


Rent Stabilization Board  
Office of the Executive Director

DATE: May 6, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board

FROM: Matt Brown, Acting Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Proposed Office Closure Every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the Month and VTO days

---

The Board recently received results from an internal survey conducted by Keren Stashower in preparation for hiring a new permanent executive director. One of the primary findings was that all too often Board staff have dealt with important issues at the last minute and that this frenzy of activity creates uncertainty and discomfort among staff – particularly those that serve the public on a regular basis. Staff have expressed that it would be helpful to work in a more structured environment where there is a focus on strategic planning and a more cohesive framework for teamwork across all units at the Rent Board.

Approximately half the staff have positions that require daily contact with members of the public. Given the demands of these positions, many of these employees are unable to engage in any serious planning or other functions that allow them to connect on a regular basis with employees from other units. Board staff is currently engaged in a review of all agency protocols with an equity and inclusion lens. In order to promote fairness and involve all staff members, it is imperative to dedicate time to these planning and coordination activities in such a way that allows all staff members to participate.

Staff has proposed to close the office to the public every second and fourth Wednesday of each month and Voluntary Time Off (VTO) days. I have discussed this with the Board Chair who supports the proposal. A regular schedule that incorporates this structure will allow all staff the opportunity to meet across the agency's various units and dedicate considerably more time to necessary strategic planning. Additionally, other City departments are closed to the public on VTO days. There is at least one VTO day per month as well as the days between Christmas and New Year's Day.

This proposal ensures that all staff have the opportunity to meet internally at least two days a month. It also would preserve our late schedule (we are open from noon to 6:30 p.m.) on all other Wednesdays. Staff will devise a system to ensure that we attend to emergencies should any arise. Additionally, we may remain partially open to the public to accommodate owners between the time registration fee bills are mailed and their due date (July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year), so that property owners have increased access to our services.