

**RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA, May 31, 2023**

The Special Meeting of the Richmond Rent Board was called to order at 5:08 P.M.

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

**ROLL CALL**

**Board Members Present:** Espinoza, Hite, Vice Chair Guadalupe and Chair Cantor.

**Staff Present:** Executive Director Nicolas Traylor, Deputy Director Fred Tran, General Counsel Charles Oshinuga, Staff Attorney Palomar Sanchez.

**Absent:** Board Member Dockens.

**STATEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None.

**AGENDA REVIEW**

None.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Lorraine Pitre, a housing provider for 25 years, expressed concerns about the legal services provided to tenants and the same level of service not provided to housing providers. She mentioned that, for this Fiscal Year, the legal services amount for housing providers would go up to \$70,000. Executive Director Nicolas Traylor stated at a meeting that legal services would be provided for a housing provider with five units or less. She mentioned that she disagrees with allowing housing providers with five or fewer units because mom-and-pop can be made up of different factors. She feels that five units or less and the mom-and-pop definition needs to be better defined. Then she said she would like to know more about what the \$70,000 is allocated to the housing providers for, what that means, and how those legal services will be in comparison to what the tenants receive. She also added that housing providers have faced unfairness over the years. Ms. Pitre also expressed concerns that no housing providers are on the Rent Board. She

feels that it is an unfair representation of the community. She also expressed that tenants and housing providers should be working together. Unfortunately, if you are a tenant who has never owned or managed a property, like a housing provider, then it would be difficult to understand how to operate. She added that is why it is important to have input from all constituents.

Iлона Clark, a resident of Richmond for 20 years, expressed concerns about former Rent Board Vice Chair Mishek stating on social media that no housing providers could be found to serve on the Rent Board, that's why this Board is has renters for the first time. Ms. Clark added that she is unsure what would happen if Ms. Mishek knew about the submitted applications. Still, former Board Member Vasilas and Conner would have re-upped if given the opportunity. She mentioned that she is unsure how Ms. Mishek could be unaware since she was on the Board with these housing provider members. She also stated she thinks Ms. Mishek now presents the optics of an unbalanced Board, which is not good, but the language of Measure L covers the issue; you can have an all-renter Board. She also said that she doesn't understand why Ms. Mishek feels she has to lie; it makes her feel like it's not right. The previous Board Members are still available, their paperwork is submitted, and they seem to have been ignored. Ms. Clark also added that she had been around since the beginning of Rent Control, and no one had reached out to her to apply. She said she doesn't understand the dishonesty and thinks it needs to be considered.

### **RENT BOARD AS A WHOLE**

**F-1.** The matter to receive the Agenda Report and discuss the objective of the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Rent Program Operating Budget options and corresponding Rental Housing Fee and approved Option B, presented by Executive Director Nicolas Traylor. The presentation included the Statement of the Issue, the fiscal impact of proposed budget options, the background and discussion, direction provided at the May 17, 2023 Rent Board meeting, an overview of the interpretation services at the Rent Board meetings, and translation of Rent Board documents with the cost options for interpretation services, the cost options for translation of Rent Program and Rent Board documents, additional staff costs to support for increased interpretation and translation services, the impact on agency of translating all Rent Board agenda packets, Option A versus Option B costs, an alternative option for

translation, Staff recommendation which included adopting Budget Option B, conducting hybrid Rent Board meetings, the development of creative outreach strategies, and a recommended action.

A motion was made by Chair Cantor to recess for 5 minutes before continuing Item F-1, seconded by Board Member Hite. The motion to recess for 5 minutes passed with Board Member Dockens absent. The meeting was adjourned for recess at 5:39 PM. The meeting was called back to order at 5:45 PM.

Discussion ensued. The following individuals commented: Ilona Clark and Chris Schildt of Urban Habitat. A motion made by Vice Chair Guadalupe, seconded by Board Member Hite, to approve option B for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Rent Program Operating Budget and corresponding Rental Housing Fee with an amendment, adding an interpreter for a total of two interpreters, passed by the following vote: **Ayes:** Board Members Hite, Vice Chair Guadalupe, and Chair Cantor. **Noes:** Board Member Espinoza. **Abstentions:** None. **Absent:** Board Member Dockens.

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS/SCHEDULING**

Executive Director Nicolas Traylor had nothing to report. Still, he mentioned that staff will contact Board Members about availability for a special budget meeting in June to meet the deadline to go to the City Council on June 27th.

Chair Cantor informed the Board that the meeting would be to vote on the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget and, if they had any questions, to speak with staff before the next meeting.

General Counsel Charles Oshinuga mentioned that we would have to publish the Budget with option B with the additional interpreters; that the Budget is published in the public newspaper, which would be the Budget the Board would consider.

He mentioned that he does agree with the Chair's recommendation to reach out to Staff if they had any questions, especially about outreach, mom & pop property owners, whatever questions, they should reach out to staff. He also mentioned that when the Budget is presented at the next meeting, if a Board Member decides that option B isn't the best option, what would happen next if the Board Member decided not to vote on it and adopt the Budget. Another meeting would be scheduled, and staff will have to repost the

announcement in the newspaper, include whatever the Board tells Staff, and go through the budget process again. General Counsel Oshinuga also mentioned that it would be troubling if the Budget isn't adopted by the end of the fiscal year. We would not be able to spend money because anything we spend in the current fiscal year will not carry over to the next fiscal year.

Chair Cantor asked General Counsel Oshinuga if the Board decided to amend the outreach plan presented at the next meeting since they haven't seen it or reallocate funds or make changes to the Budget, is the Board still required to vote on it, or would another Board meeting be necessary? General Counsel Oshinuga recommended that another meeting could be scheduled if time permits, before the regular meeting on June 21st; that way, they can discuss the outreach plan or changes to the Budget and direct Staff with any changes. Chair Cantor asked Board Members if they would like to meet in the upcoming week to discuss the outreach plan to make any adjustments.

Board Member Hite mentioned that he feels the Board is good with what they have agreed upon on already. He also mentioned that they should spend the first year trying to learn and figure it out.

Vice Chair Guadalupe mentioned that a special meeting in the upcoming week would be helpful.

Board Member Espinoza agreed that a special meeting would be a good idea.

General Counsel Oshinuga recommended that staff email each Board Member to find out everyone's availability for the upcoming week for a special meeting.

General Counsel Oshinuga responded to Board Member Hite's comment since the Board was thrown into the Budget process, and there's not much time, and they were asked to do so many things with so much information; ordinarily, they would have the whole fiscal year to prepare and would have already had several meetings to discuss outreach or any other interests, so when the Budget comes before them, they would have a greater sense of what has been done historically or intend to do going forward. He also mentioned that ordinarily, if an individual Board Member emails staff to let them know what they want, staff would let them know it's for discussion at a Board meeting, but for the nature of time for this year's Budget, staff will make an exception and accept emailed requests from Board Members for any changes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned  
at 7:42 P.M.

Cynthia Shaw

Staff Clerk

(SEAL)

Approved:

SARA CANTOR

Rent Board Chair