

**CORTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY
42 CHURCH STREET
CORTLAND, NEW YORK 13045**

DIANNE HIGGINS, Chair

ELLA M. DIORIO, Executive Director

CORTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, April 8, 2026 - 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Merle McKown, Debra Cuthbert, C. Jane Snell, Paul Quinlan, Kelly Tobin, Robert Witty

EXCUSED: Dianne Higgins, Chair

GUEST: Nicholas Daluisio

STAFF: Ella DiIorio, Joyce Allen

I. CALL TO ORDER –VICE CHAIR MCKOWN 9:30AM

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Jane Snell made a motion to approve, seconded by Kelly Tobin. Jane Snell noted HUD staff Leah Gallagher, Director of the HUD Buffalo office and Charles Dunson, Portfolio Management Specialist, should be included in the minutes. Approval of March 11, 2026, minutes approved unanimously with edits.

IV. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Vice Chair McKown communicated that Chair Higgins shared that she had added James Dempsey's Board seat to be added to the Common Council's agenda.

V. FINANCIAL REPORT – Executive Director DiIorio

- A. February financials were presented at the meeting. February is the 11th month in the Fiscal Year End 2026. Jane Snell noted the significant decrease in pest control from previous years and inquired as to why there was such a decrease. Executive Director DiIorio shared that it is because Bugs Be Gone inspects every unit and building once per year, there is a decrease in cost of treatments from the previous contractor, and better communication.

B. Occupancy

1. Public Housing is 93.16% leased. The goal of HUD is to be at least 95.5% leased. There were six move ins, and eight move outs. There are currently twenty-one vacant units. Two of the twenty-one units are offline for repairs and three are completed and awaiting leasing. Kelly

Tobin asked if the Housing Authority operates with a waitlist. Executive Director DiIorio stated there is a waiting list for all site locations.

2. The Housing Choice Voucher Program is 93% leased with a total of 286 vouchers. There are ten vouchers searching and one voucher open. Executive Director DiIorio shared that the Housing Choice Voucher Program has almost all vouchers filled and still has not overspent with the funding allocated.

VI. AGENCY PLAN– Executive Director DiIorio

- A. Executive Director DiIorio shared there is nothing to report at this time as the plan was approved by HUD.

VII. CAPITAL FUND – Executive Director DiIorio

- A. There was an increase in the amount awarded for 2026 of \$96,000.00 which will allow for some additional projects to be completed. The award amount is \$1,218,280.00. The projects that are in the plan for 2026 include replacement windows for scattered sites and family units with a budget of \$255,000.00. Executive Director DiIorio shared they are the original windows that were installed in 1973. The replacement of appliances and flooring for the family units and scattered sites with a budget of \$30,000.00. The fire alarm system upgrade in Truxton with a budget of \$75,000.00. Executive Director DiIorio shared this is an urgent project and she is in the process of writing an emergency safety and security grant for up to \$3,000,000.00. Jane Snell inquired if the grant was awarded to the Housing Authority what would the allotted monies be used for. Executive Director DiIorio shared that if the grant is awarded to the Housing Authority, the budget amount could be used for additional projects. Foundation, fire escape, lighting and stairwells improvements for family units and scattered sites with a budget of \$180,816.00. The Cincinnati playground improvements with a budget of \$76,980.00. Executive Director DiIorio shared this is the original playground since 1983 with one swing. Jane Snell asked if this amount would be a placeholder or would it all be spent on the playground. Executive Director DiIorio shared that it would be a placeholder. Kelly Tobin mentioned that a new playground might take the full budget amount. Lighting and fencing, landscaping and façade improvements for family units and scattered sites with a budget of \$40,000.00. The trash compactor for both 42 Church Street and 51 Port Watson Street with a budget of \$100,000.00. Executive Director DiIorio shared this has been band aided for quite some time. The replacement of appliances at 42 Church Street and 51 Port Watson Street along with asbestos removal and flooring with a budget of \$50,000.00. The budget for architect and engineering with a budget of \$30,000.00. The budget for management improvements with a budget of \$15,000.00. The budget for administration costs is \$121,828.00. The budget for operations expenses is \$243,656.00.

