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2017- 2020 Strategic Plan

The Portsmouth Housing Authority
PHA Housing Development LTD.

Adopted December 14, 2016

Purpose of Strategic Plan

In 2015, Portsmouth Housing's Commissioners, Directors and staff agreed on the need for a comprehensive Strategic Plan to help guide our priorities over the next 3 to 5 years. This was informed by internal and external pressures on both the organization and the residents we serve.

Some of these internal pressures included growing pains associated with technology and modernization improvements, staff succession planning, new accounting requirements, changes in the job market and the challenges of managing an increasingly diverse population. The external pressures being placed on the PHA included a changing policy environment, continued fiscal constraints, a growing demand for services, an aging population and a spiraling epidemic of opioid addiction that has become a public health emergency.

In January of 2016, the PHA, hired the Executive Service Corp. to help guide us through this year-long process. To make the plan, we appointed a staff planning committee made up of commissioners, directors, staff, residents and community members.

Above all, the most important purpose of creating a strategic plan is to give focus to our core values which is to keep the interest of our residents, no matter what their goals or needs are in the forefront of all that we do.

Portsmouth Housing Authority History and Mission

The Portsmouth Housing Authority was established by the City of Portsmouth in 1953 to address the shortage of safe, sanitary and affordable housing for low income people in the City. The PHA built its first development at Gosling Meadows in 1959 and by 1973 had developed six different public housing properties in the city with a total of 421 apartment units. The PHA also played the ongoing role of Property Manager after these properties were developed.

During this time, the PHA was also tasked as the lead agency for two major Urban Renewal projects in the city. The Vaughn Street and Marcy Street projects impacted more than 200 different commercial and residential properties in the city. While controversial, both of these projects were among the first in the nation to add a preservation component to Urban Renewal, the most celebrated of which led to the creation of the historic Strawberry Banke Museum and the preservation of the original Puddle Dock settlement in Portsmouth.

Throughout the 1970's the PHA expanded the services it offered to its mostly senior citizen residents. During this time, the PHA sponsored and managed a variety of service programs including a Respite Care program, Meals-on-Wheels, the Portsmouth Senior Center, Senior Transportation Services and a variety of recreational programs for the children and families who call PHA properties their homes.

Beginning in 1996, the PHA began redeveloping historic properties in the city using Low Income Housing Tax Credits and a variety of public and private financing. This mixed finance model was used for the redevelopment of the former Atlantic Heights School, Cottage Hospital and Lafayette School which together added an additional 60 units of affordable senior housing in the city. This model was also used to modernize the aging Ridgewood Apartments which would become Wamesit Place, home to one-hundred Portsmouth families.

The PHA also operates a Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program which provides portable subsidies for qualified families to rent privately owned affordable housing. Currently the program manages 406 vouchers being used with 164 landlords throughout the region.

The PHA is an independent, special-purpose local government entity that is governed by a six member Board of Commissioners. These Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor of Portsmouth and serve five-year terms. The PHA also has an affiliated 501(c)3 non-profit organization, PHA Housing Development LTD. which serves as the General Partner of PHA's tax credit portfolio. Together, these organizations appoint an Executive Director who is responsible for the day to day operation of the organization.

The People We Serve

Approximately 1,000 people call Portsmouth Housing Authority properties their home. Our 606 owned and managed housing units are spread among twelve different developments throughout the City and our Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program serves an additional 400 families. The PHA is the largest Housing Authority per capita in New Hampshire, housing nearly 5% of the total population of the City. Over 85% of these residents earn less than 30% of the area median income, what HUD classifies as “Extremely Low Income”.

All PHA residents are unique with different aspirations, abilities and challenges. The goals and needs of our residents vary widely with the age, disability, presence of children, absence of one or more parents, physical health, mental health, income, proximity to family and countless other factors. The complexity of challenges that accompany Extremely Low Income people is vast, and made more complex by regulatory and administrative hurdles required by the various programs designed to support them.

Many of our residents suffer from poor health due to substance abuse, lack of medical care, transportation, homecare services, legal aid, food aid, benefits assistance, job training, higher education counseling and so much more.

