

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
OF THE  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**January 20, 2022**

The Regular Meeting of the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (the “Corporation” or “RIHousing”) Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. The meeting was held via telephone conference call pursuant to Executive Order 22-01.

Carol Ventura, Executive Director, stated that this was a telephonic meeting of the RIHousing Board of Commissioners. Ms. Ventura, then introduced Carl Rotella, Director of Information Technology, who summarized the parameters of the meeting.

Mr. Rotella stated that (i) this meeting would be recorded and available for review on the RIHousing website within 3-5 business days after the meeting and (ii) except for specific RIHousing staff participating telephonically in the meeting, all callers would be muted during the meeting. Mr. Rotella also asked that to prevent any feedback or background noise, telephone participants to please mute the telephone if not speaking. Additionally, Mr. Rotella announced that if during the meeting anyone had technical difficulties with audio or accessing the call, they should call (401) 457-1240.

Next, Corinne Myers, General Counsel, provided additional guidance for the meeting. Ms. Myers stated that pursuant to Executive Order 22-01, dated January 6, 2022, the meeting was being held via teleconference. Members of the public could visit the RIHousing website to view the agenda and information on the actions being taken and in the event the teleconference was interrupted, staff would stop the meeting until audio was restored.

Ms. Myers stated that Vice Chairman Thorsen would preside over the meeting and requested that any Commissioner or staff wishing to comment state their name prior to speaking and to mute the phone when not speaking. She then invited Vice Chairman Thorsen to call the meeting to order.

A quorum being present, Vice Chairman Thorsen introduced himself and officially called the meeting to order at approximately 9:34 a.m. The Vice Chairman then invited Ms. Ventura to proceed with the roll call of Commissioners in attendance.

Ms. Ventura conducted a roll call vote of Commissioners participating in the meeting. Commissioners participating were: James Thorsen, Director of the Department of Administration; LeeAnn Byrne, Designee for General Treasurer Seth Magaziner; Elizabeth Tanner, Director of the Department of Business Regulation; Kevin Orth; Stephen P. McAllister; and Maria Barry.

RIHousing staff participating were: Carol Ventura, Executive Director; James Comer, Deputy Executive Director; Kara Lachapelle, Chief Financial Officer; Lisa Primiano, Chief Operating Officer; Leslie McKnight, Assistant Deputy Director of Loan Servicing; Christine Hunsinger, Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer; Bernadette MacArthur, Director of Finance; Peter Pagonis, Director of Homeownership; Anne Berman, Director of Real Estate Development; Corinne Myers, General Counsel; and Carl Rotella, Director of Information Technology.

Members of the public were also present on the call.

**Approval of Minutes of Board Meeting held on December 16, 2021**

Vice Chairman Thorsen asked for a motion and a second for the approval of the minutes of the Board of Commissioners meeting held on December 16, 2021. A motion was made by Commissioner Designee Byrne and seconded by Commissioner McAllister.

There being no discussion, Corinne Myers, General Counsel, conducted a roll call vote of the Commissioners. The Commissioners voted as follows:

Vice Chairman Thorsen	Aye
Commissioner Orth	Aye
Commissioner McAllister	Aye
Commissioner Designee Byrne	Aye
Commissioner Tanner	Aye
Commissioner Barry	Abstained

The commissioners voted to approve the minutes with five (5) votes in favor, Commissioner Barry abstaining, and zero (0) nay votes. Ms. Myers then officially stated for the record that the following was adopted:

VOTED: That the minutes of the Board Meeting held on December 16, 2021 hereby are approved.

**Remarks of Presiding Commissioner**

Vice Chairman Thorsen deferred his remarks to later in the meeting.

**Executive Director’s Review of Recent Activities and Trends**

Carol Ventura, Executive Director, greeted everyone and gave an update on the Corporation’s activities.

**Homeownership.** Ms. Ventura began by announcing that in 2021 the Homeownership Division originated a record volume of mortgages. For the year, the team exceeded first mortgage unit goals by 14% and 2020 production by 7%. The Director noted that staff anticipates a robust 2022 with the Downpayment Assistance initiative driving the production of loans.

**Loan Servicing.** Ms. Ventura remarked that Servicing continues to report a decrease in overall delinquencies. The delinquency rate for the month was 591 delinquent loans for a total of 1,369 delinquent loans out of the active portfolio of 11,049 loans.

Ms. Ventura then said that she expects that the launch of the Homeowner Assistance Fund Rhode Island (HAF-RI) will also assist RI Housing borrowers in mitigating delinquencies. The HAF program launched on January 10<sup>th</sup> and by close of business that day, 1,312 households had started an application and 333 had completed and submitted their applications. As of the previous day, 3,770 applications had been received and 1,306 were complete.

Ms. Ventura informed the Commissioners that staff is considering shutting the portal at some point if the volume of applications exceed the \$50 million available for distribution.

**Development.** Ms. Ventura said that the Development Division is extremely busy. Staff received 12 applications seeking \$12.5 million in LIHTC to construct 692 units in 9 communities across the state; however, RIHousing has only \$2.95 million in 2022 LIHTC to allocate. Additionally, staff is reviewing the 17 ARP applications (bond funds for blight remediation) seeking \$27.8 million in funding.

