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OAKLAND

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. 90026 C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER [IF APPLICABLE]

RESOLUTION ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO THE RENT ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM REGULATIONS TO: (1) REMOVE THE REQUIREMENT THAT A TENANT BE CURRENT ON RENT IN ORDER TO FILE OR RESPOND TO A PETITION WITH THE RENT ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM; (2) EXTEND THE AMORTIZATION PERIOD FOR MANDATORY SEISMIC RETROFITS TO 25 YEARS; (3) REDUCE APPEAL ARGUMENT TIME TO SIX MINUTES PER PARTY; (4) REMOVE THE APPEARANCE REQUIREMENT FOR APPELLANT AT APPEAL HEARINGS; (5) ALLOW RENT BOARD ALTERNATES TO PARTICIPATE IN BOARD MEETINGS IN NON-VOTING CAPACITY; (6) ADD GOOD CAUSE HEARINGS FOR FAILURE TO APPEAR AT HEARINGS; (7) CHANGE MEETING TIME TO 6:00 PM; (7) CODIFY EXISTING PROCEDURAL PRACTICES IN REGULATIONS; AND (8) MAKE OTHER CLARIFYING CHANGES

WHEREAS, the City seeks to ensure that all covered Oakland tenants and property owners have access to the protections and relief provided by the Rent Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, currently, tenants must show they are current on rent or lawfully withholding rent in order to file a petition or respond to a petition; and

WHEREAS, no other rent control jurisdiction requires tenants be current on rent to file a petition; and

WHEREAS, as lawful rent amount is determined through the adjudication process, so tenants' payment of rent should not be used as a requirement to access adjudication on matters that are regulated by the Rent Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, on September 22, 2022, the Oakland Rent Board recommended that the Council remove the current on rent requirement for tenants to access the Rent Adjustment Program's petition process; and

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2019, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 13516, to require mandatory seismic evaluation and retrofit of certain multifamily residential buildings; and

WHEREAS, in Ordinance No. 13516, the City Council directed the Rent Board to revise the capital improvements amortization schedule in the Rent Program Regulations to provide an amortization period for Mandatory Seismic Capital Improvements that conforms with the Rent Board's final motion passed during Item 5 of their July 9, 2015 meeting; and

WHEREAS, Rent Adjustment Program Regulation section 8.22.120.D.2. provides that unless the Board or Appeal Panel votes otherwise, each party will have fifteen (15) minutes to present argument on or in opposition to the appeal; and

WHEREAS, on October 20, 2020, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 13618 (Efficiency Ordinance), to among other things, streamline Rent Board meetings by allowing the Housing, Residential Rent and Relocation Board (Rent Board) to limit argument time for each party to six minutes; and

WHEREAS, Rent Adjustment Program Regulation Section 8.22.120.I. provides that if an appellant fails to appear at an appeal hearing, the Board will consider the appeal dropped and will issue a decision dismissing the appeal, subject to the appellant showing good cause for the failure to appear; and

WHEREAS, to make the appeal process more efficient and to minimize time commitment for parties to appeals, the Rent Board wishes to reduce argument time to six minutes per side AND make appearances at appeals voluntary; and

WHEREAS, Rent Adjustment Program Regulation section 8.22.040 does not currently address Alternate Board Members and their participation in scheduled Board meetings unless they are filling in for regular members; and

WHEREAS, allow non-voting alternates to participate in board meetings would allow alternates to learn about the Rent Board in a non-voting capacity; and

WHEREAS, Rent Adjustment Program Regulation section 8.22.110 does not currently outline any good-cause relief for a party that fails to appear at a properly noticed hearing except through the appeal process; and

WHEREAS, either party can potentially wait an extended period of time for a scheduled appeal hearing just to address their good cause evidence, depending on the number of pending petitions; and

WHEREAS, significant wait times for either party to be able to present their good-cause evidence can, in some occasions, significantly impact the relief that can be granted by the Appeal Body or by the Hearing Officer; and

WHEREAS, on August 24, 2023, the Housing, Residential Rent and Relocation Board

("HRRRB") approved proposed amendments to the Rent Adjustment Program Regulations, including changes to (1) extend amortization period for mandatory seismic retrofits to 25 years; (2) reduce argument time to six (6) minutes per party; (3) remove appearance requirement for appellant at appeal hearings; (4) allow non-voting alternates to participate in board meetings in non-voting capacity; (5) add good cause hearings for failure to appear at hearings; (6) change meeting time to 6 pm; (7) codify existing procedural practices in regulations; and (8) make other clarifying and reorganization changes; and

WHEREAS, OMC Section 8.22.040.D.2 provides that the development or amendment of Rent Adjustment Program Regulations by the HRRRB are subject to the approval of the City Council; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That Sections 8.22.020-040, 8.22.060, 8.22.070, 8.22.090-120, and Appendix A of the Rent Adjustment Program Regulations are hereby amended as set out below:

Amendments to the Rent Adjustment Regulations Sections 8.22.020-040, 8.22.060, 8.22.070, 8.22.090-120, and Appendix A. (additions are shown as double underline and deletions are shown as ~~strikethrough~~):

8.22.020 DEFINITIONS.

“Additional Occupancy Level” means a number equal to the total number of occupants minus the base occupancy level, as defined by O.M.C 8.22.020 and Regulation 8.22.020.

“Base occupancy level” means the number of tenants occupying the covered unit as principal residence as of June 16, 2020, with the owner’s knowledge, or allowed by the lease or rental agreement effective as of June 16, 2020, whichever is greater, except that, for units that had an initial rent established on or after June 17, 2020, “base occupancy level” means the number of tenants allowed by the lease or rental agreement entered into at the beginning of the current tenancy. When there is a new lease or rental agreement solely as a result of adding one or more additional occupants to the lease or rental agreement, the “beginning of the current tenancy” refers to the tenancy existing prior to the new lease or rental agreement regarding the additional occupant(s).

“Imputed interest” means ~~the average of the 10 year United States treasury bill rate and the 10 year LIBOR swap rate~~ for the quarter prior to the date the permits for the improvements were obtained plus an additional one and one-half percent, to be taken as simple interest. The Rent Program will post the quarterly interest rates allowable.

“Initial Base Rent” means the monthly rental rate during the initial term of tenancy. If the rental agreement provides for a period of “free” or discounted rent within its initial term, the initial base rent shall account for the “free” or discounted period. Notwithstanding any agreement to the contrary, the “rental rate” is the total lawful consideration (excluding the security deposit) charged by the owner in the initial term of the lease divided by the number of months in the lease term.

“Landlord”: For the purpose of these rules, the term “landlord” will be synonymous with owner or lessor of real property that is leased or rented to another and the representative, agent, or successor of such owner or lessor.

“Manager”: A manager is a paid (either salary or a reduced rental rate) representative of the landlord.

“Petitioner”: A petitioner is the party (landlord or tenant) who first files an action under the ordinance.

“Primary tenant” means a tenant who resides in a covered unit, is not an owner of record of the property, and charges rent to or receives rent from one or more subtenants in the covered unit.

“Principal Residence” means the one dwelling place where an individual primarily resides. Such occupancy does not require that the individual be physically present in the dwelling place at all times or continuously, but the dwelling place must be the individual’s usual or intended place of return. A Principal Residence is distinguishable from one kept primarily for secondary residential occupancy, such as a pied-a-terre or vacation home, or non-residential use, such as storage or commercial use. A determination of Principal Residence shall be based on the totality of circumstances, which may include, but are not limited to, the following factors: (1) whether the individual carries on basic living activities at the subject premises; (2) whether the individual maintains another dwelling and, if so, the amount of time that the individual spends at each dwelling place and indications, if any, that residence in one dwelling is temporary; (3) the subject premises are listed as the individual’s place of residence on any motor vehicle registration, driver’s license, voter registration, or with any other public agency, including Federal, State and local taxing authorities; (4) utilities are billed to and paid by the individual at the subject premises; (5) all or most of the individual’s personal possessions have been moved into the subject premises; (6) a

homeowner's tax exemption for the individual has not been filed for a different property; (7) the subject premises are the place the individual normally returns to as his/her home, exclusive of military service, hospitalization, vacation, family emergency, travel necessitated by employment or education, incarceration, or other reasonable temporary periods of absence.

"Respondent": A respondent is the party (landlord or tenant) who responds to the petitioner.

"Staff" means the staff appointed by City Administrator to administer the Rent Adjustment Program.

"Subtenant," for purposes of Regulation 8.22.025, means a tenant who resides with and pays rent to one or more primary tenants, rather than directly to the owner to whom the primary tenant(s) pay rent, for the housing services provided to the subtenant.