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Executive Director DiIorio

- A. Executive Director DiIorio shared that the budget proposal by the President decreases the Public Housing budget but increases the Housing Choice Voucher Program budget. Kelly Tobin asked to explain the effect of the Housing Authority with the proposed budget. Executive Director DiIorio shared that the decrease to the budget for the Public Housing Authority program will not have a major effect. However, an increase to the budget for the Housing Choice Voucher Program will have a major effect. In the future, this might force the Public Housing to look into the RAD program. This occurs when a private contractor comes in and remodels the building and can decide for how long it will keep subsidized rents.

- B. Executive Director DiIorio is in the process of writing an Emergency Safety and Security grant for the Truxton fire system panel, Housing Related Hazards & Lead Based Paint grant, and Capital Improvements for At-Risk, Troubled or Sub-Standard PHAs to benefit the Housing Authority. The capital improvements for at-risk, troubled or sub-standard PHAs to benefit the Housing Authority is up to \$3,000,000 to assist with unit turnover and other projects that are needed to assist in improving our NSPIRE score and Occupancy. The Housing Authority would have the funds to hire cleaners and contractors to make the unit turnover quicker to get the apartments leased. The housing related hazards & lead based paint grant is to assist in projects like mold issues, lead based paint, fires safety and radon. Executive Director DiIorio shared that mold is a huge issue. She also shared that all apartments were tested for lead in 2016 and there were no issues. The CHA is able to apply for a shortfall grant in the amount of \$330,000.
- C. Executive Director DiIorio shared there was a fire in the Homer location because a tenant left a pan on the burner and vacated the apartment. There was no damage to the apartment or the building, but there was a lot of smoke throughout the building.
- D. Executive Director DiIorio and HUD staff Leah Gallagher, Director of the HUD Buffalo office and Charles Dunson, Portfolio Management Specialist, had a conference call and stated that CHA needed to add twelve more move ins. This has been a challenge because there are six maintenance mechanics with currently 184 work orders and 21 vacancies along with the unit turnaround taking a lot longer to complete due to damage to the apartments and removal of personal belongings left behind from tenants. Jane Snell asked what is the mechanism for individuals who leave the Housing Authority on bad terms. Executive Director DiIorio shared that when a tenant leaves and they are considered a bad tenant due to lease violations or monies owed they would go on a system called Debts Owed that is used by all Housing Authorities. This prevents the individual from going on the program in any other jurisdiction until the money is paid to the original Housing Authority.
- E. NSPIRE inspection for AMP 2 is scheduled for May 4 and 5, 2026. Cortland Housing Authority received a score of 32 last year, which did not meet the standards and failed. Executive Director DiIorio shared that there were a lot of point reductions for smoke detectors removed by tenants. Executive Director DiIorio shared that there is now an increase in the tampering fees from \$75.00 to \$100.00. Kelly Tobin asked about case management services to assist the tenants. Executive Director DiIorio shared that Cortland Housing Authority is the landlord and there are no other services or case management that is offered other than income-based rental amounts through subsidized rents.

IX. PERSONNEL – Executive Director DiIorio

A. Resolution No. 26-09

Authorization to Appoint David Brown as Permanent Building Maintenance Mechanic

Jane Snell made a motion to approve, seconded by Robert Witty.

Resolution No. 26-09 approved unanimously.

B. Resolution No.26-10

Authorization to Approve the Cortland Housing Authority Personal Cell Phone Use Policy

Kelly Tobin made a motion to approve, seconded by Paul Quinlan.

Kelly Tobin suggested adding verbiage about disciplinary actions and including the handbook. Executive Director DiIorio shared that she did send an email to all employees no personal cell phone usage is allowed outside of breaks and meal breaks or it would be considered an unauthorized break. Executive Director DiIorio also shared that this policy does align with policies such as cybersecurity and personal identifiable information.

Resolution No. 26-10 approved unanimously as amended to include references to the CSEA policy contract.

X. OLD BUSINESS – VICE CHAIR MCKOWN

A. Resolution No. 26-08 approved electronically by consensus.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair McKown adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ella M DiIorio', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Ella M DiIorio
Executive Director