

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 21, 2024
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Getty called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. Following the call to order, roll call was taken.

The following Commissioners were present:

Present: Chairman Dina M. Getty
Vice Chairman Alanna D. Conard
Commissioner Ronald E. Ballard
Commissioner Elsie Brown

Absent: Commissioner Frank Gambino
Commissioner Danielle J.A. Potter

Also present were the following: Executive Director Alan J. Zais; Deputy Director Deb Alfredson; Finance Director Vickie Huwe; Rental Housing Support Program Manager and Re-entry Coordinator Jilly Graciana; and James R. Pirages of AGHL Law.

Chairman Getty led the Board of Commissioners in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introduction of Guests

None.

Public Hearings on (a) Rent Adjustments for the Vouchers in RAD-I (Hosmer and Brewster Apartments in Freeport, Illinois); and (b) Rent Adjustments for the Vouchers in RAD-II (Westport Village Apartments in Freeport, Illinois).

A motion to convene a public hearing on the above-referenced matters was made by Commissioner Brown; that motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Conard. The motion to convene the public hearing was approved by unanimous voice vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent. The public hearing commenced at 5:03 p.m.

Alan advised the Board that while notice of the public hearing had been published, no comments had been received regarding the proposed rent adjustments and no one from the public was present to address the proposed adjustments.

A motion to adjourn the public hearing on these matters was made by Commissioner Brown and that motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Conard. The motion to adjourn the public hearing was approved by unanimous voice vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent. The public hearing adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Changes to Agenda

Director Alan Zais asked if the “Executive Session” and “Actions Taken from Executive Session” could be moved so that they would be conducted after the completion of the Executive Director’s Report. The consensus of the Board was to approve this change to the Agenda.

Public Comments

None.

Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Alan Zais introduced Jilly Graciana, the Winnebago County Housing Authority’s (WCHA) Rental Housing Support Program (RHSP) Manager and Re-entry Coordinator. Alan said that Jilly has accepted many new responsibilities, and he has asked her to join the Board meetings given the scope of the duties for which she is now responsible. Chairman Getty and Vice Chairman Conard both welcomed Jilly to the Board meeting. Alan also gave examples of the additional responsibilities that Jilly has accepted.

Alan noted that his report was contained in the written report that accompanied the Board packet. He specifically addressed a topic that was in the report involving discussions with Extended Stay America. He noted that HUD Regional Director Kimberly Dana had been contacted by the Government Affairs liaison from Extended Stay America; Alan said that he had also subsequently spoken with the HUD Regional Director as well as with the representative from Extended Stay America in recent weeks. Extended Stay America apparently maintains three (3) different levels of housing and has an approximately 40% vacancy rate nationwide. A relationship with Extended Stay America is being considered to assist with the need for transitional housing. He pointed, for example, to an inquiry he recently received from OSF which was looking to provide supportive services for victims of domestic violence and was inquiring as to the availability of transitional housing for those individuals. He noted that Extended Stay America provides materials that are needed for transitional housing including utensils, bedding, etc. Such transitional housing could be helpful in emergency situations (citing to the situation several years ago with Hurricane Katrina) as well as for homeless veterans. He noted that there are opportunities with Extended Stay America that were not too dissimilar from what had been discussed with the WCHA’s Airbnb/VRBO concept that is part of its MTW proposal. He said he would also like to look at broadening this concept through discussions with NAHRO. He said that the next step was for him is to prepare an executive summary that will be submitted to Extended Stay America for review by that entity’s Board.

There was discussion about how this would work and some of the unanswered issues that need to be addressed. Alan asked for the Board’s consensus as to whether it was appropriate for him to continue to explore this option and the consensus of the Board was to do so, although both Chairman Getty and Vice Chairman Conard noted their concerns regarding the feasibility of such a program.

Alan asked Deputy Director Deb Alfredson if she had any comments to add. She noted that they will soon be working with a consultant from Creative Culture that will assist in advising WCHA regarding pay parity, job roles, etc. Alan also turned to Jilly Graciana and asked her to address the

work in which she is engaged in Mercer County, Illinois. Jilly noted that they had been approached by a mixed financing project in the City of Aledo, located in Mercer County, to assist with five (5) units as part of their rental housing support program. Mercer County had apparently heard about the Rental Housing Support Program through the Shimer redevelopment that WCHA has assisted in Carroll County. Alan added that with the Aledo project, an Intergovernmental Agreement would be entered into applicable to five (5) vouchers. He also noted that if the Getty Gardens project is approved, it will mark the third time that this type of mixed financing approach has been used (at Getty Gardens, at the Shimer project in Carroll County as well as at the Aledo project in Mercer County). Jilly noted that the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) is very interested in having these types of initiatives in more rural counties (and not concentrated in the Chicago and other metropolitan areas).