8.22.030 EXEMPTIONS.

A. Dwelling Units That Are Not Covered Units

1. In order to be a Covered Unit, the Owner must be receiving Rent in return for the occupancy of the dwelling unit.
 - a. Rent need not be cash, but can be in the form of “in-kind” services or materials that would ordinarily be the Owner’s responsibility.
 - i. For example, a person who lives in a dwelling unit and paints the premises, repairs damage, or upgrades the unit is considered to be paying Rent unless the person caused the damage.
 - b. Payment of some of expenses of the dwelling unit even though not all costs are paid is Rent.
 - i. Payment of all or a portion of the property taxes or insurance.
 - ii. Payment of utility costs that are not directly associated with the use of the unit occupied.
2. If California law determines that an “employee of the Owner”, including a manager who resides in the Owner’s property, is not a Tenant, then the dwelling unit occupied by such person is not subject to OMC Chapter 8.22 so long as the person is an employee and continues to reside in the unit.

B. Types of Dwelling Units Exempt

1. Subsidized units. Dwelling units whose rents are subsidized by a governmental unit, including the federal Section 8 voucher program.
2. Newly constructed dwelling units (receiving a certificate of occupancy after January 1, 1983).
 - a. Newly constructed units include legal conversions of uninhabited spaces not used by Tenants, such as:
 - i. Garages;
 - ii. Attics;
 - iii. Basements;
 - iv. Spaces that were formerly entirely commercial.
 - b. Any dwelling unit that is exempt as newly constructed under applicable interpretations of the new construction exemption pursuant to Costa-Hawkins (California Civil Code Section 1954.52).
 - c. Dwelling units not eligible for the new construction exemption include:
 - i. Live/work space where the work portion of the space was converted into a separate dwelling unit;
 - ii. Common area converted to a separate dwelling unit.
3. ~~Substantially rehabilitated buildings.~~
 - a. ~~In order to qualify for the substantial rehabilitation exemption, the rehabilitation work must be completed within a two (2) year period after the issuance of the building permit for the work unless the Owner demonstrates good cause for the work exceeding two (2) years.~~
 - b. ~~For the substantial rehabilitation exemption, the entire building must qualify for the exemption and not just individual units~~Reserved.
4. Dwelling Units Exempt Under Costa-Hawkins. Costa-Hawkins addresses dwelling units that are exempt under state law. The Costa Hawkins exemptions are contained at California Civil Code Section 1954.52. ~~The text of Costa-Hawkins is attached as an appendix to OMC Chapter 8.22.~~

C. Certificates of Exemption

1. Whenever an Owner seeks a Certificate of Exemption the following procedures apply:
 - a. The petition cannot be decided on a summary basis and may only be decided after a hearing on the merits;

b. Staff may intervene in the matter for the purpose of better ensuring that all facts relating to the exemption are presented to the Hearing Officer;

c. In addition to a party's right to appeal, Staff or the Hearing Officer may appeal the decision to the Rent Board; and,

d. A Certificate of Exemption shall be issued in the format specified by Government Code Section 27361.6 for purposes of recording with the County Recorder.

2. In the event that a previously issued Certificate of Exemption is found to have been issued based on fraud, or mistake, or is no longer valid due to an intervening material change in law or circumstances, and thereby rescinded, the Staff shall record a rescission of the Certificate of Exemption against the affected real property with the County Recorder.

8.22.040 THE BOARD.

A. Meetings

1. Notice. Meetings shall be noticed and the agenda posted in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (California Government Code Sections 54950, et. seq. ("Brown Act") and Sunshine Ordinance (OMC Chapter 2.20).)
2. Regular Meetings. The Board or an Appeal Panel shall meet regularly on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, unless cancelled. Rent Program staff is authorized to schedule these regular meetings either for the full Board or for an Appeal Panel.
3. Special Meetings. Meetings called by the Mayor or City Administrator, or meetings scheduled by the Board for a time and place other than regular meetings are to be designated Special Meetings. The agenda of Special Meetings shall be restricted to those matters for which the meeting was originally called and no additional matters may be added to the agenda.
4. Adjourned or Rescheduled Meetings. A meeting may be adjourned to a time and place to complete the agenda if voted by the Board members present. A rescheduled meeting may be held when a quorum cannot be convened for a regular meeting or when a quorum votes to substitute another time and/or place for a scheduled meeting. Notice of change of meeting time and/or place shall be sent to the City Clerk and absent Board members and provided in accordance with the Brown Act and Sunshine Ordinance.
5. Time of Meetings. Board meetings shall start at 7~~6~~ p.m. and end by 10:00 p.m. unless some other time is set in advance or the meeting is extended by a vote of the Board.
6. Location of Meetings. The Board meetings shall be held at City Hall, One Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA 94612, unless otherwise designated.
7. Agenda. The agenda for each meeting shall be posted at such time and places as required by the Brown Act and Sunshine Ordinance.
8. Board meetings shall be conducted in accordance with "Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)," unless modified by these Regulations, requirements of the Brown Act or Sunshine Ordinance, or the Board.
9. Open to Public. The meetings shall be open to the public in accordance with the Brown Act and the Sunshine Ordinance, except for circumstances where the Brown Act or Sunshine Ordinance permits the Board to address a matter in closed session, such as litigation or personnel matters.
10. Board Vacations. The Board may schedule dates during the year when no regular Board meetings may be held so that the entire Board may take vacations. The Board must schedule vacation times at least two (2) months prior to the date of the vacation time.
11. Alternate Board Members. Alternate board members may participate in discussion and deliberations, but will only be allowed to vote when filling in for a regular member who is not

present or who has been excused from consideration of or voting on a matter by the Board.

B. Quorum and Voting

1. Four Board members constitutes a quorum of the Board.
2. Decisions of the Board. For the Board to make a decision on the first time a matter comes before the Board, the quorum must include at least one of each of the three categories of Board members (Tenant, residential rental property Owner, and one who is neither of the foregoing). If a matter cannot be decided because at least one of each of the three categories of Board members is not present, the matter will be considered a second time at a future meeting where the matter can be decided even if at least one member from each category is not present. A majority of the Board members present are required to make decisions, provided a quorum is present and sufficient members of each category are present.
3. A Board member who does not participate in a matter because of a conflict of interest or incompatible employment neither counts towards a quorum nor in calculating the number of Board members required to make a majority.
4. Special voting requirements for Just Cause for Eviction regulations enacted as part of partial settlement of *Kim v. City of Oakland*, Alameda County Superior Court Case No. RG03081362 (the "Settlement Regulations").
 - a. The special voting requirements set out in this subsection apply only to the Just Cause for Eviction regulations set out in Exhibit A.
 - b. The Settlement Regulations may be amended only by affirmative vote of at least five (5) members of the Rent Board, provided that at least one member from each class of Rent Board members (homeowner, landlord, and tenant) affirmatively votes to modify the Settlement Regulations.
 - c. Before the Board adopts any amendments to the Settlement Regulations, the Board must introduce the proposed amendments at a meeting, hold a public hearing at which members of the public and interested organizations, including the Rental Housing Association of Northern Alameda County, Inc. and Just Cause Oakland, are noticed, and the amendments can only be considered for adoption at a subsequent meeting.
 - d. After the introduction of proposed amendments to the Settlement Regulations, if the Board decides to further consider the adoption of the regulations and sets a public hearing to do so, the Board must also transmit the proposed amendments to the appropriate committee of the City Council so the City Council may have the option of commenting on or holding its own hearing before the Rent Board votes to adopt or reject the proposed amendments. If the Council elects not to comment on the proposed amendments or does not comment on them within 90 days after transmittal of the proposed amendments by the Rent Board, the Rent Board may proceed to vote on the proposed amendments.

C. Officers

1. The Board shall select a Chair from among the Board members who are neither tenants nor residential rental property owners. Each Appeal Panel shall be chaired by the member of that panel who is neither a tenant nor a residential rental property owner.
2. The Board may also select a Vice-Chair (who is neither a Tenant nor an Owner) to act as Chair in the Chair's absence.
3. The Officers shall serve one-year terms.
4. The Board shall elect Officers each year at the second meeting in February.
5. The Chair votes on matters as any other Board member.

D. Standing Committees

The Board may establish standing committees subject to prior approval of the City Council. A request to create a standing committee must include:

1. The staffing costs for the committee; and
2. The costs of complying with meeting noticing requirements.

8.22.060 NOTICE OF THE EXISTENCE OF CHAPTER 8.22 REQUIRED AT COMMENCEMENT OF TENANCY.

A. Providing Notice in Multiple Languages

1. The requirement to provide the Notice of the Existence of Chapter 8.22 Required at Commencement of Tenancy in multiple languages took effect on September 21~~0~~, 2016 and only applies to new tenancies that commenced on or after that date.