Furthermore, on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, Development submitted the HOME/ARP Allocation Plan to HUD. The plan proposes \$9.1 million for development activities, \$3 million for supportive services, \$300 thousand for capacity building for homeless service providers and \$1 million for administration and planning.

**Leased Housing and Rental Services.** Ms. Ventura was pleased to share that the RentReliefRI program reached an important milestone earlier this month, reaching over \$100 million in rental and utility assistance funds disbursed to over 12,500 Rhode Island renter households. The Director mentioned that staff has strategically switched between ERA 1 and ERA 2 programs to minimize potential recapture of the funds. Ms. Ventura commended the team on the achievement.

Next, Ms. Ventura announced that on December 28<sup>th</sup>, RIHousing was notified by HUD that the annual Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program application was funded in the amount of \$280,000. This is the largest FSS award for both RIHousing and the State. Ms. Ventura congratulated the FSS team on the award.

Ms. Ventura also mentioned that the year-end monitoring statistics for the Asset Management/Multifamily Compliance department were outlined in her report. The implementation of remote file reviews enabled staff to continue to provide effective oversight throughout the pandemic, ensuring that rental developments continued to operate in accordance with the terms of their regulatory covenants, including affordability requirements unique to each property.

Ms. Ventura then said that her report included a detailed list of articles and events for the Corporation and activity on the State and Federal levels. Ms. Ventura noted the summaries in her report and encouraged the Commissioners to review the information at their convenience.

Ms. Ventura mentioned that on January 13<sup>th</sup>, the Finance Department successfully executed a new bond issuance for the Single-Family Bond Program. The Corporation received \$490 million in requests for the \$136 million bond offering. Ms. Ventura congratulated the Finance team on the highly successful execution of the bond offering.

In closing, Ms. Ventura informed the Commissioners that RIHousing has an organization-wide Ethics Policy which was presented to the Board at the December 16, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting. Quasi-public agencies like RIHousing are required to maintain a policy that implements the State Code of Ethics. Ms. Ventura stated that Marilena DiCristofano will be emailing a copy of the policy and corresponding Ethics Certification Form that the Commissioners need to complete and return to her attention.

Following the presentation, Ms. Ventura introduced James Comer, Deputy Executive Director who provided a recap of the Corporation's 2021 Charitable Contributions and Donations expenditures.

Mr. Comer referenced the summary previously circulated as part of the January 20, 2022 board package and briefly reviewed the total contributions and individual associations.

Ms. Ventura then welcomed questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Designee Byrne referenced the Homeowner Assistance Fund Rhode Island (HAF-RI) where staff anticipates that it will be oversubscribed for the \$50 million dollars available. She wanted to know how many families RIHousing will be able to serve.

Peter Pagonis, Director of Homeownership said that the number of borrowers served is correlated directly with the amount disbursed to each applicant. If the average amount allocated per household is \$35,000, then approximately 1,215 applicants will be assisted. However, it's too early to determine the average amount per customer, but Mr. Pagonis will keep the Commissioners updated as the program evolves.

Commissioner Orth questioned how the program is marketed to ensure that it maximizes exposure and reaches as many consumers as possible. Mr. Pagonis stated that prior to the official launch, the program has been promoted on the RIHousing website, where interested parties uploaded contact information. Staff then assembled a list of customers that met the program guidelines and once the program launched, were sent direct emails to start the application process.

Additionally, RIHousing formed two (2) advisory committees comprised of diverse partners, realtors, members of the Mortgage Bankers Association along with state and local entities. Mr. Pagonis also said that the Corporation's website provides comprehensive tools, resources and media kits for community partners to distribute to interested candidates.

Ms. Ventura also mentioned that she and staff have engaged in meetings with Mayors, Managers, Town Administrators and municipal leaders to promote the program. Furthermore, RIHousing has actively publicized the program on social media.

Vice Chairman Thorsen then took a few moments to share some comments. Vice Chairman Thorsen said that Rhode Island has received an additional \$25 million federal dollars to for a total allocation of \$250 million in housing assistance. He wanted to advise the Commissioners that additional support is earmarked to assist in the administration of various programs such as the Downpayment Assistance, Workforce Housing and HAF programs. The onus rests with the Department of Administration to ensure projects qualify for the funding, but RIHousing will be asked to provide housing expertise. The Vice Chairman wanted to confirm that transparency in divisions of responsibility was properly addressed; particularly as detailed reports are required to be submitted to Treasury.

### **Firm Approval of Financing for Living East Bay (Bristol and Warren)**

Vice Chairman Thorsen introduced Anne Berman Director of Real Estate Development, who gave the presentation.

