

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
AUGUST 16, 2018
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Wescott called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Following the call to order, roll call was taken.

The following Board Members were present:

Present:	Chairman Fred S. Wescott Vice Chairman Dina M. Getty Commissioner Alanna D. Conard Commissioner Pearl Hawks Commissioner James E. Hughes Commissioner Tasha Reddic
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Absent:	Commissioner Ron Ballard
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Also present: Executive Director Alan Zais, Assistant Executive Director Felicia Davis, Finance Director Vickie Huwe, FSS Coordinator Christina Coon 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.

Changes to Agenda

None.

Public Comments

None.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Alan Zais noted that he had previously submitted his written report to the Board that accompanied the Board packet.

Alan discussed the Winnebago County Housing Authority's (WCHA) Family Self-Sufficiency Program and noted that it is one of the top five (5) FSS Programs in the State of Illinois with regard to the number of people served as a percentage of eligible participants. He stated that it takes five (5) years for a participant to complete the Program and to see the results and the reward from participation and, therefore, that creates difficulties with some individuals' willingness to participate in the Program. He introduced staff member Christina Coon who oversees the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program at the WCHA and supervises another staff member, Trish, who assists with that Program. He indicated that it is Christina's personality and

the trust that she develops in the participants that contributes to the Program's success at the WCHA. Christina discussed the Program. She explained that if a resident sees an increase in wages, the amount that they pay for rent also increases. When this happens, the WCHA matches the increase in the rent and places the amount in escrow pending a participant's "graduation". She noted that there was one participant who realized over \$23,000.00 when she graduated from the Program. During the seven (7) years that she has been involved with the Program, Christina said that five (5) participants have bought houses and that there have been approximately twenty-nine (29) graduates. She said that most participants realize on average \$14,000.00 to \$16,000.00 when they "graduate" from the Program.

Alan added that Christina also, in addition to her work on the FSS Program, does case management work for the Section 8 Program. Alan said that the FSS Program is run by Christina for both the WCHA as well as the Boone County Housing Authority (BCHA); it was noted that there are 15 (of 142 eligible) residents participating at BCHA; 54 Section 8 residents participating at WCHA along with 32 Public Housing residents participating at WCHA. It was clarified that the money received from participation in the Program may be used for any purpose by the "graduate". Alan also cited to the FSS Program's relationship with Habitat for Humanity and Homestart.

Christina Coon concluded her comments and departed the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

Executive Director Alan Zais went on with his report. He advised the Board that as a result of its PHAS and SEMAP scores, WCHA had been ranked as a "high performer" in both. This designation makes it easier for the WCHA to apply for participation in the Moving to Work (MTW) Program; Vice Chairman Getty asked as to when the MTW Program would once again reopen and Alan indicated that that such should occur at almost any time.

Alan also advised the Board that with the work that the WCHA has been doing with the Freeport RAD Program, that Program is now at 100% occupancy after only four (4) months. He stated that the ownership of the development is very happy about this and, as a result, the WCHA may be retained on a long-term basis to assist with the management of that Program.

Alan also showed the Board certificates that the WCHA had received from NAHRO. He said that the WCHA received merit awards for its work with both the "Rock House" (the police officer residence program) as well as with Westport Village.

With regard to its work with the Police Program, Alan stated that Chief O'Shea wishes to expand the Program and that there are additional volunteers within the Police Department who wish to participate in the Program. The challenge in doing so is with regard to the availability of funds. He noted that the Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) had made a mistake with regard to its involvement in the Program by using public housing dollars which, in turn, has been part of the HUD investigation of the RHA's operations. Alan said that with regard to the WCHA's future involvement in this Program, he is exploring the possibility of obtaining funds through the National Community Stabilization Trust (NCST). He said that if NCST funds are available, he would like to pursue an additional residence for the Police Program, including the possibility of one in the Champion Park neighborhood.

Lastly, Alan reported that the WCHA's participation in the ConnectHome Nation Program, which is overseen by the WCHA's new ROSS Coordinator, has resulted in obtaining 87 tablets for connectivity that had been obtained through T-Mobile.

Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda was made by Commissioner Conard. That motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Getty. The items on the Consent Agenda were approved by unanimous roll call vote of the six (6) Commissioners present, with none against and one (1) Commissioner absent.

Financial Report

Finance Director Vickie Huwe reported that Winnebago Homes Association (WHA) has received a payment of approximately \$99,000.00 from the Westport Village development fee. It was noted that this is the second such payment. In response to Vice Chairman Getty's inquiry, Vickie reported that this money will be used for the development of future low income housing.

Old Business

Vice Chairman Getty inquired as to the status of the payment from the RHA (which had also been discussed at the July 2018 Board meeting). Executive Director Alan Zais gave some background information about this issue. He said that the WCHA has about twenty project-based voucher contracts with the RHA but that the RHA has not been properly making payments or placing people in the involved homes. He said that this has been a long-term issue. As noted at the July meeting, the RHA owes the WCHA money and, as a result of a June meeting (at which Vice Chairman Getty and Alan had participated) a promise had been made to pay the money by July. While a partial payment was made since the July WCHA Board meeting, no further payments have been received despite the prior promises and despite the communications that Alan has written to RHA Executive Director Laura Snyder (who has most recently not responded to his communications). While there are not significant dollars involved (at this time only approximately \$330.00), Alan said that RHA is proving not to be a reliable business partner. Vice Chairman Getty noted that she had considered making a motion to terminate the project-based voucher contract with the RHA due to its unwillingness to make payments but had learned that such a motion would have to be included on the Agenda for the September 2018 Board meeting in order to meet legal requirements. After significant discussion, the consensus of the Board was to place such a motion on the Agenda for the September WCHA Board Meeting, and that such should occur even if the RHA makes full payment in the interim. It was also acknowledged that a legal review of the contract should occur prior to such a resolution being prepared and presented at the September meeting. Executive Director Alan Zais noted that no family will be displaced by this action and, from a personal standpoint, his deep distress about this turn of events. Alan said that this is a great program that had been celebrated by HUD and others but, unfortunately, RHA has not been compliant with its obligations in the program.

There was then discussion about the status of other RHA properties including Brewington Oaks and Fairgrounds. With regard to Brewington Oaks, while RHA wishes to demolish that property, they do not have HUD's approval to do so. At present about one-third are uninhabitable, and

about one-third are not being used because of the plan to demolish the property. These issues have resulted in the RHA receiving a “troubled” PHAS score.

Commissioner Hughes commented that it is his belief that there is a movement among certain city leaders to stop the development of future Section 8 or permanent public housing on the east side of Rockford.

New Business

None.

Commissioner Comments

Vice Chairman Getty inquired as to the status of the WCHA’s work on correcting some of the aesthetic issues on the side of the Washington Park Community Center. Alan stated that they had received estimates to put up new steel and that the staff is in the process of evaluating and clarifying those estimates prior to taking further action.

Executive Session

None.

Action Taken from Executive Session

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 six (6) Commissioners present, with none against and one (1) Commissioner absent. The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alanna Conard, Recording Secretary