2. No Owner will be penalized for failing to comply with this requirement until the later of sixty (60) days after the Rent Program makes a general announcement of the requirement or all the translations are available on the Rent Program website.

3. Until September 21, 2017, no Owner will be denied a Rent increase for failing to provide the notice in the required languages, unless:

a. the Tenant is proficient in one of the non-English languages specified in OMC 8.22.060 (Spanish or Chinese), and is not proficient in English;

or

b. the Owner negotiated the terms of the rental agreement in either Spanish or Chinese and failed to give the notice in that language.

8.22.070 RENT ADJUSTMENTS FOR OCCUPIED COVERED UNITS.

A. Purpose

This section sets forth the Regulations for a Rent adjustment exceeding the CPI Rent Adjustment and that is not authorized as an allowable increase following certain vacancies.

B. CPI and Banking Rent Adjustments

1. If a landlord chooses to increase rents less than the annual CPI Adjustment [formerly Annual Permissible Increase] permitted by the Ordinance, any remaining CPI Rent Adjustment may be carried over to succeeding twelve (12) month periods ("Banked"). However, the total of CPI Adjustments imposed in any one Rent increase, including the current CPI Rent Adjustment, may not exceed three times the allowable CPI Rent Adjustment on the effective date of the Rent Increase notice.

2. Banked CPI Rent Adjustments may be used together with other Rent justifications, except Increased Housing Service Costs and Fair Return, because these justifications replace the current year's CPI increase.

3. In no event may any banked CPI Rent Adjustment be implemented more than ten years after it accrues.

C. Justifications for a Rent Increase in Excess of the CPI Rent Adjustment or Banking

~~1. Regulations regarding~~ 1. The justifications for a Rent increase in excess of the CPI Rent Adjustment or Banking are attached as Appendix A to these Regulations. The justifications are: banking; capital improvement costs; uninsured repair costs; increased housing service costs; the rent increase is necessary to meet constitutional or fair return requirements; additional occupant as defined by OMC 8.22.020; and Tenant does not reside in the unit as their principal residence; and the rent increase is necessary to meet constitutional or fair return requirements.

a. Capital Improvement Costs: Capital Improvement Costs are those improvements which materially add to the value of the property and appreciably prolong its useful life or adapt it to new building codes. Those improvements primarily must benefit the tenant rather than the landlord.

(1) Credit for capital improvements will only be given for those improvements which have been completed and paid for within the twenty-four (24) month period prior to the date the petition for a rent increase based on the improvements is filed.

(2) Eligible capital improvements include, but are not limited to, the following items:

1. Those improvements which primarily benefit the tenant rather than the landlord. (For example, the remodeling of a lobby would be eligible as a capital improvement, while the construction of a sign advertising the rental complex would not be eligible). However, the complete painting of the exterior of a building, and the complete interior painting of internal dwelling units are eligible capital improvement costs.

2. In order for equipment to be eligible as a capital improvement cost, such equipment must be permanently fixed in place or relatively immobile (for example, draperies, blinds, carpet, sinks, bathtubs, stoves, refrigerators, and kitchen cabinets are eligible capital

improvements. Hot plates, toasters, throw rugs, and hibachis would not be eligible as capital improvements).

3. Except as set forth in subsection 4, repairs completed in order to comply with the Oakland Housing Code may be considered capital improvements.

4. The following may not be considered as capital improvements:

a. Repairs for code violations may not be considered capital improvements if the Tenant proves the following:

i. That a repair was performed to correct a Priority 1 or 2 Condition from the list set forth in Subsection (8), below, that was not created by the Tenant, which may be demonstrated by any of the following:

(a) the condition was cited by Code Enforcement Services in a notice of violation; or a City Building Services Inspector as a Priority 1 or 2 Condition;

(b) the Tenant produces factual evidence to show that had the property or unit been inspected, Code Enforcement Services would have issued a notice of violation, by a City Building Services Inspector, the Inspector would have determined the condition to be a Priority 1 or 2 Condition, but the The Hearing Officer may determine that in order to decide if a condition is a Priority 1 or 2 Condition expert testimony is required, in which case the Hearing Officer may require such testimony.

ii. That the tenant

(a) informed the Owner of the condition in writing;

(b) otherwise proves that the landlord knew of the conditions, or

(c) proves that there were exceptional circumstances that prohibited the tenant from submitting needed repairs in writing; and

iii. That the Owner failed to repair the condition within a reasonable time after the Tenant informed Owner of the condition or the Owner otherwise knew of the condition.

iv. A reasonable time is determined as follows:

(a) If the condition was cited by a City Building Services Inspector and the Inspector required the repairs to be performed within a particular time frame, or any extension thereof, the time frame set out by the Inspector is deemed a reasonable time; or

(b) Ninety (90) days after the Owner received notice of the condition or otherwise learned of the condition is presumed a reasonable time unless either of the following apply:

(1) the violation remained unabated for ninety (90) days after the date of notice to the Owner and the Owner demonstrates timely, good faith efforts to correct the violation within the ninety the (90) days but such efforts were unsuccessful due to the nature of the work or circumstances beyond the Owner's control, or the delay was attributable to other good cause; or

(2) the Tenant demonstrated that the violation was an immediate threat to the health and safety of occupants of the property, [in which case] fifteen (15) business days is presumed a reasonable time unless:

(i) the Tenant proves a shorter time is reasonable based on the hazardous nature of the condition,

and the ease of correction, or
(ii) the Owner demonstrates timely, good faith efforts to correct the violation within the fifteen (15) business days after notice but such efforts were unsuccessful due to the nature of the work or circumstances beyond the Owner's control, or the delay was attributable to other good cause.

(c) If an Owner is required to get a building or other City permit to perform the work, or is required to get approval from a government agency before commencing work on the premises, the Owner's attempt to get the required permit or approval within the timelines set out in (i) and (ii) above shall be deemed evidence of good faith and the Owner shall not be penalized for delays attributable to the action of the approving government agency.

b. Deferred Maintenance. Costs for work or portion of work that could have been avoided by the landlord's exercise of reasonable diligence in making timely repairs after the landlord knew or should reasonably have known of the problem that caused the damage leading to the repair claimed as a capital improvement.

i. Among the factors that may be considered in determining if the landlord knew or should reasonably have known of the problem that caused the damage:

(a) Was the condition leading to the repairs outside the tenant's unit or inside the tenant's unit?

(b) Did the tenant notify the landlord in writing or use the landlord's procedures for notifying the landlord of conditions that might need repairs?

(c) Did the landlord conduct routine inspections of the property?

(d) Did the tenant permit the landlord to inspect the interior of the

unit?

ii. Examples:

(a) A roof leaks and, after the landlord knew of the leak, did not timely repair the problem and leak causes ceiling or wall damage to units that could have been avoided had the landlord acted timely to make the repair. In this case, replacement of the roof would be a capital improvement, but the repairs to the ceiling or wall would not be.

(b) A problem has existed for an extended period of time visible outside tenants' units and could be seen from a reasonable inspection of the property, but the landlord or landlord's agents either had not inspected the property for an unreasonable period of time, or did not exercise due diligence in making such inspections. In such a case, the landlord should have reasonably known of the problem. Annual inspections may be considered a reasonable time period for inspections depending on the facts and circumstances of the property such as age, condition, and tenant complaints.

iii. Burden of Proof

(a) The tenant has the initial burden to prove that the landlord knew or should have reasonably known of the problem that caused the repair.

(b) Once a tenant meets the burden to prove the landlord knew or

should have reasonably known, the burden shifts to the landlord to prove that the landlord exercised reasonable diligence in making timely repairs after the landlord knew or should have known of the problem.

c. "Gold-plating" or "Over-improvements"

i. Examples:

(a) A landlord replaces a Kenmore stove with a Wolf range. In such a case, the landlord may only pass on the cost of the substantially equivalent replacement.

(b) A landlord replaces a standard bathtub with a jacuzzi bathtub. In such a case, the landlord may only pass on the cost of the substantially equivalent replacement.

ii. Burden of Proof

(a) The tenant has the initial burden to prove that the improvement is greater in character or quality than existing improvements.

(b) Once a tenant meets the burden to prove that the improvement is greater in character or quality than existing improvements, the burden shifts to the landlord to prove that the tenant approved the improvement in writing, the improvement brought the unit up to current building or housing codes, or the improvement did not cost more than a substantially equivalent replacement.

d. Use of a landlord's personal appliances, furniture, etc., or those items inherited or borrowed are not eligible for consideration as capital improvements.

e. Normal routine maintenance and repair of the rental until and the building is not a capital improvement cost, but a housing service cost. (For example: while the replacement of old screens with new screens would be a capital improvement).

f. Costs for which an Owner is reimbursed (e.g., insurance, court awarded damages, subsidies, tax credits, and grants) are not capital improvement costs.

