

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
MARCH 16, 2017
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Wescott called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. Following the call to order, roll call was taken.

The following Board members were in attendance:

Present:	Chairman Fred S. Wescott Vice Chairman Dina M. Getty Commissioner Alanna D. Conard Commissioner Pearl Hawks Commissioner James E. Hughes
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Absent:	Commissioner Ron Ballard Commissioner Tunaya S.M. Beaudry
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Also present: Executive Director Alan Zais, Assistant Executive Director Felicia Davis, Finance Director Vickie Huwe and James R. Pirages of the law firm of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP.

Following roll call, Chairman Wescott led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing on the FY2017 Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan and the FY2017 Annual Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy

A motion to open the Public Hearing on these matters was made by Commissioner Hughes; that motion was seconded by Commissioner Hawks. The motion to commence the Public Hearing was approved by the unanimous roll call vote of the five (5) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent.

The Public Hearing opened at 5:36 p.m. Executive Director Alan Zais noted that notice of the Public Hearing had been published in the local newspaper and that no responses had been received to that notice. Executive Director Alan Zais also noted that no one from the public was present to comment on the FY2017 Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan and/or the FY2017 Annual Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy.

A motion to close the Public Hearing was made by Vice Chairman Getty; that motion was seconded by Commissioner Conard. The motion to close the public hearing was approved by unanimous roll call vote of the five (5) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent. The Public Hearing closed at 5:38 p.m.

Introduction of Guests

None.

Changes to Agenda

Executive Director Alan Zais asked to move the “Executive Session” and the “Action Taken from Executive Session” portions of the Agenda so that they could be held now and concluded prior to the rest of the Agenda. The proposed changes to the Agenda were approved by the Commissioners.

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 legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity” was made by Vice Chairman Getty; that motion was seconded by Commissioner Hawks. The motion to go into Executive Session was approved by unanimous roll call vote of the five (5) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent. The Executive Session commenced at 5:40 p.m. and concluded at 5:48 p.m. A motion to come out of Executive Session was made by Commissioner Hughes and was seconded by Commissioner Conard; that motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote of the five (5) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent. The Executive Session was closed at 5:48 p.m.

Action Taken from Executive Session

A motion was made to: (1) in lieu of an across-the-board increase for the coming fiscal year, a five percent (5%) one-time lump sum cash bonus (based upon the current annual salary of the full-time salaried employees and, for full-time hourly employees, their current hourly rate multiplied by 2080 hours per year); and (2) the continuation of the Performance Day Program (which allows employees to be eligible to receive an additional day off per quarter based upon the WCHA's assessment of their performance) and otherwise in keeping with the past practices applicable to that Program. That motion was made by Vice Chairman Getty and seconded by Commissioner Hawks. The 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 indicated that his written report had been included in the Board packet materials that the Commissioners had previously received.

Alan noted that there was a recent incident at Collier Garden Apartments where there was the mistaken belief that someone had a gun in a common area. It was later found that the object in question was a replica gun. However, Alan said that this brought to mind an issue that may arise

under the current lease form which provides that there are to be no firearms on the premises. Alan discussed the ongoing legal issues involving the Wilmington, Delaware Housing Authority where such lease provisions had been successfully challenged. Alan noted that the WCHA's insurance provider, AHRMA, has published recommended language for changes to the lease and to policies applicable to weapons. Alan said that he had passed along these proposed changes to legal counsel and, in order to be prepared and to avoid possible legal challenges, indicated that he would be bringing a revised lease to the Board in the near future for its review. Alan noted that he wished to "get ahead of the curve" in taking this initiative.

