

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF
WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND

1. Call to order: 4:00 P.M. Regular Meeting March 18, 2010 at the Woonsocket Housing Authority, 679 Social Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Pledge of Allegiance

Introduction of new Commissioner Janet Lemieux by Chairwoman Cote. Director Kulik explained to the Board that Commissioner Lemieux did not receive her Board package until today because the WHA was not advised of her appointment until yesterday afternoon.

Roll Call:

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Janet Lemieux

Robert Kulik, Executive Director
Deputy Director, Duncan Speel
Vice Chairman Baldelli -Absent
Commissioner Laliberte –Absent
Commissioner Gerard Remillard - Absent
Attorney Howard Croll

- 1A. Good and Welfare for the Audience

Former Commissioner Brien acknowledged his past service to the Board and expressed his continuing interest and concern of the WHA and congratulated and extended best wishes to Commissioner Lemieux on her appointment.

2. Good and Welfare for Commissioners

Commissioner Frappier asked if Good & Welfare for the Commissioners should remain or could it be voted out. Attorney Croll said it could be voted out. If the Board chose to continue Good & Welfare for the Commissioners, by next month Commissioner Frappier requested a copy of the latest ruling by the Attorney General. Attorney Croll explained that there is a ruling for cities and towns, but not for housing authorities. That ruling is that G&W is frowned upon because there is no advance notice of what anyone is going to say. There is further discussion between Commissioner Frappier and Attorney Croll about remaining

in compliance with the ruling, but Attorney Croll again states that the ruling is for cities and towns. The question remains whether the ruling applies to boards and commissions other than city and town councils. Commissioner Frappier asked Attorney Croll to get a ruling on that, Attorney Croll said it will probably take more than a month to get that ruling, but he will request it.

Commissioner Frappier questioned whether a barber or hairdresser who caters to residents in their own apartments could continue to provide this service once the salons are established at the high-rises? The Director said yes, that the salons are just an additional service option.

Commissioner Lahousse welcomed Commissioner Lemieux.

Chairwoman Cote asked Attorney Croll to look into limiting Good & Welfare to five minutes. Attorney Croll said the Board can just vote on that. Put it on the next agenda and vote on it. The Attorney said the Board could also eliminate Good & Welfare for the Commissioners or for the public the same way, by vote. The Director stated that he did not think we could eliminate G&W for the public, under federal guidelines. Deputy Speel said that G&W is an agenda item in the bylaws, so the bylaws would have to be changed; the Attorney agreed with that statement.

3. Chairwoman Cote asks for a motion to approve the Minutes for the meeting of February 18, 2010. A motion was made by Commissioner Lahousse and seconded by Commissioner Frappier.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Cote
Commissioner Frappier
Commissioner Lahousse
Commissioner Lemieux

3. Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion to approve the bills paid for the month of February 2010. A motion was made by Commissioner Frappier and seconded by Commissioner Lahousse.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Janet Lemieux

5. Communications and Interest of the Authority.

Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion to accept and place on file. A motion was made by Commissioner Lahousse and seconded by Commissioner Frappier.

There was some discussion of the communication from Woonsocket Police Chief Carey to use an apartment at St.Germain Manor to set up an office for his drug division. HUD Division Director has approved the request for three years. It benefits the entire City as well as the WHA because the officers are there on site. Director Kulik discussed how Security Director Moreau's ties to the WPD have benefitted the WHA since his coming on board with the WHA a year ago. Commissioner Frappier expressed his pleasure with this police presence at the hires.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Janet Lemieux

6. Report of the Secretary

A. Executive Director's Report

Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion to receive and place on file, the report of the Secretary, for purposes of discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Frappier and was seconded by Commissioner Lahousse.

The Director submits his report as written highlighting that the independent appraiser will be here on March 22 and 23rd to go through the scattered site units and will give an appraisal shortly thereafter. We are continuing to communicate with the SAC regarding the application for Morin Heights and Veteran's

Memorial demo/dispo regarding the use of the land after the demo of the buildings. We have also had communication with SAC in response to a letter SAC received from agencies in the City (Neighborhood Works) explaining exactly what our position is and what HUD's position is. HUD favors the Section 8 route and that is what we plan to do.