(3) Rent Increases for Capital Improvement costs are calculated according to the following rules:

1. For mixed-use structures, only the percent of residential square footage will be applied in the calculations. The same principle shall apply to landlord-occupied dwellings (i.e., exclusion of landlord's unit).

2. Items determined to be capital improvements pursuant to Section 10.2.2. shall be amortized over the useful life of the improvement as set out in the Amortization Schedule attached as Exhibit 1 to these regulations and the total costs shall be amortized over that time period, unless the Rent increase using this amortization would exceed the Rent increase limits provided by O.M.C. 8.22.070 A2 or 3. Whenever a Capital Improvement Rent increase alone or with any other Rent increases noticed at the same time for a particular Unit exceeds the limits set by O.M.C. 8.22.070 A2 or 3, if the Owner elects to recover the portion of the Capital Improvement that causes the Rent Increase to exceed the limits set by O.M.C. 8.22.070 A2 or 3, the excess can only be recovered by extending the Capital Improvement's amortization period in yearly increments sufficient to cover the excess, and complying with any requirements to notice the Tenant of the extended amortization period with the initial Capital Improvement increase. The dollar amount of the rent increase justified by Capital Improvements shall be removed from the allowable rent at the end of the amortization period.

3. A monthly Rent increase for a Capital Improvement is determined as follows:

a. A maximum of seventy percent (70%) of the total cost for the Capital

Improvement (plus imputed interest calculated pursuant to the formula set forth in Regulation 8.22.020) may be passed through to the Tenant;

b. The amount of the Capital Improvement calculated in a. above is then divided equally among the Units that benefit from the Capital Improvement;

c. The monthly Rent increase is the amount of the Capital Improvement that may be passed through as determined above, divided by the number of months the Capital Improvement is amortized over for the particular Unit.

4. If a unit is occupied by an agent of the landlord, this unit must be included when determining the average cost per unit. (For example, if a building has ten (10) units, and one is occupied by a nonpaying manager, any capital improvement would have to be divided by ten (10), not nine (9), in determining the average rent increase). This policy applies to all calculations in the financial statement which involve average per unit figures.

5. Undocumented labor costs provided by the landlord cannot exceed 25% of the cost of materials.

6. Equipment otherwise eligible as a Capital Improvement will not be considered if a "use fee" is charged (i.e., coin-operated washers and dryers).

7. Where a landlord is reimbursed for Capital Improvements (i.e., insurance, court-awarded damages, subsidies, etc.), this reimbursement must be deducted from such Capital Improvements before costs are amortized and allocated among the units. For each improvement listed on a petition, the landlord must state whether a reimbursement or tax credit is or will be received for that improvement.

(4) In some cases, it is difficult to separate costs between rental units; common vs. rental areas; commercial vs. residential areas; or housing service costs vs. Capital Improvements. In these cases, the Hearing Officer will make a determination on a case-by-case basis.

(5) Interest on Failure to Reduce Capital Improvement Increase After End of Amortization Period.

1. If an Owner fails to reduce a Capital Improvement Rent increase in the month following the end of the amortization period for such improvement and the Tenant pays any portion of such Rent increase after the end of the amortization period, the Tenant may recover interest on the amount overpaid.

2. The applicable rate of interest for overpaid Capital Improvements shall be the rate specified by law for judgments pursuant to California Constitution, Article XV and any legislation adopted thereto and shall be calculated at simple interest.

(6) Documentation of improvement costs with proof of payment (i.e., invoices, receipts, and/or canceled checks) must be presented for all costs which are being used for justification of the proposed rent increase.

(7) Amortization of Capital Improvements. The following schedule shall be used to determine the amortization period of the capital improvement:

<u>IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>YEARS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>YEARS</u>	<u>IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>YEARS</u>
<u>Air Conditioners</u>	10	<u>Seismic Retrofit</u>	25	Gas	10
<u>Appliances</u>		<u>Electrical Wiring</u>	10	Electric	10
Refrigerator	5	<u>Elevator</u>	20	Solar	10
Stove	5	<u>Fencing and Security</u>		<u>Insulation</u>	10
Garbage Disposal	5	Chain	10	<u>Landscaping</u>	
Water Heater	5	Block	10	Planting	10
Dishwasher	5	Wood	10	Sprinklers	10
Microwave Oven	5	<u>Fire Alarm System</u>	10	Tree Replacement	10
Washer/Dryer	5	<u>Fire Sprinkler System</u>	20	<u>Lighting</u>	
Fans	5	<u>Fire Escape</u>	10	Interior	10
<u>Cabinets</u>	10	<u>Flooring/Floor Covering</u>		Exterior	10
<u>Carpentry</u>	10	Hardwood	10	<u>Locks</u>	5
<u>Counters</u>	10	Tile and Linoleum	5	<u>Mailboxes</u>	10
<u>Doors</u>	10	Carpet	5	<u>Meters</u>	10
Knobs	5	Carpet Pad	5	<u>Plumbing</u>	
Screen Doors	5	Subfloor	10	Fixtures	10
<u>Earthquake Expenses</u>		<u>Fumigation</u>		Pipe Replacement	10
Architectural and Engineering Fees	5	Tenting	5	Re-Pipe Entire Building	20
Emergency Services		<u>Furniture</u>	5	Shower Doors	5
Clean Up	5	<u>Automatic Garage Door Openers</u>	10	<u>Painting</u>	5
Fencing and Security	5	<u>Gates</u>		<u>Paving</u>	
Management	5	Chain Link	10	Asphalt	10
<u>Structural Repair and Retrofitting</u>		Wrought Iron	10	Cement	10
Foundation Repair	10	Wood	10	Decking	10
Foundation Replacement	20	<u>Glass</u>		<u>Plastering</u>	10
Foundation Bolting	20	Windows	5	<u>Pumps- Sump</u>	10
Iron or Steel Work	20	Doors	5	<u>Railing</u>	10
Masonry-Chimney Repair	20	Mirrors	5	<u>Roofing</u>	
Shear Wall Install	10	<u>Heating</u>		Shingle/Asphalt	10
		Central	10	Built-Up, Tar, and Gravel	10
				Tile and Linoleum	10
				Gutters/Downspout	10

<u>IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>YEARS</u>
<u>Security</u>	
Entry Telephone Intercom	10
Gates/Doors	10
Fencing	10
Alarms	10
<u>Sidewalks/ Walkways</u>	10
<u>Stairs</u>	10
<u>Stucco</u>	10
<u>Tilework</u>	10
<u>Wallpaper</u>	5
<u>Window Coverings</u>	
Drapes	5
Shades	5
Screens	5
Awnings	5
Blinds/Miniblinds	5
Shutters	5

(8) The following describe five major hazard conditions classified as Priorities 1 & 2:

I. MECHANICAL

Priority 1

- A. Unvented heaters
- B. No combustion chamber, fire or vent hazard
- C. Water heaters in sleeping rooms, bathrooms
- D. Open gas lines, open flame heaters

Priority 2

- A. Damaged gas appliance
- B. Flame impingement, soot
- C. Crimped gas line, rubber gas connections
- D. Dampers in gas heater vent pipes, no separation or clearance, through or near combustible surfaces
- E. Water heater on garage floor

II. PLUMBING

Priority 1

- A. Sewage overflow on surface

Priority 2

- A. Open sewers or waste lines
- B. Unsanitary, inoperative fixtures; leaking toilets
- C. T & P systems, newly or improperly installed

III. ELECTRICAL

Priority 1

- A. Bare wiring, open splices, unprotected knife switches, exposed energized electrical parts
- B. Evidence of overheated conductors including extension cords
- C. Extension cords under rugs

Priority 2

- A. Stapled cord wiring; extension cords
- B. Open junction boxes, switches, outlets
- C. Over-fused circuits
- D. Improperly added wiring

IV. STRUCTURAL

Priority 1

- A. Absence of handrail, loose, weakly-supported handrail
- B. Broken glass, posing potential immediate injury
- C. Hazardous stairs
- D. Collapsing structural members

Priority 2

- A. Garage wall separation
- B. Uneven walks, floors, tripping hazards
- C. Loose or insufficient supporting structural members
- D. Cracked glass, leaky roofs, missing doors (exterior) and windows
- E. Exit, egress requirements; fire safety

Note: Floor separation and stairway enclosures in multi-story handled on a case basis.

