

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE MAY 20, 2021
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Getty called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Following the call to order, roll call was taken.

The following Board Members were in attendance:

Present: Chairman Dina M. Getty
Vice Chairman Alanna D. Conard
Commissioner Danielle J. A. Potter
Commissioner Fred S. Wescott

Absent: Commissioner Mustafa Abdall
Commissioner Ronald E. Ballard
Commissioner Tasha N. Reddic

Also in attendance were Executive Director Alan Zais, Deputy Director Deb Alfredson, Finance Director Vickie Huwe, and James R. Pirages of AGHL Law.

Since the meeting was held in a room that did not have a United States flag, the Pledge of Allegiance was not recited.

Public Hearings on the FY2021 Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan and the FY2021 Annual Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy

A motion to open the public hearings on the FY2021 Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan and the FY2021 Annual Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy was made by Vice Chairman Conard; that motion was seconded by Commissioner Wescott. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote of all four (4) Commissioners in attendance with none against and three (3) Commissioners absent. The public hearing commenced at 5:31 p.m.

Executive Director Alan Zais stated that notice of the public hearings had been placed in the newspaper and otherwise publicized and that no one from the public was in attendance and that no comments regarding these matters were received from the public.

A motion to close the public hearings was made by Commissioner Potter and that motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Conard. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and three (3) Commissioners absent.

Introduction of Guests

None

Changes to Agenda

None

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Alan Zais referred the Board to his written report that had accompanied the Board packet.

Alan advised the Board of the Moving To Work Application (MTW) that had been submitted by the Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA). Alan also said that in connection with MTW he is on the "slate" to be elected for the Rockford Apartment Association and that it is probable that he will be elected because he is part of a "slate". Alan also said that he had learned that the Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) had applied for and had been turned down for its application in the MTW Cohort 2. He said that the RHA will also be applying for Cohort 5 (which is also the Cohort that WCHA plans to apply for). He went on to note that by Congressional mandate, Cohort 5 is to be expanded to one hundred (100) housing authorities; he advised that this is the WCHA's last chance for MTW but he believes that the WCHA has a strong application for MTW.

He also explained that he wished to make the WCHA Board aware that he will be talking to the Board of Winnebago Homes Association (WHA) about a Memorandum of Understanding for the Pearl Place development in Belvidere. He said that the Boone County Housing Authority (BCHA) will be using project-based vouchers for that development and that a BCHA member may become a member of the WHA Board in connection with the development.

Alan also advised the Board that a home owned by WHA across from the WCHA's offices is close to being sold. It was agreed that a review of the minutes of the WHA board meetings will have to be conducted to determine whether further approval of that sale will be necessary by the WHA Board. It was noted that the sale was tentatively set to close on May 24, but an extension of that date may be necessary based upon whether the sale price was within the scope of the WHA Board's past authority.

Alan also advised the Board that he and Vice Chairman Conard had toured the old St. Thomas High School property. He reminded the Board that he had discussed the proposed redevelopment of that property in a past WCHA Board meeting. He said that the project, if realized, would be a WHA project but would be based upon WCHA vouchers. He noted that paperwork needs to be submitted soon with regard to this project which would include approval by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); followed in June by a request for proposals (RFP) being issued by WCHA; followed by responses to the RFP; and, ultimately, WCHA Board approval at its August meeting. This would leave only a few days before all the materials need to be submitted.

Alan went on to explain that the WCHA may have only 20% of its vouchers that are project-based and that those vouchers are important to attract investors. He said that the WCHA's remaining

vouchers number only slightly more than twenty (20) and that he does want to use those vouchers for this project. He explained that he can use Mainstream Vouchers from the Mainstream Voucher program (for homeless who are non-elderly or disabled) in place of project-based vouchers. He said that the developers are okay with doing so and that the WCHA has ample Mainstream Vouchers to support this program. Vice Chairman Conard noted that she had toured the building and that it is a beautiful building with great potential. Alan added that the project would be much like the Pearl Place redevelopment in Belvidere but would involve a complete renovation of the St. Thomas High School property. He said that they continue to refine the budget for this project and so far have cut about one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) from proposed expenditures. He said that the vouchers, if issued, could go out to anyone in the community and that a committee (which he hoped would consist of at least one WCHA Board member) would evaluate those who express interest in the vouchers.