While many of our families only live in subsidized housing for a short time, many others remain stuck in a state of chronic scarcity and are dependent housing subsidies for most of their lives and often into the next generation or beyond. Nationwide, studies show that more than half of the people who are born into the lowest 20% of income earners will never make it to the middle 20% and will never experience the security and opportunity for upward mobility that is afforded to the American middle class.

Still there are others who do break this cycle of persistent scarcity by building assets, building credit, improving their health, taking advantage of educational opportunities and making good use of the resources around them. This growth can take place without any guidance or delivering of any services to these residents, while others prosper because they were provided with and encouraged to use the wide variety governmental, non-profit and faith based services that are designed to alleviate the conditions of poverty.

The PHA also houses several hundred senior citizens in Portsmouth. These seniors benefit from permanent affordability and security in their later years. The PHA also houses hundreds of people with physical, mental and developmental disabilities. In fact, while it is not a specific part of our mission, the PHA is the most critical part of the mental health system in the region due to the fact that services for people who suffer from mental illnesses are nearly impossible to provide to people without stable housing.

Findings

- Community leaders report the quality of working relationships with PHA staff is excellent and the assessment of the quality of service provided by PHA is described as good to excellent.
- Some individuals observe that there are human services available in the communities that do not reach varying numbers of eligible PHA residents.
- Some residents report that their “quality of life” falls short of what they hope for. This should be properly assessed through survey.
- There is pent-up need for housing in Greater Portsmouth among low-income individuals and families. The 350-400 families and individuals on PHA’s waiting list is testament to this.
- Work still needs to be done, first to better understand and then to address the needs of low-income families, senior citizens and people with disabilities.
- The PHA needs to communicate more clearly on the role the PHA can play as an advocate for housing and related services.

The organizations and individual that these contributors represent are all important partners in supporting our residents and as such, were instrumental in informing this strategic plan.

We learned about the challenges and high costs of living in chronic state of scarcity which helped us develop and strategies that will improve access to resources, reframe goals and objectives to empower residents to make positive changes in themselves and their communities, provide easy access to information and create the slack that is needed for people to pursue a brighter future.

Goal One

The Portsmouth Housing Authority will optimize Quality of Life for its residents by forming relationships that foster equality, trust and transparency while engaging residents to pursue and achieve their goals.

Objective 1

Create a culture of caring, open and empathetic staff and neighbors and for PHA staff and leadership to hear from and understand PHA residents, their ideal good and improving Quality of Life.

Objective 2

Based upon the findings that are a result of Objective 1, determine what is currently being done well and what needs to be improved on for our residents as a result of PHA staff, partner or community involvement.

Objective 3

Encourage, educate, motivate and empower residents to work together and take ownership of their community.

Objective 4

Focus PHA on organizational, financial, regulatory, and development programs that will support additional quality of life improving activities.

Objective 5

Increase resident enrollment in personal development and job training programs.

Strategic Plan – Goal 1

Create a culture of caring, open and empathetic staff and neighbors and for PHA staff and leadership to hear from and understand PHA residents, their ideal good and improving Quality of Life.

OBJECTIVE 1

Create a culture of caring, open and empathetic staff and neighbors and for PHA staff and leadership to hear from and understand PHA residents, their ideal good and improving Quality of Life.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
1.1.1 Update job descriptions to include listening and being attentive to resident needs, questions and concerns about Quality of Life Issues.	Human Resources* Deputy Director		Q1 2017
1.1.2 Study staff efficiencies to assure that staff members have the time and resources to listen to, acknowledge and follow up on resident concerns.	Human Resources* Deputy Director		Q1 2017 and Ongoing
1.1.3 Organize community listening sessions at all properties.	Resident Services Coordinator*		Q1 2017 and Monthly
1.1.4 Design and implement a resident focused communications plan to allow residents to communicate on a continual basis with PHA staff and for the plan to include a process to acknowledge resident communication.	Resident Services Coordinator*		Q1 2017
1.1.5 Organize a comprehensive resident satisfaction and needs survey and develop a process for institutionalizing such a survey annually.	Resident Services Coordinator*		Q2 2017

Strategic Plan – Goal 1

Create a culture of caring, open and empathetic staff and neighbors and for PHA staff and leadership to hear from and understand PHA residents, their ideal good and improving Quality of Life.