The Director commended Deputy Speel for his diligence and perseverance in obtaining the rebate from National Grid for 1100 new refrigerators. National Grid, after the fact of our application, said we did not qualify as a "household" because we are a housing authority. We were expecting a \$45,000 - \$50,000 rebate. Deputy contacted RISE and consequently, we are receiving a \$110,153 rebate. The Deputy included Judi Lacroix in his efforts to obtain the rebate.

The Director announced a farewell luncheon for Accounting Coordinator Monique Bergeron on March 26th, and extended an invitation to all Commissioners.

Regarding the bathroom renovations, the contractor J.J. Cardosi is in each of the 4 hi-rises demolishing one bathroom unit to be used as a model. The renovated bathrooms will eliminate the bathtub and install an ADA compliant shower unit. Commissioner Lemieux asked if there would be a seat in the shower; yes there will.

With the departure of Monique Bergeron, there will be a reorganization of the finance department. Until that process is completed, the Section 8 Coordinator and Intake Manager positions will be put on hold. There is a possibility that someone from the finance department will migrate downstairs. We have also just posted for an Accounting Clerk. Commissioner Frappier asked how long the Section 8 Coordinator has been in interim status; the Director said a year and a half and may be for a month or two longer. The delay has been a result of the management company's review and recommendations.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Cote
Commissioner Frappier
Commissioner Lahousse
Commissioner Lemieux

B. Report of the Deputy Director

Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion to receive and place on file, the report of the Secretary, for purposes of discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Lemieux and was seconded by Commissioner Lahousse.

The Deputy submitted his report as written, highlighting the bathroom renovations contract with J.J. Cardosi for \$3,700,000 which is all of our stimulus money, plus some. The stimulus was \$2,900,000. The Deputy and Executive Directors have been exploring the option of assisted housing at the hi-rises as an option to help with the difficulty we are having renting the hi-rises. We are not looking a major commitment, maybe something like two floors at one hi-rise. The Deputy discussed creating fully ADA compliant units for assisted housing. We would bring in the services for nursing, food and housekeeping. We would lose the HUD subsidy, but done right, we could double our income.

The compactors are being replaced under the contract with Fielding Associates. Also under contract is the Maguire Group who will begin the engineering survey of the overhead electric at Morin Heights and Veteran's. This work is being done in conjunction with the application that we have submitted to the SAC which result in the demo of half of the units at Veteran's.

Everything we do now has to be done to advance to more practical options like assisted housing, transitional housing with the shelter, and homeownership options.

Commissioner Lemieux asked for an explanation about the stimulus funds. The Deputy explained that the \$2,900,000 stimulus under the ARRA came with a new set of rules and regulations as to when and how it must be spent, including that we must buy all American-made products.

Commissioner Lemieux asked about assisted living and asked if that was just for hi-rises. The Deputy addressed the question pointing out that Boston HUD does not support assisted living options, even though HUD does subsidize assisted living units in RI and MA.

There was some discussion about the difficulties renting the hi-rises. At Kennedy Manor parking is an issue, at St. Germain and Crepeau Court it is the apartment design. Although the Parkview waiting list is not a problem, it is not as long as it used to be. All waiting lists are currently open, except Section 8.

Commissioner Lemieux asked about the overhead electric, and asked about an "every-other-light" option like in the City. The Deputy said we have not

considered it considering the problems we have with crime, and regardless, the electric service is very outdated and must be upgraded.

Commissioner Frappier asked how many vacancies there are at the hi-rises. The Deputy said about 10 out of 600. All around, the WHA vacancy is probably less than 1%.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Cote
Commissioner Frappier
Commissioner Lahousse
Commissioner Lemieux

C. Reports of Direct Staff, Legal and Financial

Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion to receive and place on file, the reports of Direct Staff, Legal and Financial, for purposes of discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Frappier and was seconded by Commissioner Lahousse.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Cote
Commissioner Frappier
Commissioner Lahousse
Commissioner Lemieux

7. Report of Committees

None

8. Unfinished Business

None

9. New Business

A. Resolution # 1066: Approval to amend the WHA Procurement Policy.

A motion was made by Commissioner Frappier and was seconded by Commissioner Lahousse.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the “Ayes” and “Nays”.

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Cote
Commissioner Frappier
Commissioner Lahousse
Commissioner Lemieux - Abstain

10. Adjournment

Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Commissioner Frappier, seconded by Commissioner Lahousse at 4:50 p.m.

Roll call vote was unanimous.

Robert Kulik, Executive Director