V. OTHER

Priority 1

- A. Wet garbage

- B. Open wells or unattended swimming pools

- C. Abandoned refrigerators
- D. Items considered by field person to be immediate hazards

Priority 2

- A. Broken-down fences or retaining walls
- B. High, dry weeds, next to combustible surfaces
- C. Significant quantity of debris
- D. Abandoned vehicles

Questions concerning permits, repairs and compliance schedules should be referred to code enforcement office of the City of Oakland — (510) 238-3381.

b. Uninsured Repair Costs: Uninsured Repair Costs are costs for work done by a landlord or tenant to a rental unit or to the common area of the property or structure containing a rental unit which is performed to secure compliance with any state or local law as to repair damage resulting from, fire, earthquake, or other casualty or natural disaster, to the extent such repair is not reimbursed by insurance proceeds

(1) Uninsured Repair Costs are those costs incurred as a result of natural causes and casualty claims; it does not include improvement work or code correction work. Improvements work or code correction work will be considered either capital improvements or housing services, depending on the nature of the improvement.

(2) Increases justified by Uninsured Repair Costs will be calculated as Capital Improvement costs.

c. Increased Housing Service Costs: Increased Housing Service Costs are services provided by the landlord related to the use or occupancy of a rental unit, including, but not limited to, insurance, repairs, replacement maintenance, painting, lighting, heat, water, elevator service, laundry facilities, janitorial service, refuse removal, furnishings, parking, security service and employee services. Any repair cost that is the result of deferred maintenance, as defined in Appendix A, Section 10-2-28.22.070.C.1.a(2)(4)(b), cannot be considered a repair for calculation of Increased Housing Service Costs. Property tax is not considered a housing service cost.

(1) In determining whether there has been an increase in housing service costs, consider the annual operating expenses for the previous two years. (For example: if the rent increase is proposed in 1993, the difference in housing service costs between 1991 and 1992 will be considered.) The average housing service cost percentage (%) increase per month per unit shall be derived by dividing this difference by twelve (12) months, then by the number of units in the building and finally by the average gross operating income per month per unit (which is determined by dividing the gross monthly operating income by the number of units). Once the percentage increase is determined the percentage amount must exceed the allowable rental increase deemed by City Council. The total determined percentage amount is the actual percentage amount allowed for a rental increase.

(2) Any major or unusual housing service costs (i.e., a major repair which does not occur every year) shall be considered a capital improvement. However, any repair cost that is not eligible as a capital improvement because it is deferred maintenance pursuant to Appendix A, Section 10-2-28.22.070.C.1.a(2)(4)(b), may not be considered a repair for purposes of calculating Increased Housing Service Costs.

(3) Any item which has a useful life of one year or less, or which is not considered to be a capital improvement, will be considered a housing service cost (i.e., maintenance and repair).

(4) Individual housing service cost items will not be considered for special consideration. For example, PG&E increased costs will not be considered separately from other housing service costs.

(5) Documentation (i.e., bills, receipts, and/or canceled checks) must be presented for all costs which are being used for justification of the proposed rent increase.

(6) Landlords are allowed up to 8% of the gross operating income of unspecified expenses (i.e., maintenance, repairs, legal and management fees, etc.) under housing service costs unless verified documentation in the form of receipts and/or canceled checks justify a greater percentage.

(7) If a landlord chooses to use 8% of his/her income for unspecified expenses, it must be applied to both years being considered under housing service cost (for example, 8% cannot be applied to 1980 and not 1981).

(8) An Increased Housing Service Costs increase may not be taken in the same year as a CPI increase because it replaces the current year's CPI increase.

1.8 A decrease in housing service costs (i.e., any items originally included as housing service costs such as water, garbage, etc.) is considered to be an increase in rent and will be calculated as such (i.e., the average cost of the service eliminated will be considered as a percentage of the rent). If a landlord adds service (i.e., cable TV, etc.) without increasing rent or covers costs previously paid by a tenant, this is considered to be a rent decrease and will be calculated as such.

1.9 The transfer of utility costs to the tenant by the landlord is not considered as part of the rent increase unless the landlord is designated in the original rental agreement to be the party responsible for such costs.

1.10 When more than one rental unit shares any type of utility bill with another rental unit, it is illegal to divide up the bill between units. Splitting the costs of utilities among tenants who live in separate units is prohibited by the Public Utilities Commission Code and Rule 18 of PG&E. The best way to remedy the bill is to install individual meters. If this is too expensive, then the property owner should pay the utility bill himself/herself and build the cost into the rent.

d. "Fair Return"

(1) Owners are entitled to the opportunity to receive a fair return. Ordinarily, a fair return will be measured by maintaining the net operating income (NOI) produced by the property in a base year, subject to CPI related adjustments. Permissible rent increases will be adjusted upon a showing that the NOI in the comparison year is not equal to the base year NOI.

(2) Maintenance of Net Operating Income (MNOI) Calculations

1. The base year shall be the calendar year 2014.
 - a. New owners are expected to obtain relevant records from prior owners.
 - b. Hearing officers are authorized to use a different base date, however, if an owner can demonstrate that relevant records were unavailable (e.g., in a foreclosure sale) or that use of base year 2014 will otherwise result in injustice.
2. The NOI for a property shall be the gross income less the following: property taxes, housing service costs, and the amortized cost of capital improvements. Gross income shall be the total of gross rents lawfully collectible from a property at 100% occupancy, plus any other consideration received or

receivable for, or in connection with, the use or occupancy of rental units and housing services. Gross rents collectible shall include the imputed rental value of owner-occupied units.

3. When an expense amount for a particular year is not a reasonable projection of ongoing or future expenditures for that item, said expense shall be averaged with the expense level for that item for other years or amortized or adjusted by the CPI or may otherwise be adjusted, in order to establish an expense amount for that item which most reasonably serves the objectives of obtaining a reasonable comparison of base year and current year expenses.

(3) Owners may present methodologies alternative to MNOI for assessing their fair return if they believe that an MNOI analysis will not adequately address the fair return considerations in their case. To pursue an alternative methodology, owners must first show that they cannot get a fair return under an MNOI analysis. They must specifically state in the petition the factual and legal bases for the claim, including any calculations.

e. Additional Occupants

As provided by O.M.C. 8.22.020, "Additional occupant," the addition of occupants above the base occupancy level, as defined by the Rent Adjustment Ordinance, allows an owner to petition to increase the rent by an amount up to 5% for each occupant above the base occupancy level. Such petitions must be filed within ninety (90) days of approval, or deemed approval as provided by O.M.C. 8.22.360.A.2.b, of the tenant's written request to add the occupant. No rent increase shall be granted for an additional occupant who is the spouse, registered domestic partner, parent, grandparent, child, adopted child, foster child, or grandchild of an existing tenant, or the legal guardian of an existing tenant's child or grandchild who resides in the unit, or a caretaker/attendant as required for a reasonable accommodation for an occupant with a disability.

Such rent increases must be reversed by the Owner if the additional occupancy level decreases, beginning with the most recently granted increase. Once a tenant provides written notice to the Owner of a decrease in the additional occupancy level and lists all current occupants, the Owner must provide written notice within fifteen (15) days to the tenant of the applicable reduced rent, effective as of the next regular rent due date occurring no sooner than thirty (30) days after the tenant's written notice.

If there are changes in occupancy following a tenant's request to add an occupant and, prior to the Owner's 15-day rent reduction notice deadline and the Owner issuing the notice, the additional occupancy level remains the same (e.g., a departing occupant is replaced), the Owner need not issue the rent reduction notice and the rent increase granted due to the prior additional occupant shall remain in effect, until and unless the additional occupancy level decreases. When the additional occupancy level remains the same following a change in occupancy, the Owner may not be granted a new additional occupant rent increase for any additional occupant that is added. The number of rent increases for additional occupants that currently apply to the rent may not exceed the additional occupancy level.

f. Tenant Not Residing in Unit as Principal Residence [Added May 5, 2021, but does not take effect until 3 months after the Local Emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic declared on March 9, 2020, is terminated by the City Council]

An Owner who seeks to impose a rent increase without limitation because the Tenant is not residing in the unit as their principal residence must petition for approval of the unrestricted rent increase based on a determination made pursuant to a hearing that the Tenant does not reside in the unit as their principal residence as of the date the petition is filed. The Hearing Officer shall not consider evidence in support of a petition that is obtained in violation of California Civil Code Section 1954 or the Oakland Tenant Protection Ordinance.