OBJECTIVE 2

Based upon the findings that are a result of Objective 1, determine what is currently being done well and what needs to be improved on for our residents as a result of PHA staff, partner or community involvement.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
1.2.1 Survey in person all PHA residents.	Resident Services Coordinator*		Q1 2017
1.2.2 Complete a staff inventory of current activities.	Resident Services Coordinator*		Q1 2017
1.2.3 Survey caretakers, guardians and agencies that support PHA residents.	Resident Services Coordinator*		Q3 2017
1.2.4 Adjust the intake and application process to gather relevant information.	Applications Specialist*		Q4 2017
1.2.5 As this continuous improvement process proceeds, monitor its effect and adjust as needed.	Resident Services Coordinator*		Q4 2017 and Ongoing

Strategic Plan – Goal 1

Create a culture of caring, open and empathetic staff and neighbors and for PHA staff and leadership to hear from and understand PHA residents, their ideal good and improving Quality of Life.

OBJECTIVE 3

Encourage, educate, motivate and empower residents to work together and take ownership of their community.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
1.3.1 Provide and communicate about resources that PHA can make available to residents or groups of residents who would like to make a positive contribution to the community.	Resident Services Coordinator* Executive Director		Q3 2017
1.3.2 Create a program to honor and award positive contributions to the community.	Resident Services Coordinator*		Q3 2017

Strategic Plan – Goal 1

Create a culture of caring, open and empathetic staff and neighbors and for PHA staff and leadership to hear from and understand PHA residents, their ideal good and improving Quality of Life.

OBJECTIVE 4

Improve the PHA's organizational, financial, regulatory and fundraising programs to support additional Quality of Life improving activities.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
1.4.1 Focus additional resources towards grant writing and fundraising.	Deputy Director* Finance Director		Q1 2017
1.4.2 Study and pursue opportunities to leverage PHA assets to create unrestricted earned income that will support resident services.	Executive Director*		Q2 2017
1.4.3 Complete a feasibility study of the federal Moving to Work Program.	Executive Director* Consultant		Q1 2018
1.4.4 Create Volunteer and Intern Programs and job descriptions to study and support these efforts	Deputy Director* HR Consultant		Q1 2018

Strategic Plan – Goal 1

Create a culture of caring, open and empathetic staff and neighbors and for PHA staff and leadership to hear from and understand PHA residents, their ideal good and improving Quality of Life.

OBJECTIVE 5

Increase resident enrollment in personal development and job training programs.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
1.5.1 Define and implement training opportunities for residents to improve self-advocacy, positive communication and healthy group process.	Resident Services Coordinator*		Q3 2017
1.5.2 Develop system to ensure compliance with Community Service Self Sufficiency regulations for all non-exempt residents.	Director of Public Housing* Deputy Director		Q3 2017
1.5.3 To develop a process to promote training opportunities for our residents, especially those who meet our federal Section III goals.	Resident Services* Maintenance Property Managers		Q4 2017
1.5.4 Develop a program to give resident access to PHA resources including shop space, technology and common areas for training purposes.	Facilities Director* Resident Services		Q1 2018
1.5.5 Expand the Bridges Out of Poverty Program.	Resident Services		Q1 2018

Goal - 2

To encourage strong partnerships with organizations and individuals that will serve to support our residents and strengthen the capacity of the PHA.

Objective 1

Continually identify partners who can help serve the needs of our residents.

Objective 2

Develop a comprehensive external communications plan with the goal of reaching partner organizations and the wider Portsmouth community.

Objective 3

Evaluate partnerships for the purpose of securing funding for initiatives aimed at PHA residents.

Objective 4

Connect partner networks for collective impact.

Strategic Plan – Goal 2

To encourage strong partnerships with organizations and individuals that will serve to support our residents and strengthen the capacity of the PHA.

