

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY  
AUGUST 20, 2020  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Wescott called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. (In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and consistent with Governor Pritzker’s Executive Orders and Senate Bill 2135 (that was signed into law and which became effective on June 12, 2020), the meeting was held via video conference and/or telephone conference). Following the call to order, roll call was taken.

The following Board Members participated:

Present:	Chairman Fred S. Wescott Vice Chairman Dina M. Getty Commissioner Mustafa Abdall (arrived via videoconference at 5:39 p.m.) Commissioner Danielle J.A. Potter Commissioner Tasha N. Reddic
Absent:	Commissioner Ronald E. Ballard Commissioner Alanna D. Conard

Also participating: Deputy Director Deb Alfredson, Voucher Programs Director Kristin Andrews and James R. Pirages of the law firm of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP.

Executive Director Alan Zais and Finance Director Vickie Huwe also participated via video conference and in-person at the Winnebago County Housing Authority offices at 3621 Delaware Street, Rockford, Illinois, so as to allow for public attendance (if any).

Inasmuch as the meeting was held via video/teleconference, the Pledge of Allegiance was not recited.

**Introduction of Guests**

None.

**Changes to Agenda**

Attorney Jim Pirages asked that the item under “New Business” be moved to this point of the Agenda so as to provide an explanation as to why the meeting was being held in this manner and to allow for the temporary suspension of a bylaw provision. The consensus of the Board was to allow for this change to the Agenda.

## **New Business**

Attorney Jim Pirages explained the basis for the meeting being held in this manner and requested the temporary suspension of a bylaw provision for purposes of this meeting. Attorney Pirages advised the Commissioners that in keeping with Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 20-07 issued in March of 2020 and continuing thereafter as well as the recently enacted Senate Bill 2135 (which became effective on June 12, 2020), various provisions of the Open Meetings Act (including those requiring the members of the public body to be physically present at each meeting and those limiting remote participation by members of the public body) have been suspended provided certain requirements are met (including the audio recording of the meeting). Attorney Pirages went on to note that the provisions of the WCHA's bylaws (specifically, Article IV, Section 4 which provide that "[t]he physical presence of four (4) Commissioners shall constitute a quorum for purposes of conducting its business...") could also be suspended in keeping with the provisions of the Executive Order. Thereafter, a motion to suspend that bylaw provision for purposes of the August 20, 2020 meeting was made by Commissioner Potter and that motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Getty. That motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote of the five (5) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Alan Zais noted that his extensive written report had accompanied the Board packet that the Commissioners had previously received.

Alan remarked that the scheduled Winnebago Homes Association (WHA) Special Meeting that was to have preceded this meeting had to be cancelled due to the absence of a quorum; he noted that on the WHA Agenda was a discussion of an initiative for the development of the Marjorie Gang Homes in Belvidere, the specifics of which were detailed in the materials that accompanied the WHA Agenda and Board packet. He noted that if the WHA project proceeds, the WCHA would be the management agent. He sought the WCHA's Board's consensus to proceed with the initiative as described by him and detailed in the WHA Agenda and Board packet. He said that he would provide additional information regarding this development as the project moves forward and remarked that both the WHA and WCHA Boards will ultimately have to formally approve the program before it proceeds to the next level.

Alan also commented regarding the materials in the Board packet involving the Re-entry Program. He said that the next step will be to engage stakeholders in discussions regarding the Program, which he anticipates beginning in early October and will involve county board chairs, local mayors; legislators; the R1 Regional Planning Council; etc.

Alan also discussed the recent HUD compliance review. He said that the WCHA had this type of comprehensive review conducted by HUD in 2017 and that the housing authorities chosen for compliance review are selected by lottery. He noted that this is a time-intensive process and was preceded by letters that were sent not only to the WCHA, but also to the WCHA's Commissioners and to the County Board Chair. He said that during the course of the compliance review, HUD had also asked for copies of past Board packets and Board Meeting Minutes. He said that the

HUD looks to review minutes and board packets to ensure that board members are fully informed for their decisions.

Alan asked the Board if they had any questions regarding the compliance review. No questions were raised. Vice Chairman Getty thanked Alan for his efforts in assuring that all proper measures are taken with regard to the WCHA's operations and its compliance with HUD requirements.

### **Consent Agenda**

A motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda was made by Vice Chairman Getty. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Potter. The items on the Consent Agenda were approved by unanimous roll call vote of the five (5) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent.

### **Financial Report**

Finance Director Vickie Huwe advised that the WCHA July financials had been submitted with the Board packet. She added that the WCHA has recently received a \$20,000 payment from Collier Gardens for the 2019 "return to owner". She added that the WHA recently received \$37,506 as the "return to owner". She further noted that the Housing Authority of the City of Freeport and the Boone County Housing Authority have recently been making monthly payments to the WCHA.

Alan cited to the information in the Board packet about the short-fall funds that had been made available by HUD. Alan added that while the WCHA did not need this financial assistance, some of the WCHA's neighboring housing authorities had been the recipients of assistance through those short-fall funds.

### **Old Business**

Executive Director Alan Zais advised the Board that he wished to continue the practice of providing a "Performance Day" for staff as a means of rewarding staff for their extra efforts. He said that this program had been very popular among staff. The consensus of the Board was to allow the "Performance Day" program to continue through the end of this fiscal year.

Vice Chairman Getty inquired as to the status of the name change for the WCHA that has been discussed. Alan responded by noting that the website is moving along; he cited to the challenges posed by attempting to explain the services offered by the WCHA on a website while making it easy to understand. He added that the website is going through reviews to make it strong, and that those efforts are moving along and are very active.

### **Executive Session**

None.

**Action Taken from Executive Session**

None.

**Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Reddic and that motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Getty. The motion passed by unanimous vote of all five (5) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent. The meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Alanna D. Conard, Recording Secretary