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”, 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 against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity” and pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21) for “[d]iscussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06” was made by Vice Chairman Conard; that motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. The motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to the Sections noted above was approved by unanimous roll call vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent. The Executive Session commenced at 5:31 p.m.

A motion to come out of Executive Session was made by Commissioner Ballard and that motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. 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 two (2) Commissioners absent. The Executive Session ended at 5:55 p.m.

Action Taken from Executive Session

A motion to approve the minutes of the Executive Sessions held on September 21, 2023, January 18, 2024 and February 15, 2024; to keep unavailable from public review the minutes of the Executive Sessions held on July 21, 2011, March 14, 2018, April 19, 2018, September 19, 2018, January 18, 2024 and February 15, 2024; and finally, to make available for public review the minutes of the Executive Session held on September 21, 2023, was made by Commissioner Ballard and that motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Conard. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Getty pointed to the eleven (11) Resolutions on the Consent Agenda. Vice Chairman Conard 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 7 *“Resolution Approving the Minutes of the February 15, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners”*
- B. Resolution No. 24 R 8 *“Resolution Approving Rent Adjustments for the Vouchers in the RAD-I Program Applicable to Hosmer and Brewster Apartments in Freeport, Illinois”*
- C. Resolution No. 24 R 9 *“Resolution Approving Rent Adjustments for the Vouchers in the RAD-II Program Applicable to Westport Village Apartments in Freeport, Illinois”*
- D. Resolution No. 24 R 10 *“Resolution Confirming the Approval of the First Revision to the Operating Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2024”*
- E. Resolution No. 24 R 11 *“Resolution Approving the Operating Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2025 and Certification Necessary for Submitting the Same to HUD”*
- F. Resolution No. 24 R 12 *“Resolution Approving Obtaining Employee Group Health Insurance Coverage Through Aetna Healthcare”*
- G. Resolution No. 24 R 13 *“Resolution Approving and Authorizing Submission to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development of the Winnebago County Housing Authority’s FY2025 Moving to Work Supplement to the Annual Plan Covering the Period April 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025”*
- H. Resolution No. 24 R 14 *“Resolution Approving Intergovernmental Agreement with the Boone County Housing Authority for the Period From May 1, 2024 through April 30, 2034”*
- I. Resolution No. 24 R 15 *“Resolution Approving Amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Boone County Housing Authority”*
- J. Resolution No. 24 R 16 *“Resolution Approving the Write-Off of \$634.00 as a Collection Loss for D’Agnolo Garden Apartments”*
- K. Resolution No. 24 R 17 *“Resolution Approving the Write-Off of \$5,446.79 as a Collection Loss for Wescott Homes”*

A motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda, as noted above, was approved by unanimous roll call of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent

Financial Report

Finance Director Vickie Huwe noted that Financial Report for February had been included in the Board packet and that she had no additional comments and the Commissioners had no questions regarding the Financial Report. Executive Director Alan Zais noted that the budgeted items that were part of the Consent Agenda really involve primarily the two (2) developments that are currently owned by WCHA (D'Agnolo Garden Apartments and Wescott Homes) and Finance Director Vickie Huwe added that the other developments managed by WCHA are technically "their own businesses".

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Commissioner Comments

Vice Chairman Conard gave congratulations to Alan on his recent appointment by Governor Pritzker to the Illinois Affordable Housing Advisory Commission. She also noted the resident letter that was included with the Board packet that gave compliments to Emily Schwartz, Rene Myers, and Christal Warne. Vice Chairman Conard questioned whether the employees who received such compliments are recognized by WCHA. Alan detailed the efforts that are made by the WCHA to express appreciation to staff and noted the recent promotions of some of these three (3) individuals as well as receptions that have been held to recognize their appointments.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Vice Chairman Conard and that motion was seconded by Commissioner Ballard. That motion was passed by unanimous voice vote of the four (4) Commissioners present with none against and two (2) Commissioners absent. The meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle J.A. Potter, Recording Secretary