OBJECTIVE 1

Continually identify partners who can help serve the needs of our residents.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
2.1.1 Review key partners list from Strategic Plan.	Executive Director*		Q3 2016
2.1.2 Add to new stakeholders list.	Executive Director*		Q4 2017
2.1.3 Participate in community networks.	Resident Services Coordinator* Applications Specialist, Executive Director		Q4 2016 and Ongoing
2.1.4 Develop an Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Plan and implement a plan that will include outreach to partner organizations that can assist in our goal of serving underrepresented populations.	Executive Director* City of Portsmouth, Consortia		Q2 2017

Strategic Plan – Goal 2

Create a culture of caring, open and empathetic staff and neighbors and for PHA staff and leadership to hear from and understand PHA residents, their ideal good and improving Quality of Life.

OBJECTIVE 2

Develop a comprehensive external communications plan with the goal of reaching partner organizations and the wider Portsmouth community.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
2.2.1 Identify target audience groups PHA should engage.	Executive Director*		Q1 2017
2.2.2 Identify 3-5 concrete, specific and measureable communications objectives.	Executive Director*		Q2 2017
2.2.3 Develop specific action steps, budget and roles.	Executive Director*		Q2 2017
2.2.4 Develop communication policies, process and evaluation/measures.	Consultant*		Q3 2017
2.2.5 roll out communications plan.	Executive Director* Deputy Director Consultant Commissioners		Q3 2017
2.2.6 Evaluate and update communications plan.	TBD		Q1 2018

Strategic Plan – Goal 2

Create a culture of caring, open and empathetic staff and neighbors and for PHA staff and leadership to hear from and understand PHA residents, their ideal good and improving Quality of Life.

OBJECTIVE 3

Evaluate partnerships for the purpose of securing funding for initiatives aimed at PHA residents.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
2.3.1 Reach out to charitable Foundation, United Way, Robins Egg, Consultant Bank.	Executive Director*		Q1 2017
2.3.2 Hire fundraising consultant.	Executive Director*		Q2 2017
2.3.3 Dedicate staff to fundraising and development training.	Executive Director*		Q4 2017

Strategic Plan – Goal 2

Create a culture of caring, open and empathetic staff and neighbors and for PHA staff and leadership to hear from and understand PHA residents, their ideal good and improving Quality of Life.

OBJECTIVE 4

Connect partner networks for collective impact.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
2.4.1 Establish the PHA as respected steward leaders and best-in-class designation in key association groups and affiliations.	Executive Director* Board of Commissioners		Q1 2017
2.4.2 Dedicate staff to attending association and network meetings	Human Resources Consultant* Deputy Director		Q4 2016
2.4.3 Study the viability of providing office space to key partners	Deputy Director*		Q4 2016
2.4.4 Organize staff and partner training on networks and collective impact.	Executive Director*		Q2 2018

Goal 3

To achieve operational excellence through improved efficiencies, staff development and best practices in housing authority management.

Objective 1

Evaluate business processes, practices and costs to create continual and measurable improvements.

Objective 2

Implement a Continuous Improvement Plan.

Objective 3

Invest in staff training.

Strategic Plan – Goal 3

To achieve operational excellence through improved efficiencies, staff development and best practices in housing authority management.

OBJECTIVE 1

Evaluate business processes, practices and costs to create continual and measurable improvements.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
3.1.1 Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for all positions in the organization.	Deputy Director* Dept. Heads		Q1 2017
3.1.2 Create a Business Process Map for our top five priority areas.	Deputy Director* Dept. Heads		Q1 2017
3.1.3 Provide a draft to applicable staff to review and suggest changes. Consult with HA's and other external sources for input.	Deputy Director* Dept. Heads		Q1 2017
3.1.4 Finalize top five SOPs and publish in shared drive that all employees may access.	Deputy Director* Dept. Heads		Q2 2017
3.1.5 Repeat for next five business processes for each subsequent quarter until complete.	Deputy Director*		Q4 2017
3.1.6 Identify five opportunities to perform a Failure Mode Effect Analysis (FMEA) in order to make continuous improvement to SOPs.	Deputy Director* Finance Director		Q4 2017

Strategic Plan – Goal 3

To achieve operational excellence through improved efficiencies, staff development and best practices in housing authority management.

