

**BOONE COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
MARCH 19, 2021, REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

Call to Order, Roll Call

Chairman Allen Sisson called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. (In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and consistent with Gov. Pritzker's Executive Orders, the meeting was held telephonically).

Following the call to order, roll call was taken.

The following Board members were present:

Present:	Chairman Allen Sisson Vice Chairman Robert Johns Commissioner Elsie Brown Commissioner Ron Wait
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Absent:	Commissioner Julaine Drake Commissioner Ray Morse
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Also participating telephonically: Staff members Kristin Andrews, Deb Alfredson and Christina Coon.

Kristin Andrews participated telephonically and in person at the Boone County Housing Authority office at 2036 North State Street, Belvidere, Illinois, to allow for public attendance.

Introduction of Guests

Erica Crew, Program Analyst for the Vera Institute of Justice, was present.

Changes to the Agenda

Alan Zais explained the proposed change to the agenda and indicated that it is being proposed that Item XI on the Agenda -- that addresses the "Temporary suspension of by-law provisions pursuant to Executive Order 2020-07 signed by Gov. Pritzker on March 16, 2020" -- be moved with the Board's consent so that it may be reviewed first and before other actions are taken. Robert Johns approved to move the agenda item. The motion was seconded by Ron Wait and approved by all Commissioners present.

Alan noted that pursuant to the Executive Order, various provisions of the Open Meetings Act, including those that require that members of the public body be physically present at such meetings and those limiting remote participation by members of the public body, had been suspended. In keeping with the Executive Order, Alan noted that the provisions of the Boone County Housing Authority's (BCHA) by-laws which require, among other things, the physical presence of Board members for a quorum, that the meeting be held at the regular meeting place of the BCHA at 2036 North State Street, etc. be suspended in keeping with the provisions of the Executive Order. A motion to suspend those by-law provisions was made by Elsie Brown and the motion was seconded by Ron Wait. The motion was approved by all the Commissioners present.

Public Comment

None.

Executive Director Report

Alan Zais reported on the background of the Vera Institute of Justice and the award of their technical assistance to the Winnebago County Housing Authority. Erica Crew said that Vera was a nonprofit created in 1961 and has worked with housing authorities including New York, Los Angeles, Burlington, Detroit, Allegheny and not Winnebago as part of the Opening Doors to Public Housing Program to safely promote collaborations and community safety. Erica referenced the written recommendations to the board, such as the absent family member provision and the denial of admissions, which are now contained within the Nan McKay policy templates. Alan said that most of the nation's 3,000 housing authorities use the Nan McKay template, including Winnebago and Boone, and that Nan McKay trains HUD staff. Erica noted the part of the document recommending a 5-year to a 6-month look-back period, noting that Illinois was already at the front of this with a bill, not yet in effect, that would firm that time period. Erica said that such things as evidence of rehabilitation for overturing an ineligibility was already in practice and the recommendation would be to codify it into the policy. Erica said that criminal records do not tell all the information on an applicant that would identify eligibility throughout mitigating factors. Erica noted that an eviction record is often a byproduct of poverty and these are the things that can be presented in the informal hearing process. Allen Sisson said he was in favor of helping people, but was concerned if housing authorities would be held responsible for someone's actions—he was concerned about the possibility of a legal claim. Erica said that persons admitted through the policies are not more likely to reconvict, and that, anecdotally, people who cause criminal problems are not on the lease. Ron Wait asked if a reentry person would need to have a job or looking for a job and would they need to have a multi-bedroom voucher. Erica said the recommendations are for the general admissions policy and does not change the number of bedrooms for the unit. Alan gave examples of persons not part of a reentry program at Rockford and Freeport who committed lease violations and that the lack of such a background was not a predictor of compliance. Alan gave further background of persons admitted with criminal backgrounds and the mitigation often encountered. Allen invited a resolution at the April 16, 2021 regular board meeting to adopt the recommendations, and Erica expressed her appreciation.

Alan said the current office space would no longer be large enough, and that he had met with the owner about an expansion into the rear portion of the adjoining space. Alan noted the pictures he had placed in his report and wanted to show them to the board for their conversation. Allen wanted to make sure that no areas would be closed off so as to ensure staff visibility for safety, and he would like Alan to review with staff for the return conversation. Ron asked how many people from the public come in at a time, and Kristin Andrews said the office is still closed to the public and document exchanges are handled at the door should someone show up. She said that prior to the pandemic, they would see about ten people at a time. She said that recertifications sometimes involved one person and sometimes the family. Alan said he would bring the board some schematic concepts, and Vickie Huwe's thought on the affordability of an increased rent.

Resolution No. 21 R 4, "Resolution Approving the Minutes of the February 19, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners"

Ron Wait moved to approve Resolution No. 21 R 4. The motion was seconded by Elsie Brown. The motion to accept the amended minutes was then approved by all commissioners present.

Resolution No. 21 R 5, “Resolution Approving the Waivers Applicable to COVID-19 issued by HUD per PIH 2020-33 (HA), Rev-2 Issued 11/30/20”

Robert Johns to approve Resolution No. 21 R 5. The motion was seconded by Elsie Brown. Alan gave the background that this was an extension of the HUD waivers previously passed by the board at the regular June 2020 board meeting. Allen asked if there was still a sunset to the waivers, and Alan said they did end at various dates in 2021.

Financial Report

Alan noted that Vickie was on annual leave and not present, and that the accounts payable continue to move in the right direction and the Mainstream vouchers will bring more additional administrative funding once they are in place.

Robert Johns moved to accept the financial report. The motion was seconded by Ron Wait and approved by all commissioners present.

Old Business

None

New Business

None.

Commissioner Comments

None.

Executive Session

None.

Action Take from Executive Session

None.

Adjournment

Ron Wait moved to hold the next meeting at 9:00 a.m. on April 16, 2021 at the Boone County Housing Authority office, 2036 North State Street, Belvidere, Illinois, 61008, and adjourn the meeting at 10:05 a.m. The motion was seconded by Robert Johns and approved by all commissioners present.

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary

Commissioner _____ moved to approve
these minutes, seconded by Commissioner _____

The foregoing minutes were approved by the Boone County Housing Authority on this
16th day of April, 2021.

Chairman Allen Sisson _____

Vice Chairman Robert Johns _____

Commissioner Ron Wait _____

Commissioner Ray Morse _____

Commissioner Julaine Drake _____

Commissioner Elsie Brown _____