

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 18, 2024  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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

Chairman Getty called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. Following the call to order, roll call was taken.

The following Commissioners were present:

Present:                                      Chairman Dina M. Getty  
   Commissioner Ronald E. Ballard  
   Commissioner Elsie Brown  
   Commissioner Danielle J.A. Potter

Absent:    Vice Chairman Alanna D. Conard

Also present were the following: Executive Director Alan J. Zais; Deputy Director Deb Alfredson; Finance Director Vickie Huwe; and James R. Pirages of AGHL Law.

Chairman Getty led the Board of Commissioners 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 the Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA) had submitted in the application to Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) for the Getty Gardens Program and had done so on Monday, January 15, 2024. He thanked Jilly Graciana, Deb Alfredson and Vickie Huwe for their work on this application and noted that he thought it was a good application. Alan reminded the Board that he serves on the IHDA committee that reviews these applications (noting that he will recuse himself from any vote on the WCHA's application) and that a formal decision on this issue is expected by April 19, 2024.

Alan said that he still needs to finalize the Memorandum of Understanding with Fifth Avenue Capital Partners and its representative, Tom Brantley. He reminded the Board that it had previously approved WCHA entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with Fifth Avenue

Capital Partners, subject to review and approval of the Memorandum of Understanding by legal counsel. From his dealings with Tom Brantley he said that he believes that the WCHA and the Fifth Avenue Capital Partners will have a good working relationship. Alan will keep the Board advised of further developments in this matter.

Deputy Director Deb Alfredson noted the pending adjustment in the Operating Cost Adjustment Factor (OCAF) for the Freeport RAD properties. She noted that these adjustments will take place effective February 1, 2024 with the rent for a one bedroom unit being raised from \$545 to \$610 per month and from \$736 per month to \$824 a month for a two-bedroom apartment. Alan noted that the ratification of these adjustments will be part of the Agenda for the February WCHA Board meeting.

### **Consent Agenda**

Chairman Getty pointed to the two (2) Resolutions on the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Potter made a motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. The items on the Consent Agenda were as follows:

- A. Resolution No. 24 R 1 *“Resolution Approving the Minutes of the December 21, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners”*
- B. Resolution No. 24 R 2 *“Resolution Approving the Moving to Work Plan for 2024”*

The motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda, as noted above, was approved by unanimous roll call vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and one (1) Commissioner absent.

### **Financial Report**

Finance Director Vickie Huwe said that efforts are being made to have Section 8 payments made by means other than by check given recent fraudulent activities involving checks. She said that they are working on arranging for debit cards through US Bank to use for Section 8 payments instead of checks. She discussed the fraudulent activities, the perpetrator of which is not a participant in the Section 8 program.

### **Old Business**

Alan discussed the NI ReACH “d/b/a” name that has been used by the WCHA in the recent past and was implemented substantially due to the WCHA’s activities outside of Winnebago County. Alan said that despite this intent, there are issues that have been created by the use of the “NI ReACH” name. He cited to problems that Vickie Huwe is having (wherein residents cannot write checks to NI ReACH but must write them out to WCHA to avoid bank issues); legal issues; issues with HUD and IHDA; a lack of understanding regarding the relationship between NI ReACH and WCHA, etc. He recommended to the Board that they abandon the use of “NI ReACH” because of these problems and returned to the use of WCHA which remains that entity’s legal name. The consensus of the Board was to approve this move; it was noted that formal action will have to be taken on this topic at the next meeting since the use of NI ReACH was originally approved by Board Resolution.

Alan also discussed the conflict-of-interest issue involving the prospective appointment of a Board member to the WCHA Board by the Winnebago County Board. The candidate involved is a landlord. Alan noted that he and Chairman Getty along with Attorney Pirages had met with Chairman Chiarelli, his assistant, Karen Elyea and the prospective Board member on January 17 to discuss the conflict-of-interest issue that had been raised by HUD. It was noted that the meeting was a very positive meeting and that the candidate was assured that it was nothing personal but that the potential conflict of interest matter (and the waiver of same) was an issue raised by HUD. Attorney Pirages added that HUD has been unable to give us clear guidance on whether a conflict of interest exists and noted that HUD apparently has no template or process for requesting a waiver of a conflict. Nevertheless, with the approval of Chairman Chiarelli and the candidate, and assuming that the WCHA Board agrees, a conflict-of-interest waiver is being submitted to HUD which will be going out by a letter that is ready to be sent on Friday, January 19, 2024. The consensus of the Board was to proceed with that conflict-of-interest waiver request.

**New Business**

None.

**Commissioner Comments**

None.

**Executive Session**

A motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to Section 2(c)(11) of the Open Meetings Act for purposes of discussing “[l]itigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting,” was made by Commissioner Ballard; that motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. The motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to Section 2(c)(11) was approved by unanimous roll call vote of all four (4) Commissioners present with none against and one (1) Commissioner absent. The Executive Session commenced at 5:24 p.m.

A motion to come out of Executive Session was made by Commissioner Potter and that motion was seconded by Commissioner Ballard. The motion to come out of Executive Session was approved by unanimous roll call vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and one (1) Commissioner absent. The Executive Session ended at 5:50 p.m.

**Action Taken from Executive Session**

None.

**Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Potter and that motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. That motion was passed by unanimous voice vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and one (1) Commissioner absent. The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Danielle J.A. Potter, Recording Secretary