

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF
WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND

1. Call to order: 4:03 P.M. Regular Meeting April 15, 2010 at the Woonsocket Housing Authority, 679 Social Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

Robert Kulik, Executive Director
Deputy Director, Duncan Speel
Attorney Paul Fontaine

2. Election of Chair

Secretary asks for nominations for Chairperson. Commissioner Frappier nominates current Chairwoman Cote noting her exemplary performance over the past year. Commissioner Remillard seconds the nomination.

The Secretary asks twice for other nominations. Hearing none, the Secretary closes the nominations.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken on the nomination of Lucienne Cote as Chair. The following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

3. Election of Vice Chair

The Chairwoman asks for nominations for Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Laliberte nominates current Vice Chairman Baldelli noting that he is a good representative for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Frappier seconds the nomination.

The Chairwoman asks twice for other nominations. Hearing none, the Chairwoman closes the nominations.

There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken on the nomination of Charles Baldelli as Vice Chairman. The following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

4. Good and Welfare for the Audience - None

5. Good and Welfare for Commissioners

Commissioner Lemieux raised for discussion the RI Legislature introducing a bill to cause tenant accounts to be placed in escrow in interest bearing accounts. She asked if there was any further information on that. This topic will be placed on the agenda for next month.

Commissioner Baldelli commented on Mapplan's report regarding the decrease in applications for the senior high-rises. His opinion is that it is not too soon to begin to look at the disposition of St. Germain Manor or Crepeau Court. We should be researching what we can do with one of those buildings. The Vice-Chairman also commented on the character of the residents changing. Commissioner Frappier asked about the high-rise vacancy rate at the high-rises. He does not believe that Mapplan scrutinized the community well enough to determine that one of the buildings should be eliminated. The Director discussed what he and the Deputy have learned by visiting and researching Assisted Living communities. He suggested that a committee be formed to continue this research. The Director thinks the 2nd and 3rd floors of Crepeau Court are the best site for

Assisted Living. The Director said St. Germain Manor can be rented because it is centrally located to many stores in the community. Vice Chairman Baldelli comment that Commissioner Laliberte should be part of the group looking at the possibility of Assisted Living. Commissioner Laliberte commented that Assisted Living will help the WHA to keep elderly residents in the buildings longer and safer.

Chairwoman Cote thanked the Board for their support and hopes to keep leading them in the right direction.

6. Chairwoman Cote asks for a motion to accept the minutes for the meeting of March 18, 2010. A motion was made by Commissioner Laliberte and seconded by Commissioner Frappier.

Commissioner Frappier asked for the minutes to be corrected regarding his question about barbers/hairdressers who currently service residents in their apartments. His question was, will these service providers be able to continue to service residents in their apartments once the salon is established in the high-rises? The answer is 'yes', and the minutes will be corrected

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

7. Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion to approve the bills paid for the month of March 2010. A motion was made by Commissioner Frappier and seconded by Commissioner Laliberte.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

8. Communications and Interest of the Authority – None.

- 9A. Report of the Secretary

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 Laliberte and seconded by Vice-Chairman Baldelli.

The Director discusses the scattered sites stating that the appraisals from the professional appraisal service should be in next week; that information will be sent to HUD Boston, and upon approval, we will proceed with marketing the properties through the Fontaine Agency. Vice Chairman Baldelli asks about the Section 8 vouchers and the Director assures him that the vouchers are waiting for us. Commissioner Laliberte asks about the use of the vouchers. The Director explains that the recipients can use the vouchers anywhere, not just in Woonsocket because this is a special situation and the vouchers can be used anywhere in the country. Realtor Fontaine indicated that he has some potential buyers who would be very happy if the tenants would stay in place. The Director said we will meet with the residents again when the time comes to explain their options. Commissioner Laliberte asks about the inspection process for our Section 8 properties. The Deputy explains the inspection process under HQS. The Deputy Director also explains that this week’s radio program gave the WHA some unwarranted bad press. Commissioner Laliberte questioned the monthly rent and the Deputy said 2 BR is \$1100 and 3BR is \$1200. There is some discussion about how well maintained Section 8 properties are, and how applicants for these properties are screened before being granted residency. Commissioner Laliberte suggests that it would be good for the WHA have a spokesman go on the air to set the record for the WHA straight.

The Executive Director discusses a pending visit from HUD, SAC and an engineer to view the buildings at Veteran's and Morin Heights to determine whether or not we will get the demo/dispo application approved. It seems like overkill, but the Director feels confident that we will get approval. The Director thinks this visit may be due to the social service agencies that have written to protest the WHA's plan. The Director invited the Commissioners to meet the visitors on Tuesday morning. The Director also commended Deputy Speel for his 30+ years of excellence as a maintenance supervisor for the WHA and stated that all money spent on maintenance was spent wisely.

Vice-Chairman Baldelli requested that Commissioner Laliberte request a letter of support for the demo/dispo from Mayor Fontaine for next Tuesday's meeting.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

9B. Report of the Deputy Director

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

The Deputy submitted his report as written, highlighting that the capitalization appraisal should be in next week and we should be able to begin selling the scattered site units shortly thereafter. J.J. Cardosi is doing a sample bathroom unit in each building. Fielding Construction will begin working on the trash compactor system next week. Maguire Group has done on-site visits regarding the overhead electric. The preliminary report is that Veteran's is significantly behind on the number of transformers needed there. This is the cause of the brown-outs in the summer during high consumption periods. Commissioner Laliberte asked the Deputy about any 'greening' initiatives, windmills, etc. The Deputy explained that we have done what we can with energy-efficient refrigerators, water-saving toilets and water-saving showers and faucets, and that

we operated very efficiently. We will also receive an energy rebate on the new refrigerators and the new generators that were installed.