Alan also discussed the present agreement with Ken-Rock Apartments wherein the WCHA manages that property on behalf of the Ken-Rock Community Center. It was noted that the agreement will expire at the end of March 2017. Alan said that the current arrangement is not working out. He noted that Ken-Rock has been impacted quite drastically by its inability to use \$60,000.00 of the monies received through its housing programs to operate its community center as it had done in the past. Alan also noted that Ken-Rock has been asking the WCHA to pay for questionable items for which it has not provided adequate documentation. Therefore, he wanted the Board to be aware of the WCHA's intent to provide Ken-Rock with notice of the WCHA's intent to terminate the arrangement. It was noted that the termination is anticipated to become effective at the end of Ken-Rock's fiscal year and the completion of its audit (on or about July 1, 2017).

Commissioner Hughes, who is a Board Member at Ken-Rock, noted that he had been the individual who had originally suggested the relationship between Ken-Rock and WCHA. He said that he had told the Ken-Rock Board that it appeared that Ken-Rock wanted to take over the management of the property again and that, while the Director of Ken-Rock had said that that was not his intent, it nonetheless appeared to be that way. Alan noted that there have been issues with maintenance at Ken-Rock that the WCHA has recommended but that Ken-Rock has challenged and, as a result, that the residents have been adversely affected. He said that the Ken-Rock maintenance person does not appear to be performing his duties and that the WCHA is expending an inordinate amount of time and effort in addressing issues there. Therefore, Alan advised the Board that it was his intent to provide notice to terminate the agreement to Ken-Rock. The Board concurred with this suggestion. Commissioner Hughes thanked the WCHA for its past efforts in cleaning up the documentation and management at Ken-Rock.

At approximately 6:00 p.m., Towanna Williams of the WCHA staff arrived. Alan introduced Towanna and noted that she is running the WCHA's ROSS Program. Alan said that Towanna has been a public housing resident. He said that while Towanna started working at the front window at the WCHA's offices, she has since been promoted and is now doing resident support services. He asked Towanna to describe some of her job duties.

Towanna indicated that she assists individuals with applications and helps residents find services at a discount with various social service programs. She noted that she has also recently coordinated epilepsy training as well as training for residents on meeting "final expenses" (a program which has been offered at three sites). She is in the process of starting an adult coloring book club and is also running a "What Home Means to Me" poster contest. She is also attempting to start bingo programs at the various sites. She also noted that she is presently taking a sign language class to allow her to better communicate with the residents.

The Board congratulated Towanna on her efforts. It was noted that she has only been in the job for approximately two weeks and has accomplished many tasks. Towanna departed the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

Alan continued on with his report. He reminded the Board of his past report regarding the WCHA's PHAS score which had resulted in the WCHA being assessed at 3 points below the level necessary to be rated as a "high performer". He noted that he had been involved in ongoing efforts with HUD and was having difficulties in arguing the WCHA's points to individuals at HUD who would respond to his concerns. He said one individual had indicated that he could grade the WCHA only on the "property side" (and not on its "financial side") which would have allowed WCHA to be rated as a high performer but would only do so if Ms. Navarro (who runs the Moving to Work (MTW) Program) would approve; Alan noted, however, that his calls to Ms. Navarro had not been returned.

Alan said that he ultimately contacted the offices of Senators Durbin and Duckworth and Congressman Bustos and, through their efforts in contacting HUD, the WCHA's efforts have been successful. He indicated that the WCHA was notified today that its appeal has been granted and that it will be rated as a high performer. Alan cited to this as a good example of the importance of maintaining good relationships with our Federal representatives.

Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda was made by Commissioner Hughes. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Conard. 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.

Alan noted to the Board that Assistant Executive Director Felicia Davis had made a strong outreach with regard to the elevator procurement item that was set forth the Consent Agenda but, despite her efforts, the WCHA had received only one response.

Financial Report

Financial Director Vickie Huwe noted that the WCHA has received approximately \$5,000.00 through the State Offset Program. This Program allows the WCHA to recover delinquent monies owed to the WCHA from the involved individuals' State tax refunds. This amount has been recovered only since January 1, 2017.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Commissioner Comments

None.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Hughes and that motion was seconded by Commissioner Hawks. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of all five (5) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent. The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alanna Conard, Recording Secretary