Ms. Berman said that this request for the firm approval of RIHousing tax-exempt financing in an amount not to exceed \$4,750,000.00, a taxable permanent first mortgage of \$430,000.00, a HOME Investment Partnerships Program (the "HOME Program") loan of \$714,500.00, a Housing Trust Fund Program (the "HTF Program") loan of \$800,000.00, and a Capital Magnet Fund ("CMF") loan

of \$785,000.00 for Living East Bay (“LEB” or the “Development”). East Bay Community Development Corp. is the developer (“East Bay” or the “Developer”). The Development received preliminary approval from the Board of Commissioners for the tax-exempt and CMF financing on August 19, 2021, and for the HOME Program and HTF Program financing on May 20, 2021.

This firm approval will support the acquisition and rehabilitation of two existing portfolios, combining them into a single low-income housing tax credit (“LIHTC”) project. The 47 units are in nine buildings located in Bristol and Warren. The project has a Section 8 project-based voucher contract for eight units. The units and buildings are in average condition with some deferred maintenance. Most of these buildings were constructed in the early 1900s, but one dates as far back as the 1800s.

Exposure to weather and salt air takes a toll on historic structures. East Bay will undertake a substantial renovation of the Development with a focus on the exterior and common area elements. The scope of work for the renovation includes new roofs, windows, siding, entry doors and exterior lighting. Additionally, the mechanical, electrical, and fire alarm systems will be replaced or upgraded. The common area hallways and unit interiors will be upgraded as needed.

The Developer will complete the acquisition and rehabilitation of the Development using the proceeds from this tax-exempt financing, taxable financing, the sale of LIHTCs, a CMF loan, a HOME loan, a HTF Program loan, a sponsor loan, assumed debt, and a seller loan. Red Stone Equity Partners (“Red Stone”) will be the syndicator purchasing the 4% LIHTCs and is paying \$0.93 per credit.

There is approximately \$2,250,000.00 of existing debt plus accrued interest on these properties comprised primarily of RIHousing targeted loans, HOME Program loans, a Building Homes Rhode Island loan, and Lead Program funds. As part of the approval process, staff has determined that the Development and sponsor meet RIHousing’s requirements for rollover of existing debt.

Following the presentation, Vice Chairman Thorsen thanked Ms. Berman and asked for a motion and a second for Firm Approval of Financing for Living East Bay (Bristol and Warren).

A motion was duly made by Commissioner Orth and seconded by Commissioner Barry.

There being no discussion, Corinne Myers, General Counsel, conducted a roll call vote of the Commissioners. The commissioners voted as follows:

Vice Chairman Thorsen	Aye
Commissioner Orth	Aye
Commissioner McAllister	Aye
Commissioner Designee Byrne	Aye
Commissioner Tanner	Aye
Commissioner Barry	Aye

Ms. Myers then announced that the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

**Resolution of the Board of Commissioners  
Of Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation**

**Whereas,** Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) is authorized to make loans to mortgagors or sponsors for such developments as in the judgment of RIHousing have promise of supplying well-planned, well-designed apartment units, which will provide or preserve housing for low- and moderate-income persons or families, or the elderly, or others in locations where there is a need for such housing;

**Whereas,** RIHousing intends to issue tax-exempt bonds for the purpose of financing qualified housing developments throughout the state;

**Whereas,** RIHousing is authorized to issue tax-exempt financing at an economically acceptable rate to promote the acquisition, rehabilitation, or preservation of affordable housing;

**Whereas,** the Board of Commissioners granted preliminary approval of tax-exempt and Capital Magnet Fund financing on August 19, 2021 and of HOME Program and HTF Program financing on May 20, 2021 for East Bay Community Development Corp. (“Applicant”) to acquire and/or rehabilitate the affordable housing to be known as Living East Bay (the “Development”);

**Whereas,** the Applicant is requesting firm approval of tax-exempt and mortgage financing for the Development as set forth below:

<u>Development</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Tax-Exempt Bonds</u>	<u>Taxable Permanent Mortgage</u>	<u>HOME Program</u>	<u>HTF Program</u>	<u>CMF</u>
Living East Bay	East Bay Community Development Corp.	\$4,750,000	\$430,000	\$714,500	\$800,000	\$785,000

**Whereas,** said bonds shall have a term not to exceed 36 months and shall be in the approximate amount sufficient to finance the mortgage, pay the costs of issuance, fund a capital reserve fund and to provide the capitalized interest if determined to be necessary; and

**Whereas,** the RIHousing Board of Commissioners and staff have reviewed the submission of the Applicant for mortgage financing and determined that the Development qualifies for financing under RIHousing’s enabling legislation, regulations, guidelines, and policies.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY:**

**Resolved,** that subject to the special conditions listed below, RIHousing hereby declares firm commitment for tax-exempt mortgage financing for East Bay Community Development Corp. or other affiliated entity of the Applicant (the “Borrower”) in an amount not to exceed \$4,750,000 for rental housing known as Living East Bay located in Bristol and Warren, Rhode Island to be financed in part with tax-exempt bonds.