Commissioner Laliberte commended Security Director Bob Moreau for his assistance with the arrest of the perpetrators involved in the crimes against delivery people recently. The Director concurred, and included Property Manager Linda Boulay in the commendation.

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

AYES

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9C. Reports of Direct Staff, Legal and Financial

Vice-Chairman would like to know at the next meeting, the percentage of rental delinquency at each site, and what is an acceptable percentage under HUD guidelines.

Commissioner Lemieux asked about a monthly financial report. The Director stated that Fenton and Ewall had not been in yet this month and that the report would be forthcoming next month, probably two reports.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

10. Report of Committees

None

11. Unfinished Business

None

12. New Business

A. Resolution # 1067: Approval of Reasonable Accommodations to Pet Policy for Persons with Disabilities.

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

Vice Chairman Baldelli is against the resolution and does not believe that pets should be allowed; no reasonable accommodation is acceptable. Commissioner Frappier adds that many years ago he fought this resolution and lost it under the ADA. Deputy Speel explains that the Attorney has drafted an accommodation to our current policy that allows service animals that therapeutically reduce anxiety and also allows the resident to have multiple dogs. Vice Chairman Baldelli reiterates that the majority of the residents in the high-rises do not want dogs allowed. The Attorney explains that this is not the WHA's pet policy. This resolution is in response to a specific direction from HUD and the RI Commission on Human Rights because of an action filed by applicants who were denied because they wanted to bring in two dogs, which is in violation of the WHA's pet policy. They file a complaint with HUD and the RI Commission on Human Rights saying they were entitled to a reasonable accommodation because of their disability of emotional imbalance. The disability was supposedly relieved by the support animals. The RICHR ordered us to develop a policy for reasonable accommodation as part of the settlement. There is some further discussion regarding lease violations, evictions, and what defines a disability. The Attorney indicated that he tried to make the policy as tight as he could for the WHA. The Attorney closes by stating that we are required by HUD to have this policy; it is not optional. Commissioner Frappier asks how bad the problem is on a scale of 1-10. The Chairwoman said it depends who you ask, but there have been multiple complaints. Commissioner Lemieux asks how many dogs there are in the high-rises? Kennedy and St. Germain have quite a few, Parkview has 2. Cats? Multiple.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote

Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli

Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

B. Resolution # 1068: Approval to limit Good & Welfare for the Audience to 5 minutes.

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

Commissioner Laliberte asks why this resolution is on the agenda, are there individuals who are too long-winded? Chairwoman Cote explains that sometimes multiple people come in to speak on the same matter; this would limit the time. Commissioner Lemieux questions 5 minutes per person, or 5 minutes total audience? Per person with exceptions made by Chairwoman as appropriate.

Attorney Fontaine suggests that a motion be made to amend the resolution to read 5 minutes “per person.” Commissioner Laliberte makes the motion, and Vice-Chairman Baldelli seconds the motion.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

Back to Resolution # 1068: Approval to limit Good & Welfare for the Audience to 5 minutes, *per person*. Commissioner Laliberte makes the motion, and Vice-Chairman Baldelli seconds the motion.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote
Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli
Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse
Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux
Commissioner Gerard Remillard

C. Resolution # 1069: Approval to eliminate Good & Welfare for the Commissioners.

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

Commissioner Laliberte asks why this issue appears. Chair indicates that Commissioner Frappier asked for this. Commissioner Frappier explains that he requested this agenda item because the Board never received a clarification on whether the Board should be bound by the ruling from the Attorney General which states 24 hours in advance for the public and 24 hours in advance for the Commissioners. Today there is an opinion in the package from Attorney Murphy which seems to indicate that the Board is not bound by the ruling. Attorney Fontaine explains that the Board is not required to have an agenda item for Good & Welfare for the Commissioners. Any Commissioner can raise an item at any point in any meeting, but that does not allow that Commissioner to discuss items that would be “out of order.” Commissioner Frappier moves to approve the item. Commissioner Laliberte confirms with the Attorney that during any meeting a Commissioner may make comments or ask questions. The Attorney confirms this. Vice Chairman Baldelli disagrees with the Commissioner Frappier stating that a Commissioner may not address issues that are not germane to agenda items. Attorney Fontaine clarifies that any Commissioner may address any item, as long as the discussion does not violate the Open Meetings Law. Vice Chairman again states his opposition to this item.

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

AYES

Chairwoman Lucienne L. Cote

Commissioner Gerard Frappier
Commissioner David Lahousse

Commissioner Gerard Remillard

NAYS

Vice Chairman Charles Baldelli

Commissioner Normand Laliberte
Commissioner Janet Lemieux

10. Adjournment

Chairwoman Cote asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Commissioner Laliberte, seconded by Commissioner Frappier at 5:14 p.m.

Roll call vote was unanimous.

Robert Kulik, Executive Director