Alan went on to discuss a potential grant from ComEd involving electric vehicles. He reminded the Board that the WCHA has participated in past ComEd initiatives involving electrical efficiency and has been quite successful in the outcomes of those matters. He said that he had verbally committed the WCHA to looking into this if the Board allows participation in this new initiative which would involve electric cars and electric charging stations. He said that this project is in its very beginning stages.

Alan also advised the Board that he had spoken with the Veterans Administration about participation in the VASH program. He said that the Veterans Administration does not want to do such a program in Winnebago County but does wish to do such a program in Boone County so that he will be speaking to the BCHA Board about this at its meeting on May 21, 2021.

Vice Chairman Conard asked if this means that they were not going to use the VASH vouchers with the St. Thomas project. Alan said that they are not going to use VASH vouchers at St. Thomas but will be using Mainstream vouchers instead. Commissioner Potter asked how many vehicles the WCHA owns and it was indicated that there are seven (7) vehicles (cars, vans, and pickups) that are presently owned by the WCHA.

Alan went on to discuss the issues involving the RHA and 2011 Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to which the WCHA was allowed continued jurisdiction within the City of Rockford and the RHA was allowed continued jurisdiction within Winnebago County. He said that six months ago the RHA had wanted to end the Memorandum of Understanding and he had subsequently reached out to the Winnebago County Board Chair who had arranged a meeting between the Winnebago County Board Chair, the Mayor of the City of Rockford, Todd Cagnoni of the City of Rockford, Chairman Getty, RHA CEO Laura Snyder, her staff member Owen Carter, and Karen Elyea of the Winnebago County Board Chairman's staff. He said that another meeting will be scheduled between the attorneys; he invited the Board to contact him if they wanted additional information about this matter.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Getty noted that there were six (6) items on the Consent Agenda. A motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda was made by Commissioner Wescott and that motion was seconded by Commissioner Potter. The motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda was

approved by unanimous roll call vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and three (3) Commissioners absent.

Financial Report

Finance Director Vickie Huwe noted that the April financial report had accompanied the Board packet. She noted that she had submitted the unaudited statement to HUD for FY21 and that the auditors had also submitted to HUD the audited financials for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020 which had been accomplished during this past week.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Wescott noted that he was glad to see everyone back in person for a Board meeting. Commissioner Potter questioned whether there had been any issues with increased crime or concerns regarding crime within the WCHA's operations (citing to a recent shooting in the park property adjacent to the WCHA's offices). Executive Director Alan Zais noted that it is an ongoing concern. Deputy Director Deb Alfredson noted that the "Blink cameras" are on order and that three (3) cameras will be installed on each house. Alan indicated that there had been issues with crime but nothing horrific. He said that a resident at the Hosmer Building in Freeport had been the subject of regular police reports and after about a year of effort and significant attorney fees, that resident had been evicted – the process for which had been made difficult by Governor Pritzker's Executive Order banning most evictions. He said that similar issues had arisen at Collier Garden and Johnston Garden Apartments and that the WCHA's hands have somewhat been tied because of the bar on evictions. He said that they have explained to residents that the WCHA has been trying to do something but has been limited in its actions by the eviction moratorium. He noted that it is hard for many residents to live with someone in their buildings who they feel may be a threat. Commissioner Potter asked how the staff was weathering these matters and Deputy Director Deb Alfredson noted that the staff has been challenged by these matters but has been otherwise doing well. Executive Director Alan Zais noted that other housing authorities have been experiencing more significant issues than has been the WCHA.

Executive Session

A motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) to consider the "appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity" was made by Commissioner Wescott; that motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Conard. The motion to go into Executive Session was approved by unanimous roll call vote of all four (4)

Commissioners present with none against and three (3) Commissioners absent. The Executive Session commenced at 5:54 p.m.

A motion to come out of Executive Session was made by Commissioner Potter at 5:58 p.m.; that motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Conard. The motion to come out of Executive Session was approved by unanimous roll call vote of all four (4) Commissioners present with none against and three (3) Commissioners absent.

Action Taken from Executive Session

None

Commissioner Wescott added his comments thanking Vice Chairman Conard and Chairman Getty for their leadership in taking over his former position as chairman. He said he has personally had a very difficult past few months and thanked them for the job that they were doing. Chairman and Vice Chairman Conard thanked Commissioner Wescott for his service to the WCHA.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Potter and that motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Conard. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and three (3) Commissioners absent. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle J. A. Potter, Recording Secretary