**Resolved,** that RIHousing hereby declares that this firm commitment of financing for the Borrower constitutes the affirmative official act of RIHousing of its intention to issue tax-exempt bonds to finance up to \$4,750,000 in mortgage funds, plus the required bond reserve funds, and the related costs of issuance for the bond issue for the above-referenced Development pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and any regulations promulgated thereunder. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

**Resolved,** that the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Director of Finance, General Counsel, and the Manager of Treasury and Capital Planning (each, an “Authorized Officer”), acting singly, be, and each of them hereby is, authorized, empowered and directed to take any and all action necessary to effectuate the purpose and intent of the foregoing resolutions, including, without limitation, (i) the execution and delivery on behalf of RIHousing of all such other agreements, documents, and instruments and the performance by RIHousing thereunder, as each of them shall determine, in his/her exclusive and reasonable judgment, to be necessary, appropriate, or advisable, and (ii) the consummation of the transactions contemplated hereby and the performance by RIHousing as required hereunder, as each of them shall determine, in his/her exclusive and reasonable judgment, to be necessary, appropriate, or advisable, each such determination pursuant to the immediately preceding clauses to be conclusively evidenced by the taking of such action by any Authorized Officer and each such determination is hereby fully and completely approved and adopted as the valid action of and by RIHousing, approved in all respects by the Board of Commissioners.

**Resolved,** that, subject to the special conditions listed below, RIHousing hereby grants firm approval for a taxable permanent financing loan to the Borrower, in an amount not to exceed \$430,000.00 for rental housing known as Living East Bay located in Bristol and Warren.

**Resolved,** that subject to the special conditions listed below, RIHousing hereby approves a HOME Investment Partnerships Program loan in an amount up to \$714,500.00 for rental housing known as Living East Bay located in Bristol and Warren.

**Resolved,** that subject to the special conditions listed below, RIHousing hereby approves a Housing Trust Fund Program loan in an amount up to \$800,000.00 for rental housing known as Living East Bay located in Bristol and Warren.

**Resolved,** that, subject to the special conditions listed below, RIHousing hereby approves a Capital Magnet Fund loan to the Borrower in an amount not to exceed \$785,000.00 for rental housing known as Living East Bay located in Bristol and Warren.

**Resolved,** that the foregoing resolutions are subject to the following special conditions:

- Syndication proceeds from the sale of 4% LIHTCs in an amount sufficient to ensure development feasibility;
- Final approval by RIHousing of construction plans, specifications, and supporting construction documentation;

- Execution and delivery by the Applicant of a construction completion guaranty in form and substance satisfactory to RIHousing;
- Approval by RIHousing of management documentation;
- Approval by bond underwriter and bond counsel that the loans will satisfy all required bond provisions for the bond issue;
- Recordation of a RIHousing Declaration of Land Use Restrictive Covenants and Regulatory Agreement in form(s) acceptable to RIHousing; and
- Completion of all items required for firm commitment and closing in accordance with normal underwriting and processing requirements;

**Resolved,** that the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, and Director of Development each acting singly, are hereby authorized to take any and all actions they deem necessary to carry out the foregoing resolutions.

### **Approval of Renewal and Amendment of Engagement of Witt O’Brien’s LLC**

Vice Chairman Thorsen announced that Christine Hunsinger, Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer would give this presentation.

Ms. Hunsinger said that this request seeks authorization for RIHousing to renew and amend its engagement of Witt O’Brien’s LLC (“Witt O’Brien’s”) for the provision of call center services in connection with the RentReliefRI Program, an emergency rental assistance (“ERA”) program funded by the U.S. Department of the Treasury (“Treasury”).

In February 2021, the State of Rhode Island (the “State”) designated RIHousing as the subrecipient of approximately \$352 million in ERA funds that were appropriated to the State by Treasury. To administer the subaward, RIHousing developed the RentReliefRI Program (the “Program”) and, through it, utilizes ERA funds to assist Rhode Islanders with their rent, utility, and other housing-related expenses.

As it developed the Program, RIHousing recognized that it needed to engage a vendor to provide applicants with call center services so that Program objectives would be accomplished in a timely, efficient, and effective manner. In turn, a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for call center services was issued in February 2021. Sixteen (16) firms, including Witt O’Brien’s, submitted responses to the RFP. In March 2021, RIHousing’s Board of Commissioners authorized RIHousing to award Witt O’Brien’s with a contract in an amount not to exceed \$2,500,000 for a nine-month period.

Pursuant to the Board’s authorization, RIHousing initially agreed to compensate Witt O’Brien’s at an hourly rate based on employee title/role and number of hours worked. Both the call center services that Witt O’Brien’s provides under the Program and the pricing structure have been adjusted to reflect the evolution of the Program since its initial rollout, importantly the higher-than-expected volume of applications approved. Currently, a hybrid pricing structure is in effect: call center agent services continue to be billed on a per role/title and number of hours worked basis but set fees have been established for application processing services. The total cost of the engagement will be approximately \$5,000,000, which includes \$750,000 for call center services rendered in calendar year 2021 and a budget of \$4,250,000 for services for twelve months in 2022.



