

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
JUNE 19, 2019
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance

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

The following Board Members were present:

Present:	Chairman Fred S. Wescott Commissioner Alanna D. Conard Commissioner James E. Hughes Commissioner Danielle J.A. Potter Commissioner Tasha N. Reddic
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Absent:	Vice Chairman Dina M. Getty Commissioner Ronald E. Ballard
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Also present: Executive Director Alan Zais 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.

Introduction of Guests

None.

Changes to Agenda

None.

Public Comments

None.

Executive Director's Report

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

Alan indicated that he wanted to further report on two matters. With respect to the Westport Village development in Freeport (which is managed by the WCHA), he was looking for consensus from the Board regarding whether to pursue a rent increase. Alan reminded the Board that last year a \$5.00 increase had been implemented at Westport Village. This year's rate increase was actually due in February 2019 but could not be completed at that time because of the federal government shutdown. Alan said that he has been in contact with representatives of

HUD and had asked for their input and permission to now proceed with an adjustment. HUD had pointed out to Alan that such an adjustment is allowed per the terms of the agreement with ownership but would not otherwise commit to approving such a rent increase at this time. Alan noted his belief that not pursuing a rent increase was unfair to the ownership. He said that an increase this year (which would likely be about \$5.00) would be based upon rate comparability studies and would not be instituted until after the Board has reviewed and approved it (likely at the August Board meeting). He said that if a rate increase is instituted in August, it is likely that another increase will be pursued in February of 2020 (to put the rent increases back on the approved “cycle”). While noting that someone could challenge two increases during less than a twelve month period, Alan reminded the Board that such an increase only affects the payment standard and is not passed along to the residents. He pointed out that the ownership/landlord has been doing what it is supposed to do per its agreement and wanted to know the Board’s feelings on whether to pursue such an increase.

Commissioner Reddic asked if the rent increase could not just be doubled at this time so as to make it unnecessary to have another increase next year. Alan responded by noting that such an increase is supposed to be considered each year. Commissioner Conard asked who is penalized if such an increase is not pursued. Alan responded by noting that the ownership (which includes Winnebago Homes Association) would be negatively impacted by the failure to pursue such an increase.

Alan asked Attorney Jim Pirages for his thoughts on this. While noting that he had not reviewed the underlying documents, Attorney Pirages noted his belief that we should take the risk of pursuing an increase at this time so as to continue with the annual practice of pursuing a rate increase when it is supported by the comparability study. Alan also noted that if such an increase was challenged, the WCHA could always put a “hold” on such an increase for next year.

The consensus of the Board was to pursue such an increase at this juncture, with the understanding that approval of such an increase would be brought before the Board following a hearing on the increase, review of the comparability study and similar tasks (likely at the August 2019 Board meeting).

Alan also advised the Board of the program undertaken by the Rockford Police Department where it is using a software program to access video cameras at various locations throughout the community. Alan noted that he would like to have the WCHA participate in this program. By way of example, he pointed to activities going on at Collier Gardens which he thought could be deterred with resident knowledge that the video cameras are ultimately connected to the Rockford Police Department. He said that this would be a wonderful benefit to the residents who would feel safer with this technology in place. Alan also advised of his intent to look at obtaining license plate recognition technology and to include such as part of the future capital fund budget.

Commissioner Potter asked if the Rockford Police Department might use the information obtained through footage to require the WCHA to take additional steps to address conduct seen on that footage. Alan indicated that he did not know the answer to that question but said that the WCHA and the Rockford Police Department have a great working relationship and he did not anticipate such issues. He also noted his wish to bring cameras to the Champion Park

neighborhood; he said that two residents have been having large parties every Saturday and that such technology would be helpful in monitoring and discouraging improper conduct in conjunction with those activities.

The consensus of the Board was for Alan to proceed with cooperating with the Rockford Police Department with this program.

Lastly, Alan noted the good news set forth in the Board packet regarding the status of the WCHA's Move to Work (MWT) application. While noting that the WCHA's selection is not a foregone conclusion, the WCHA is one of those 49 housing authorities that are part of "lottery" for MTW participation.

Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Commissioner Hughes. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Conard. The item on the Consent Agenda was 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 was absent. Alan advised the Board that the WCHA received the four (4) year financial report from HUD for its Section 8 activities and that the WCHA's numbers looked good, with the WCHA spending all of the Section 8 funds allotted to it. He also advised the Board that the audit had been received on the Freeport RAD I program and that no "findings" had resulted from that audit.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Conard inquired as to the status of the Concord Commons development that had been discussed at previous Board meetings. Alan indicated that nothing further had been heard by the WCHA about its involvement in that development.

Chairman Wescott noted the WCHA's contribution of a gift basket for the recent Charitable Golf Outing with which he is involved. He said that the golf outing is likely to netted over \$15,000.00.

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 Reddic. That motion was passed by unanimous voice vote of all five (5) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent. The meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alanna D. Conard, Recording Secretary