D. Rent Adjustment Based on Decreased Housing Services

1. A decrease in housing services costs (i.e., any items originally included as housing services costs such as water, garbage, etc.) is considered to be an increase in rent and will be calculated as such (i.e., the average cost of the service eliminated will be considered as a percentage of the rent). ~~If a landlord adds service (i.e., cable TV, etc.) without increasing rent or covers costs previously paid by a tenant, this is considered to be a rent decrease and will be calculated as such.~~

2. Where the unit is separately or individually metered, ~~t~~The transfer of utility costs to the tenant by the landlord is considered a decrease in housing services, unless the tenant agreed to the transfer at the inception of the tenancy or not considered as part of the rent increase unless the landlord is designated in the original rental agreement to be the party responsible for such costs.

3. When more than one rental unit shares any type of utility bill with another rental unit, it is illegal to divide up the bill between units. ~~Splitting the costs of utilities among tenants who live in separate units is prohibited by the Public Utilities Commission Code and Rule 18 of PG&E.~~ The best way to remedy the bill is to install individual meters. If this is too expensive, then the property owner should pay the utility bill and build the cost into the initial rent.

8.22.090 PETITION AND RESPONSE FILING PROCEDURES.

A. Filing Deadlines

1. In order for a document to meet the filing deadlines prescribed by OMC Chapter 8.22.090, documents must be received by the Rent Adjustment Program offices no later than 5 PM on the date the document is due. A postmark is not sufficient to meet the requirements of OMC Chapter 8.22.090. Additional Regulations regarding electronic and facsimile filing will be developed when these filing methods become available at the Rent Adjustment Program.

2. Electronically filed documents must be received by the Rent Adjustment Program no later than 11:59 PM on the date the document is due.

B. Subtenant Petitions

1. Primary tenant responses to subtenant petitions described by Regulation 8.22.025 are not subject to the Owner response requirements in this section.

C. Supporting Documentation

1. Petitions and responses are not considered filed until all filing requirements have been met, including the requirement to submit organized documentation justifying a rent increase or exemption. Petitions and responses that are submitted without necessary documentation may be dismissed.

2. Any additional documentation not submitted together with the petition or response must be filed and served on the other party at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled hearing.

B. Tenant Petition and Response Requirements

1. A Tenant petition or response to an Owner petition is not considered filed until the following has been submitted:

a. Evidence that the Tenant is current on his or her Rent or is lawfully withholding Rent. For purposes of filing a petition or response, a statement under oath that a Tenant is current in his or her Rent or is lawfully withholding Rent is sufficient, but is subject to challenge at the hearing;

b. A substantially completed petition or response on the form prescribed by the Rent Adjustment Program, signed under oath; and

e. For Decreased Housing Services claims, organized documentation clearly showing the Housing Service decreases claimed and the claimed value of the services, and detailing the calculations to which the documentation pertains. Copies of documents should be submitted rather than originals. All documents submitted to the Rent Adjustment Program become permanent additions to the file.

d. Proof of service by first-class mail or in person of the tenant petition or response and any supporting documents on the owner.

2. Subtenant petitions described by Regulation 8.22.025 and Primary Tenant responses to them are subject to the tenant petition and response requirements in this section.

C. ~~Owner Petition and Response Requirements~~

1. An Owner's petition or response to a petition is not considered filed until the following has been submitted:

a. Evidence that the Owner has paid his or her City of Oakland Business License Tax;

b. Evidence that the Owner has paid his or her Rent Program Service Fee;

e. Evidence that the Owner has provided written notice, to all Tenants affected by the petition or response, of the existence and scope of the Rent Adjustment Program as required by OMC 8.22.060. For purposes of filing a petition or response, a statement that the Owner has provided the required notices is sufficient, but is subject to challenge at the hearing;

ii. After July 1, 2023, evidence of registration with the Rent Adjustment Program as required by O.M.C. 8.22.510 for each affected covered unit in the building prior to the petition or response being filed;

d. A substantially completed petition or response on the form prescribed by the Rent Adjustment Program, signed under oath;

e. Organized documentation clearly showing the Rent increase justification and detailing the calculations to which the documentation pertains. Copies of documents should be submitted rather than originals. All documents submitted to the Rent Adjustment Program become permanent additions to the file; and

f. Proof of service by first class mail or in person of the owner petition or response and any supporting documents on the tenants of all units affected by the petition. Supporting documents that exceed twenty five (25) pages are exempt from the service requirement, provided that: (1) the owner petition form must be served by first class mail or in person; (2) the petition or attachment to the petition must indicate that additional documents are or will be available at the Rent Adjustment Program; and (3) the owner must provide a paper copy of supporting documents to the tenant or the tenant's representative within ten (10) days if a tenant requests a paper copy in the tenant's response.

2. Primary tenant responses to subtenant petitions described by Regulation 8.22.025 are not subject to the Owner response requirements in this section.

D. ~~Time of Hearing and Decision~~

1. The time frames for hearings and decisions set out below are repeated from OMC 8.22.110 D.

2. The Hearing Officer shall have the goal of hearing the matter within sixty (60) days of the original petition's filing date.

~~3. The Hearing Officer shall have a goal of rendering a decision within sixty (60) days after the conclusion of the hearing or the close of the record, whichever is later.~~

E.D. Designation of Representative

Parties have the right to be represented by the person of their choice. A Representative does not have to be a licensed attorney. Representatives must be designated in writing by the party. Notices and correspondence from the Rent Adjustment Program will be sent to representatives as well as parties so long as a written Designation of Representative has been received by the Rent Adjustment Program at least ten (10) days prior to the mailing of the notice or correspondence. Parties are encouraged to designate their representatives at the time of filing their petition or response whenever possible.

8.22.100 MEDIATION OF RENT DISPUTES.

A. Availability of Mediation

Voluntary mediation of Rent disputes will be available to all parties participating in Rent adjustment proceedings after the filing of a petition and response. Mediation will only be conducted in those cases in which all parties agree in advance to an effort to mediate the dispute.

B. Procedures

1. Parties who desire mediation shall have the choice between the use of Rent Adjustment Program Staff Hearing Officers acting as mediators or the selection of an outside mediator. Staff Hearing Officers shall be made available to conduct mediations free of charge. The Rent Adjustment Program will develop a list of available outside mediators for those who do not wish to have Staff Hearing Officers mediate rent disputes. Any fees charged by an outside mediator for mediation of rent disputes will be the responsibility of the parties requesting the use of their services.

2. The following rules apply to mediations conducted by Staff Hearing Officers and notices regarding the scheduling of a mediation session shall explain the following:

a. Participation in a mediation session is voluntary;

b. A request by any party for a hearing on the petition instead of the mediation session received prior to or during the scheduled mediation will be granted. Such a request will be immediately referred to the Rent Adjustment Program and a hearing on the petition will be scheduled;

c. Written notice of the mediation session shall be served on the parties by the Rent Adjustment Program in accordance with OMC 8.22.110.

d. It is the goal to have the mediation scheduled within the first 30 days after the response to the petition is filed.

e. Absence Of Parties. If either party fails to appear for a properly noticed mediation, the Hearing Officer will refer the matter to the Rent Adjustment Program for administrative review or hearing on the petition, whichever is appropriate.

i. If a petitioner fails to appear at a properly noticed mediation, the Hearing Officer may, in the Hearing Officer's discretion, dismiss the case.

ii. If a respondent fails to appear, the Hearing Officer will refer the matter to the Rent Adjustment Program for administrative review or hearing on the petition, whichever is appropriate.

3. The following rules apply to mediations conducted by outside mediators and notices regarding the scheduling of a mediation session shall explain the following:

a. Participation in a mediation session is voluntary;

b. The Rent Adjustment Program will not schedule the mediation; the parties will be responsible for scheduling the mediation between themselves and the mediator and for notifying the Rent Adjustment Program of the time and date for the mediation;

c. A request by any party for a hearing on the petition instead of the mediation session received prior to or during the scheduled mediation will be granted. Such a request will be immediately referred to the Rent Adjustment Program and an administrative hearing will be scheduled.

~~d. In the event that the responding either party fails to appear for the mediation session, the case will be referred back to the Rent Adjustment Program for administrative review and or hearing on the petition, whichever is appropriate.~~

~~d. In the event that the petitioning party fails to appear for the mediation session, the case will be referred back to the Rent Adjustment Program for administrative dismissal of the petition.~~

4. The Regulations regarding representation by an agent and translation apply to mediations.

5. If the parties fail to settle the rent dispute through the mediation process after a good faith effort, a hearing on the petition will be scheduled on a priority basis with a Staff Hearing Officer. If the mediation was conducted by a Staff Hearing Officer, the hearing on the petition will be conducted by a different Hearing Officer.

6. If the parties reach an agreement during the mediation, a written mediation agreement will be prepared immediately by the mediator and signed by the parties at the conclusion of the mediation. To the extent possible, mediation agreements shall be self-enforcing. The Hearing Officer will issue an order corresponding to the mediated agreement and signed by the parties that either dismisses the petition or grants the petition according to terms set out in the mediation agreement.