Since the Program’s inception, Witt O’Brien’s has proven to be an integral component to its success. Their customized scripting, agent training program, quality assurance, reporting capabilities, and Program application assistance and processing services have been critical in enabling RIHousing to both administer the Program and comply with the ERA program requirements of the State and Treasury. As RIHousing continues to administer the Program, their continued engagement will allow RIHousing to continue to accomplish these objectives.

Following the presentation, Vice Chairman Thorsen asked for a motion and a second for Approval of Renewal and Amendment of Engagement of Witt O’Brien’s LLC.

A motion was duly made by Commissioner Designee Byrne and seconded by Commissioner McAllister.

Vice Chairman Thorsen commented that typically call centers are an expensive operation. The Vice Chairman wondered if it made sense to consolidate the call centers to create a statewide call center. The effort could be coordinated by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and run by the State.

Christine Hunsinger replied that she is not aware of that particular discussion but RIHousing is utilizing partners who are familiar with the portal. The DHS portal was not a good fit for the needs of RentReliefRI and staff engaged Witt O’Brien’s. However, the subject of a statewide call center is frequently considered, but no effort has been made to move forward on the initiative.

There being no further comments, Corinne Myers, General Counsel, then conducted a roll call vote of the Commissioners. The commissioners voted as follows:

Vice Chairman Thorsen	Aye
Commissioner Orth	Aye
Commissioner McAllister	Aye
Commissioner Designee Byrne	Aye
Commissioner Tanner	Aye
Commissioner Barry	Aye

Ms. Myers then announced that the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

**Resolution of the Board of Commissioners  
Of Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation**

**Whereas,** the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) enabling act provides it with all of the power to make and execute contracts for the exercise of the powers and functions provided to it under the act (R.I. Gen. Laws §42-55-5(6)); and

**Whereas,** the State of Rhode Island (the “State”) designated RIHousing as its subrecipient to receive approximately \$352 million in emergency rental assistance (“ERA”) funds that were appropriated to the State by the United States Department of the Treasury; and

**Whereas,** RIHousing developed the RentReliefRI Program to administer the ERA funds to applicants statewide and, in March 2021, engaged Witt O'Brien's LLC to provide the RentReliefRI Program with call center services; and

**Whereas,** to continue to administer RentReliefRI Program efficiently and effectively, RIHousing seeks the Board of Commissioner's approval to continue to engage Witt O'Brien's LLC as said vendor.

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY:**

**Resolved,** that RIHousing be, and hereby is, authorized to renew and amend its engagement of Witt O'Brien's, LLC for call center support services in an amount not to exceed \$5,000,000 for call center support services occurring in 2021 and 2022 to enable RIHousing to manage the RentReliefRI Program; and

**Resolved,** that the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director and Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer, each acting singly be, and hereby is, authorized and empowered to take any and all actions necessary or desirable to carry out the foregoing resolution, including without limitation the authority to negotiate such terms of the engagement as he or she may determine are in the best interests of RIHousing, and to execute any and all agreements or documents as he or she deems necessary to carry out the foregoing; and

**Resolved,** that all prior actions taken by the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, and Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer that are consistent with the authority conferred herein are hereby expressly ratified and confirmed.

**Approval of Pre-Qualification of Additional Rental Assistance Support Service Vendors for RentReliefRI**

Vice Chairman Thorsen invited Ms. Hunsinger to present the request.

Ms. Hunsinger introduced the topic by saying this request is for approval to expand the roster of pre-qualified partners to support the RentReliefRI Program (the "Program"), an emergency rental assistance program funded by the U.S. Department of the Treasury ("Treasury") and administered by RIHousing.

On March 18, 2021, RIHousing's Board of Commissioners approved its creation of roster of pre-qualified vendors that could provide the Program and its applicants with outreach, application assistance and processing, and legal support services on an as-needed basis. As demand for these services continues to grow, RIHousing seeks to expand the breadth of pre-qualified vendors on the roster to reach additional demographics and areas where current presence is under-represented.

In November 2021, RIHousing issued a request for proposals for supplemental Program application and processing assistance, outreach, and legal services for tenants and landlords (the "RFP"). The RFP was posted on RIHousing's website, and the website maintained by the State of Rhode Island Department of Administration. In

addition, RIHousing circulated the RFP to more than 200 entities, including for and non-profit organizations, social service providers, neighborhood organizations, cultural entities representing a variety of populations, places of worship, and community groups. In response, RIHousing received sixteen (16) proposals from a diverse group of entities, with some entities proposing to provide multiple categories of support.