OBJECTIVE 2

Implement a Continuous Improvement Plan.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
3.2.1 Develop and maintain a system for reviewing and updating Standard Operating Procedures and assign review date.	Deputy Director*		Q1 2017
3.2.2 Determine a review date for the first five SOPs.	Deputy Director* Department Heads		Q2 2017
3.2.3 Review process mapping annually on SOP to ensure process remains efficient. .	Deputy Director* Department Heads		Q4 2017
3.2.4 Communicate with staff about any changes to SOP and update it in the shared drive .	Deputy Director* Department Heads		Q4 2017

Strategic Plan – Goal 3

To achieve operational excellence through improved efficiencies, staff development and best practices in housing authority management.

OBJECTIVE 3

Invest in staff training.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
3.3.1 Assess training need, certifications and licenses and implement annual staff training schedules.	Deputy Director*		Q1 2017
3.3.2 Review and update job descriptions.	Deputy Director* Human Resources		Q1 2017
3.3.3 Each Department Head will meet with employees and discuss training both required and requested training needs.	At next annual review		Q1 2017
3.3.4 Develop and maintain a schedule and budget for staff training.	Departments Heads* Finance Director		Q1 2017

Goal Four

To grow and preserve the supply of affordable housing in Portsmouth.

Objective 1

Add to or preserve affordable housing units by building, redeveloping and acquiring properties to preserve permanent affordability.

Strategic Plan – Goal 4

To grow and preserve the supply of affordable housing in Portsmouth.

OBJECTIVE 1

Add to or preserve affordable housing units by building, redeveloping and acquiring properties to preserve permanent affordability.

Strategy	Lead* Team	Budget Authority	Timeframe
4.1.1 Position PHA to submit a winning application for tax credit financing annually.	Executive Director*		Q4 2017
4.1.2 Evaluate landscape for preserving, building, acquiring or redeveloping housing in Portsmouth and provide an update every six months.	Executive Director* LTD Board		Q1 2017
4.1.3 Participate in State and Federal industry lobbying groups with the goal of increased funding or legislative reforms of interest.	Executive Director* Board		Q1 2017
4.1.4 Position the PHA to be opportunistic when real estate opportunities arise by meeting with financial institutions and tax credit experts to discuss borrowing capacity and governance structures that would allow or prohibit first-mover or other advantage.	Executive Director*		Q2 2017

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Process Mapping – asq.org/quality-process/2003/01/problem-solving/a-simple-process-map.html

Failure Mode Effect Analysis – asq.org/learn-about-quality/process-analysis-tool/overview/fmea.html

Acknowledgements

Portsmouth Housing is grateful for the experienced and engaged PHA Board of Commissioners, PHA Housing Development LTD. Board of Directors, Portsmouth Housing staff and the volunteers of the Strategic Planning Team that worked over the past year on this project.

The Portsmouth Housing Authority Board of Commissioners:

Mrs. Ruth Griffin, Chair
Mr. John Leith, Commissioner
Mrs. Amy Schwartz, Commissioner
Mr. Gibson “Mike” Kennedy, Commissioner
Mr. Tom Ferrini

PHA Housing Development, Ltd. Board of Directors

The Portsmouth Housing Authority also has an affiliate non-profit organization, PHA Housing Development, Limited which develops new affordable housing in Portsmouth and the surrounding region. Both boards are affiliated but operate independently. The Ltd. Board is comprised of five members; two from the Portsmouth Housing Authority and three members appointed at large.

Mr. M. Kevin MacLeod, President
Mr. John Leith, Director
Mr. Timothy “Ted” J. Connors, Director
Mr. Jack Blalock, Director

2016 Strategic Planning Committee

Commissioner Mike Kennedy
Commissioner Amy Schwartz
Director Ted Connors
Ms. Kristin Jeffrey, Community Member
Ms. Jennifer Pyke, Resident
Ms. Valerie Labrie, Finance Director
Ms. Norma Bosen, Deputy Director