7. A settlement agreement reached by the parties will become a part of the record of the proceedings on the petition unless the parties otherwise agree.

8. The parties cannot agree to grant an Owner a permanent exemption of for dwelling unit. Permanent exemption claims must be decided by a Hearing Officer after a hearing on the evidence.

C. Postponements of Mediations Before Hearing Officers

1. A Hearing Officer or designated Staff member may grant a postponement of the mediation only for good cause shown and in the interests of justice. A party may be granted only one postponement for good cause, unless the party shows extraordinary circumstances.

2. "Good cause" includes but is not limited to:

a. Verified illness of a party an attorney or other authorized representative of a party or

material witness of the party;

b. Verified travel plans scheduled before the receipt of notice of hearing;

c. Any other reason that makes it impractical to appear at the scheduled mediation date due to unforeseen circumstances or verified prearranged plans that cannot be changed. Mere inconvenience or difficulty in appearing shall not constitute "good cause".

3. A request for a postponement of a mediation must be made in writing at the earliest date possible after receipt of the notice of mediation with supporting documentation attached.

4. Parties may mutually agree to a postponement at any time. When the parties have agreed to a postponement, the Rent Adjustment Program office must be notified in writing at the earliest date possible prior to the date set for the mediation.

8.22.110 HEARING PROCEDURE.

A. Postponements

1. A Hearing Officer or designated Staff member may grant a postponement of the hearing only for good cause shown and in the interests of justice. A party may be granted only one postponement for good cause, unless the party shows extraordinary circumstances.
2. "Good cause" includes but is not limited to: a. Verified illness of a party an attorney or other authorized representative of a party or material witness of the party; b. Verified travel plans scheduled before the receipt of notice of hearing; c. Any other reason that makes it impractical to appear at the scheduled date due to unforeseen circumstances or verified prearranged plans that cannot be changed. Mere inconvenience or difficulty in appearing shall not constitute "good cause".
3. A request for a postponement of a hearing must be made in writing at the earliest date possible after receipt of the notice of hearing with supporting documentation attached.
4. Parties may mutually agree to a postponement at any time. When the parties have agreed to a postponement, the Rent Adjustment Program office must be notified in writing at the earliest date possible prior to the date set for the hearing.

B. Absence Of Parties

1. If a petitioner fails to appear at a properly noticed hearing, the Hearing Officer may, in the Hearing Officer's discretion, dismiss the case, subject to the petitioner showing good cause for the failure to appear.
 - a. Any excuse for failing to appear, along with supporting documentation, must be submitted to the Hearing Officer within ten (10) days of service of the hearing decision.
 - b. The Hearing Officer will determine if the excuse constitutes a prima facie case of good cause based on the standards for failing to appear at a hearing and any Board decisions interpreting good cause for failure to appear.
 - c. If the Hearing Officer determines that the petitioner's excuse establishes a prima facie case of good cause, the Hearing Officer may schedule a new hearing on good cause and on the petition.
 - d. If the petitioner submits a timely application under subsection (a), the time to appeal the Hearing Decision is extended until fifteen (15) days after service of the Hearing Officer's decision denying good cause for failure to appear.
2. If a respondent fails to appear, the Hearing Officer may rule against the respondent, or proceed to a hearing on the evidence.

C. Record Of Proceedings

1. All proceedings before a Hearing Officer or the Rent Board, except mediation sessions, shall

be recorded by tape or other mechanical means. A party may order a duplicate or transcript of the tape recording of any hearing provided that the party ordering the duplicate or transcript pays for the expense of duplicating or transcribing the tape.

2. Any party desiring to employ a court reporter to create a record of a proceeding, except a mediation session, is free to do so at their own expense, provided that the opportunity to obtain copies of any transcript are offered to the Rent Adjustment Program and to the opposing party.

D. Translation

Translation services for documents, procedures, hearings and mediations in languages other than English pursuant to the Equal Access to Services ordinance (O.M.C. Chapter 2.3) shall be made available to persons requesting such services subject to the City's ability to provide such services. In the event that the City is unable to provide such services, petitioners and respondents who do not speak or are not comfortable with English must provide their own translators. The translators will be required to take an oath that they are fluent in both English and the relevant foreign language and that they will fully and to the best of their ability translate the proceedings.

E. Conduct Of Hearings Before Hearing Officers

1. Each party, attorney, other representative of a party or witness appearing at the hearing shall complete a written Notice of Appearance and oath, as appropriate, that will be submitted to the Hearing Officer at the commencement of the hearing. All Notices of Appearance shall become part of the record.

2. All oral testimony must be given under oath or affirmation to be admissible.

3. Each party shall have these rights:

a. To call and examine witnesses;

b. To introduce exhibits, provided that the party provides the exhibits to the Rent Adjustment Program and serves copies to the other party not less than seven (7) days before the hearing unless the party has good cause for late filing;

c. To cross-examine opposing witnesses on any matter relevant to the issues even if that issue was not raised on direct examination;

d. To impeach any witness regardless of which party called first called him or her to testify;

e. To rebut the evidence against him or her;

f. To cross-examine an opposing party or their agent even if that party did not testify on his or her own behalf or on behalf of their principal

g. A party who fails to file a timely response to a petition is prohibited from calling or examining witnesses or introducing oral or written evidence and is limited to cross-examination,

unless the party has good cause for failing to file a response.

4. Unless otherwise specified in these Regulations or OMC Chapter 8.22, the rules of evidence applicable to administrative hearings contained in the California Administrative Procedures Act (California Government Code Section 11513) shall apply.

F. Decisions Of The Hearing Officer

1. The Hearing Officer shall make written findings of fact and issue a written decision on petitions filed.

2. If an increase in Rent is granted, the Hearing Officer shall state the amount of increase that is justified, ~~and the effective date of the increase.~~

3. If a decrease in Rent is granted, the Hearing Officer shall state when the decrease commenced, the nature of the service decrease, the value of the decrease in services, and the amount to which the rent may be increased when the service is restored. When the service is restored, any Rent increase based on the restoration of service may only be taken following a valid change of terms of tenancy notice pursuant to California Civil Code Section 827. A Rent increase for restoration of decreased Housing Services is not considered a Rent increase for purposes of the limitation on one Rent increase in twelve (12) months pursuant to OMC 8.22.070 A. (One Rent Increase Each Twelve Months).

4. The Hearing Officer may order Rent adjustment for overpayments or underpayments over a period of months, however, such adjustments shall not span more than a twelve (12) month period, unless longer period is warranted for extraordinary circumstances. The following is a schedule of adjustments for underpayment and overpayments that Hearing Officers must follow unless the parties otherwise agree or good cause is shown:

a. If the underpayment or overpayment is 25% of the Rent or less, the Rent will be adjusted over 3 months;

b. If the underpayment or overpayment is 50% of the Rent or less, the Rent will be adjusted over 6 months;

c. If the underpayment or overpayment is 75% of the Rent or less, the Rent will be adjusted over 9 months;

d. If the underpayment or overpayment is 100% of the Rent or more, the Rent will be adjusted over 12 months.

5. For Rent overpayments based on an Owner's failure to reduce Rent after the expiration of the amortization period for a Capital Improvement, the decision shall also include a calculation of any interest that may be due pursuant to Reg. 8.22.070.C.1.a(5) ~~10.2-5~~ (see Appendix A).

6. If the Landlord has petitioned for multiple capital improvements covering the same unit or building, the Hearing Officer may consolidate the capital improvements into a single amortization period and, in the Hearing Officer's discretion, determine the length for that

amortization period in the Decision.

G. Administrative Decisions

For rent increase petitions based on one or more additional occupants, if there is no genuine dispute regarding any material fact, the petition may be decided as a matter of law, and the tenant waives their right to a hearing in writing on a form provided by the Rent Adjustment Program, the Hearing Officer shall issue a decision without a hearing.

8.22.120 APPEALS.

A. Statement of Grounds for Appeal and Supporting Documentation

1. A party who appeals a decision of a Hearing Officer or administrative decision must clearly state the grounds for the appeal on the appeal form or an attachment. The grounds for appeal must be stated sufficiently clearly for the responding party, and the Board to reasonably determine the basis for the appeal so that the responding party can adequately respond and the Board can adequately adjudicate the appeal.
2. A party who files an appeal must file any supporting argument and documentation and serve it on the opposing party within fifteen (15) days of filing the appeal along with a proof of service on the opposition party.
3. A party responding to an appeal must file any response to the appeal and any supporting documentation and serve it on the opposing party within thirty (30)~~fifteen (15)~~ days of the service of the supporting documentation~~appeal~~ along with a proof of service on the opposing party.
4. Any argument and supporting documentation may not be any more than twenty-five (25) pages. Arguments must be legible and double-spaced if typed. Any submissions not conforming to these requirements may be rejected by Staff. Staff may limit the pages for argument and supporting documentation submitted in consolidated cases.
5. Staff, in its discretion, may modify or waive the above requirements for good cause. The good cause must be provided in writing by the party seeking a waiver or modification.