A selection committee comprised of RIHousing staff (the “Committee”) reviewed the proposals in accordance with the criteria set forth in the RFP and determined whether respondents were qualified to perform the requested services. Based on the review, the Committee proposes to add ten (10) new vendors to its roster for Rental Assistance Support Service Vendors<sup>1</sup>. The proposed expanded roster is as follows<sup>2</sup>:

**Application Assistance**

- Blackstone Valley Community Action Program
- Comprehensive Community Action Program
- Center for Southeast Asians
- Central Falls Housing Authority
- Crossroads
- Cultural & Linguistic Advocacy Support Services (C.L.A.S.S.)\*
- DARE\*
- Dorcas International\*
- East Bay Community Action Program
- Family Service of RI
- George Wiley Center\*
- Higher Ground International\*
- Oasis International\*
- ONE Neighborhood Builders
- Progreso Latino\*
- RI Community Action Association\*
- Sojourner House
- Tri-County Community Action Agency
- Witt O’Brien’s

**Outreach**

- Advocacy Solutions, LLC
- Comprehensive Community Action Program
- Center for Southeast Asians
- Central Falls Housing Authority
- City of Providence\*
- Cultural & Linguistic Advocacy Support Services (C.L.A.S.S.)\*
- DARE\*
- East Bay Community Action Program
- Family Service of RI
- Genesis Center\*
- George Wiley Center\*
- Higher Ground International\*
- Housing Network of RI
- ONE Neighborhood Builders

Progreso Latino\*  
Sojourner House  
Tri-County Community Action Agency  
Witt O'Brien's

**Legal Support Services**

Center for Justice  
Law Offices of Michael D. Crane, LLC  
Rhode Island Legal Services

**Application Processing**

Blackstone Valley Community Action Program  
Comprehensive Community Action Program  
Center for Southeast Asians  
Central Falls Housing Authority  
Crossroads  
East Bay Community Action Program  
Family Service of RI  
Housing Network of RI  
Tri-County Community Action Agency  
Witt O'Brien's

RIHousing anticipates that the selected firms will appear on the roster for a period of three years, which period may be extended if staff determines that doing so is in the best interests of the corporation. Staff may either engage vendors on the roster on an as-needed basis or solicit bids for particular projects consistent with RIHousing's Purchasing Policies. There is no guarantee of any level of spending activity to a vendor selected for this roster.

Vice Chairman Thorsen thanked Ms. Hunsinger for the presentation and asked for a motion and a second for Approval of Pre-Qualification of Additional Rental Assistance Support Service Vendors for RentReliefRI.

A motion was duly made by Commissioner Orth and seconded by Commissioner Designee Byrne.

Commissioner Designee Byrne thanked staff for their efforts in issuing the RFP for new vendors and the responsiveness of staff in always striving to do better. She also thanked staff for providing the matrix illustrating the diverse partners.

Vice Chairman Thorsen also expressed his appreciation to Ms. Hunsinger for providing information previously requested on the volume generated by the individual partners. He felt the information was extremely helpful.

Corinne Myers, General Counsel, then conducted a roll call vote of the Commissioners. The commissioners voted as follows:

Vice Chairman Thorsen	Aye
Commissioner Orth	Aye
Commissioner McAllister	Aye

Commissioner Designee Byrne      Aye  
Commissioner Tanner                Aye  
Commissioner Barry                 Aye

Ms. Myers announced that the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

**Resolution of the Board of Commissioners  
Of Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation**

**WHEREAS:**        the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) enabling act provides it with all of the power to make and execute contracts for the exercise of the powers and functions provided to it under the act (R.I. Gen. Laws §42-55-5(6)); and

**WHEREAS:**        RIHousing has been selected by the State of Rhode Island to administer approximately \$352 million in federal grant funds under the Emergency Rental Assistance (“ERA”) program of the U.S. Department of Treasury; and

**WHEREAS:**        RIHousing developed the RentReliefRI Program to deliver ERA housing assistance to applicants statewide, and expects to deploy other state and federal emergency housing programs as they arise; and

**WHEREAS:**        RIHousing requires a diverse set of partners to ensure outreach for assistance is provided across a range of populations, language groups, and cultural communities; that application support is widely accessible; and that community-based legal assistance is available for landlords and tenants;

**WHEREAS:**        in November 2021, RIHousing solicited proposals from additional vendors to provide the above-described rental assistance support services; and

**WHEREAS:**        a selection committee comprised of RIHousing staff reviewed the proposals and evaluated them in accordance with the criteria set forth in the solicitation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY:**

**RESOLVED:**        that RIHousing be, and hereby is, authorized to supplement its roster of pre-qualified vendors to support emergency housing programs, including the RentReliefRI Program, to include the following providers of application assistance and outreach services, as the Executive Director or her designee deems advisable or necessary:

**Application Assistance**

Cultural & Linguistic Advocacy Support Services (C.L.A.S.S.)

DARE

Dorcas International

George Wiley Center

Higher Ground International

Oasis International  
Progreso Latino  
RI Community Action Association

**Outreach**

City of Providence  
Cultural & Linguistic Advocacy Support Services (C.L.A.S.S.)  
DARE  
Genesis Center  
George Wiley Center  
Higher Ground International  
Progreso Latino

**RESOLVED:** that RIHousing be, and hereby is authorized, to engage the above-listed firms on an as-needed basis and/or solicit bids or proposals from such firms for specific projects consistent with RIHousing’s Purchasing Policies; and

**RESOLVED:** that the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director and the Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer, each acting singly, be, and hereby is, authorized and empowered to take any and all actions necessary or desirable to carry out the foregoing resolutions, including without limitation the authority to negotiate such terms of the engagements as she or he may determine are in the best interests of RIHousing, and to execute any and all agreements or documents as she or he deems necessary to carry out the foregoing.

