flexible Inspection and Enforcement:

- \* Phased inspections: Consider conducting phased inspections to allow landlords more time to make repairs, especially for major renovations.

- \* Reasonable extensions: Grant reasonable extensions to landlords who demonstrate a good faith effort to comply but face unforeseen delays or challenges in completing the repairs.

- \* Incentives for compliance: Explore offering incentives to landlords who proactively make repairs or improvements to their units to meet the new HQS.

\* Enhanced Housing Search Assistance:

\* Dedicated staff and resources: Allocate additional staff and resources to assist displaced tenants in their housing search, including providing personalized support and guidance.

\* Expanded housing listings: Develop and maintain an updated list of available units that meet the new HQS, including units in areas with low poverty and minority concentration.

\* Outreach to landlords: Conduct targeted outreach to landlords to encourage them to list their units with the PHA and participate in the program.

\* Temporary Housing Solutions:

\* Voucher extensions: Grant voucher extensions to tenants who need additional time to find suitable housing.

\* Temporary housing assistance: Provide temporary housing assistance, such as hotel vouchers or referrals to shelters, to bridge the gap until tenants can secure new housing.

\* Collaboration with Community Partners:

\* Partner with housing counseling agencies: Collaborate with housing counseling agencies to provide tenants with additional support and guidance during their housing search.

\* Coordinate with social service agencies: Work with social service agencies to address any additional needs of displaced tenants, such as transportation, childcare, or employment assistance.

By implementing these strategies, the PHA can proactively mitigate the impact of increased HQS on voucher holders and ensure that they have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing.

Reference:

\* The potential PHA actions and policy updates are based on the general principles and guidelines outlined in the 2021 PHA Administrative Plan and current HUD regulations and guidance, including the Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook and relevant notices.