B. Grounds for Appeal

The grounds on which a party may appeal a decision of a Hearing Officer include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The decision is inconsistent with OMC Chapter 8.22, the Regulations, or prior decisions of the Board;
2. The decision is inconsistent with decisions issued by other Hearing Officers;
3. The decision raises a new policy issue that has not previously been decided by the Board;
4. The decision violates federal, state, or local law;
5. The decision is not supported by substantial evidence. Where a party claims the decision is not supported by substantial evidence, the party making this claim has the burden to ensure that sufficient record is before the Board to enable the Board to evaluate the party's claim;
6. The Hearing Officer made a procedural error that denied the party sufficient opportunity to adequately present his or her claim or to respond to the opposing party; or
7. The decision denies the Owner a fair return.

a. This appeal ground may only be used by an Owner when his or her underlying petition for approval of a rent increase was based on a fair return claim.

b. Where an Owner claims the decision denies a fair return, the Owner must specifically state on the appeal form the basis for the claim, including any calculations, and the legal basis for the claim.

C. Postponements

1. The Board or Staff may grant a postponement of the appeal hearing only for good cause shown and in the interests of justice. A party may be granted only one postponement for good cause, unless the party shows extraordinary circumstances.

2. "Good cause" shall include but is not limited to:

a. Verified illness of a party an attorney or other authorized representative of a party or material witness of the party;

b. Verified travel plans scheduled before the receipt of notice of hearing;

c. Any other reason that makes it impractical to appear at the scheduled date due to unforeseen circumstances or verified prearranged plans that cannot be changed. Mere inconvenience or difficulty in appearing shall not constitute "good cause".

3. A request for a postponement of an appeal hearing must be made in writing at the earliest date possible after receipt of the notice of appeal hearing with supporting documentation attached.

~~4. Parties may mutually agree to a postponement at any time. When the parties have agreed to a postponement, the Rent Adjustment Program office must be notified in writing at the earliest date possible prior to the date for the appeal hearing.~~

D. Procedures at Appeal Hearings

1. It is the Board's or Appeal Panel's goal to hear three (3) appeals per meeting.

2. Unless the Board or Appeal Panel votes otherwise, or the Appeal Body Chair establishes an alternate time limit prior to the first appeal being heard by the Appeal Body, each party will have ~~fifteen (15)~~ six (6) minutes to present argument on or in opposition to the appeal. This time includes opening argument and any response.

3. Whenever the Board or Appeal Panel considers an appeal at more than one meeting, any Board member not present at a prior hearing must listen to a tape of the prior hearing in order to participate at a subsequent hearing.

4. Only those grounds presented in the written appeal may be argued before the Board or the Appeal Panel.

E. Record Of Proceedings

1. All proceedings before the Rent Board shall be recorded by tape or other mechanical means. A party may order a duplicate or transcript of the tape recording of any appeal hearing provided that the party ordering the duplicate or transcript pays for the expense of duplicating or transcribing the tape.
2. Any party desiring to employ a court reporter to create a record of a proceeding, except a mediation session, is free to do so at their own expense, provided that the opportunity to obtain copies of any transcript are offered to the Rent Adjustment Program and to the opposing party.

F. Evidentiary Hearings

1. As a general rule, the Board and Appeal Panels should not conduct evidentiary hearings. When the Board or Appeal Panel determines that additional evidence or reconsideration of evidence is necessary, the Board or Appeal Panel should remand the matter back to a Hearing Officer for consideration of evidence.
2. The Board or Appeal Panel should only consider evidence when the evidence is limited in scope and resolution of the matter is more efficient than having it remanded to a Hearing Officer for consideration of the evidence.
3. In order for new evidence to be considered, the party offering the new evidence must show that the new evidence could not have been available at the Hearing Officer proceedings.
4. If the Board or Appeal Panel deems an evidentiary hearing necessary, the appeal will be continued and the Board will issue a written order setting forth the issues on which the parties may present evidence.
5. The parties must file any new documentary evidence with the Board or Appeal Panel and also serve it the opposing party not more than ten (10) days after notice is given that a date has been set for the evidentiary appeal hearing.
 - a. Parties must also file with the Rent Program proofs of service of the evidence on the opposing party.
 - b. Failure to file the evidence and the proofs of service may result in the evidence not being considered by the Board or Appeal Panel.
6. When the Board or Appeal Panel conducts an evidentiary hearing, the same rules will apply as to hearings before Hearing Officers.

G. Appeal Decisions

1. **Vote Required.** Provided a quorum of the Board is present, or all three Appeal Panel members if a matter is being heard by an Appeal Panel, a majority vote of the Board members present is required to overturn or modify a Hearing Officer's decision. A tie vote upholds the Hearing Officer's decision. If no Board member makes a motion to uphold, reverse, or modify the

Hearing Officer's decision on appeal or no motion receives a second, the appeal is deemed denied without comment.

2. Vote at Close of Appeal Hearing. Unless the Board or Appeal Panel votes otherwise, it shall vote on each appeal at the close of the appeal. The motion should include the reasons for the decisions so that the reasons can be set forth in a written decision.

a. Form of Decision. An appeal decision must be in writing and include findings and conclusions.

b. Time for Written Decision. The Board has the goal of issuing a written decision within thirty (30) days of the close of the appeal hearing.

c. Final decision.

i. Written appeal decisions are drafted by Staff, reviewed by the City Attorney, signed by staff as the Board's designee, and served on the parties.

ii. In any individual matter, however, the Board or Appeal Panel may vote to require that a decision first come to the full Board or full Appeal Panel or to the Board or Appeal Panel Chair for final approval and signature of that Chair. A decision is not final until signed by Staff or the Board or Appeal Panel Chair and served on the parties.

d. In its decision, the Board is authorized to designate a schedule for refunds or repayments consistent with Reg. 8.22.110 F.4 in cases where its decision results in under- or over-payments by a party; alternatively, the Board may remand to the Hearing Officer for purposes of devising a refund or repayment plan.

e. Staff shall serve decisions on the parties.

H. Dismissal of Appeal

1. Untimely appeal filing.

a. Staff may dismiss an appeal that is not timely filed.

b. Within ten (10) days following Staff's notice of the dismissal, the party filing the late appeal may submit a written statement explaining any good cause for the late filing.

c. If the good cause appears within the guidelines for acceptable good cause set out in Rent Board decisions, Staff may reinstate the appeal or set a hearing before the Board on whether there is good cause for the late appeal.

d. If the good cause does not appear within the acceptable good cause parameters, Staff may reject the good cause and affirm the appeal dismissal.

2. Failing to adequately state grounds for appeal.

a. If Staff determines that an appeal fails to adequately state the grounds for appeal,

Staff will send a deficiency notice to the appellant notifying the appellant of the deficiency and giving the appellant ten (10) days to correct the deficiency.

b. If the appellant fails to respond to the deficiency notice or fails to correct the deficiency in the response, Staff may dismiss the appeal, or ask the Rent Board to determine the adequacy of the appeal.

I. Failure to Appear

1. Appellant. If an appellant fails to appear at an appeal hearing, the Board or Appeal Panel will decide the appeal on the record as submitted, unless the Board or Appeal Panel votes to postpone the appeal to a future meeting consider the appeal dropped and will issue a decision dismissing the appeal, subject to the appellant showing good cause for the failure to appear.

a. — Any excuse for failing to appear, along with supporting documentation, must be submitted to Staff with ten (10) days of the date of the service of the appeal decision.

b. — Staff will, in the first instance determine if the excuse represents a prima facie case of good cause based on the standards for failing to appear at a hearing and any Board decisions interpreting good cause for failure to appear.

e. If a prima facie case of good cause is shown, Staff will schedule an appeal hearing on whether the Board or Appeal Panel accepts the good cause.

2. Responding party. If an appellant appears and the responding party fails to appear, the Board or Appeal Panel must still hear and decide the appeal.

Appendix A

Deleted [Contents moved to Section 8.22.070.]

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

DEC 05 2023

AYES - FIFE, GALLO, JENKINS, KALB, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, REID, AND PRESIDENT
FORTUNATO BAS 8

NOES 0
ABSENT 0
ABSTENTION 0

ATTEST:



ASHA REED
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the City of
Oakland, California