**Approval of Pre-Qualification of Communication Services and Data Research Firms**

Ms. Hunsinger also gave this presentation.

Ms. Hunsinger informed the Commissioners that this transaction was for the authorization of RIHousing to establish a roster of pre-qualified communication services and data research firms. RIHousing may accept bids from and engage such firms on an as-needed basis to provide (i) communication services and (ii) housing related research, analysis and reporting services.

Periodically, RIHousing engages firms to provide it with communication services in the following categories: public and stakeholder engagement; focus groups, surveys, in-depth interviews and facilitated meetings; industry and market analyses and business planning; marketing; advertising; graphic design; video and audio recording and production; and strategic communication advice and counsel. In addition, RIHousing recently identified a need for broader research, analysis and reporting services to provide housing related research and policy recommendations, and the production of plans and reports as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and other federal regulatory agencies. Consequently, RIHousing issued the following Requests for Proposals (“RFPs”) to create a roster of qualified firms to fulfill these needs:

**a. Communication Services**

In October 2021, RIHousing issued an RFP seeking qualified firms to provide it with communication services in the following categories (collectively “Communication Services”):

- A. Marketing/Advertising/Media Buying
- B. Creative Services
- C. Media Relations
- D. Report Writing
- E. Video/Audio Recording and Production
- F. Photography
- G. Website Hosting, Maintenance and Support
- H. Public and Stakeholder Engagement
- I. Focus Groups, Surveys, In-depth Interviews, & Facilitated Meetings
- J. Strategic Communications Advice and Counsel

The RFP notice was posted on the RIHousing website and the website maintained by the State of Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Purchases. In addition, the RFP was sent by email to more than 180+ public information/communications agencies and trade associations as well as 80 contacts who have signed up to receive RFP notifications from RIHousing.

Overall, RIHousing received proposals from sixteen (16) unique firms, with some firms applying for multiple service categories.

A selection committee comprised of RIHousing staff (the “Review Committee”) reviewed the responses in accordance with the criteria set forth the RFP and determined whether respondents were qualified to perform the required services. Based on this review, RIHousing seeks approval to include the following sixteen (16) firms on its roster for Communication Services (please note, some firms appear under more than one category):

**Marketing/Advertising/Media Buying**

Advocacy Solutions  
Allen Roche Group  
DDL Advertising  
ESM (Electric Symphony Media)  
Glad Works  
Luminous  
SCS (Systems Change Strategies)  
Trailblaze Marketing  
True North Inc.

**Creative Services**

Advocacy Solutions  
Allen Roche Group  
DDL Advertising  
Glad Works  
Luminous  
SCS (Systems Change Strategies)  
Shields Design Studio  
Trailblaze Marketing

True North Inc.

**Media Relations**

Advocacy Solutions

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

**Report Writing**

Advocacy Solutions

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

**Video/Audio Recording and Production**

Advocacy Solutions

Allen Roche Group

Glad Works

Luminous

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

Shields Design Studio

Sociable

St. Thomas Sound & Picture

Third Spoon

**Photography**

Allen Roche Group

Connie Grosch Photography

DDL Advertising

Glad Works

Gretchen Ertl Photography

Luminous

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

Third Spoon

**Website Hosting, Maintenance and Support**

Glad Works

Luminous

NineDot

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

Shields Design Studio

**Public and Stakeholder Engagement**

Advocacy Solutions

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

**Focus Groups, Surveys, In-depth Interviews, & Facilitated Meetings**

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

**Strategic Communications Advice and Counsel**

Advocacy Solutions

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)



**b. Data Research Services**

In October 2021, RIHousing issued an RFP seeking qualified firms to provide housing related research, analysis and reporting services (“Data Research Services”). The RFP notice was posted on the RIHousing’s website and the website maintained by the State of Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Purchases, as well as the local and national websites for the American Planning Association. In response to the RFP, RIHousing received proposals from five (5) firms.

The Review Committee reviewed the responses in accordance with the criteria set forth in the RFP and determined that each of the five (5) respondents whose submissions met the threshold requirements was qualified to perform the services. Based on this review, RIHousing seeks approval to include the following firms on its roster of Data Research firms (please note, some firms appear under more than one category):

**Production of Plans and Reports**

HousingWorks RI  
Mullin & Lonergan Associates  
Western Economic Services, LLC

**Industry/Market Analyses/Business Planning**

Ninigret Partners  
Western Economic Services, LLC

**Housing Related Research, Analysis and Policy Recommendations**

January Advisors  
HousingWorks RI  
Mullin & Lonergan Associates  
Ninigret Partners  
Western Economic Services, LLC

The selected firms will appear on RIHousing’s roster of pre-qualified Communication Services and Data Research Services for a period of three years, which period may be extended if determined by staff to be in the best interests of the corporation. Staff will engage firms from this list on an as-needed basis or solicit bids for particular projects consistent with RIHousing’s Purchasing Policies.

Following the presentation, Vice Chairman Thorsen asked for a motion and a second for Approval of Pre-Qualification of Communication Services and Data Research Firms.

A motion was duly made by Commissioner McAllister and seconded by Commissioner Barry.

There being no discussion, Corinne Myers, General Counsel, then conducted a roll call vote of the Commissioners. The commissioners voted as follows:

Vice Chairman Thorsen	Aye
Commissioner Orth	Aye
Commissioner McAllister	Aye

Commissioner Designee Byrne           Aye  
Commissioner Tanner                    Aye  
Commissioner Barry                    Aye

Ms. Myers next announced that the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

**Resolution of the Board of Commissioners  
Of Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation**

**WHEREAS:** the enabling act of Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) provides it with all of the powers to make and execute contracts necessary for the exercise of powers and functions provided to it under the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation Act, R.I. Gen. Laws §42-55-5(6); and

**WHEREAS:** RIHousing has determined that it is in the best interests of the corporation to create a roster of approved communication services and data research firms to provide a variety of communication, business planning, marketing and advertising services; produce plans and reports; and perform housing related research and analysis;

**WHEREAS:** RIHousing issued Requests for Proposals (“RFPs”) for qualified communication services and data research firms; and

**WHEREAS:** a selection committee comprised of staff reviewed the proposals and evaluated them in accordance with the criteria outlined in the RFPs.

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY:**

**RESOLVED:** that RIHousing be, and hereby is authorized, to create a roster of qualified communications and data research firms from which RIHousing may select providers of primary communication, public information, business planning, marketing, advertising, plan- and report-production, and data research services on such matters as the Executive Director or her designee deems advisable or necessary; and

**RESOLVED:** that RIHousing be, and hereby is authorized, to establish the following roster of firms pre-qualified to provide communications and data research services to the corporation, as such services were described in the RFPs and consistent with the responses submitted in response thereto:

**Marketing/Advertising/Media Buying**

Advocacy Solutions  
Allen Roche Group  
DDL Advertising  
ESM (Electric Symphony Media)  
Glad Works

Luminous

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)  
Trailblaze Marketing  
True North Inc.

**Creative Services**

Advocacy Solutions  
Allen Roche Group  
DDL Advertising  
Glad Works  
Luminous  
SCS (Systems Change Strategies)  
Shields Design Studio  
Trailblaze Marketing  
True North Inc.

**Media Relations**

Advocacy Solutions  
SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

**Report Writing**

Advocacy Solutions  
SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

**Video/Audio Recording and Production**

Advocacy Solutions  
Allen Roche Group  
Glad Works  
Luminous  
SCS (Systems Change Strategies)  
Shields Design Studio  
Sociable  
St. Thomas Sound & Picture  
Third Spoon

**Photography**

Allen Roche Group  
Connie Grosch Photography  
DDL Advertising  
Glad Works  
Gretchen Ertl Photography  
Luminous  
SCS (Systems Change Strategies)  
Third Spoon

**Website Hosting, Maintenance and Support**

Glad Works  
Luminous  
NineDot

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)  
Shields Design Studio

**Public and Stakeholder Engagement**

Advocacy Solutions  
SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

**Focus Groups, Surveys, In-depth Interviews, & Facilitated Meetings**

SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

**Strategic Communications Advice and Counsel**

Advocacy Solutions  
SCS (Systems Change Strategies)

**Production of Plans and Reports**

HousingWorks RI  
Mullin & Loneragan Associates  
Western Economic Services, LLC

**Industry/Market Analyses/Business Planning**

Ninigret Partners  
Western Economic Services, LLC

**Housing Related Research, Analysis and Policy Recommendations**

January Advisors  
HousingWorks RI  
Mullin & Loneragan Associates  
Ninigret Partners  
Western Economic Services, LLC

**RESOLVED:** that RIHousing be, and hereby is authorized, to engage the above-listed firms on an as-needed basis and/or solicit bids or proposals from such firms for specific projects consistent with RIHousing's Purchasing Policies; and

**RESOLVED:** that the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director or the Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer, each acting singly, be and hereby is authorized and empowered to take any and all actions necessary or desirable to carry out the foregoing resolutions, including without limitation the authority to negotiate terms and fees of the engagements as he or she may determine to be in the best interests of RIHousing, and to execute any and all agreements and to take such further actions as he or she deems necessary to carry out the foregoing resolutions.

There being no further business to discuss, Vice Chairman Thorsen asked for a motion to adjourn the Board of Commissioners meeting. A motion was duly made by Commissioner Barry and seconded by Commissioner Designee Byrne to adjourn the meeting.

Corinne Myers, General Counsel then conducted a roll call vote of the Commissioners. The Commissioners voted as follows:

Vice Chairman Thorsen	Aye
Commissioner Orth	Aye
Commissioner McAllister	Aye
Commissioner Designee Byrne	Aye
Commissioner Tanner	Aye
Commissioner Barry	Aye

Ms. Myers then announced that the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

Vice Chairman Thorsen then thanked everyone for participating in the Board meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Ventura  
Secretary and Executive Director