

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF
WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND

1. Call to order: 4:30 p.m. Regular Meeting October 9, 2014 at the Woonsocket Housing Authority, 679 Social Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

David Lahousse, Chairman
Bernadette Rochefort, Vice Chairwoman
Sally Anthony
Charles Baldelli
Roger Bouchard
Janet Lemieux

Duncan C. Speel, Deputy Director
Attorney Joseph J. Rodio, Sr.
Attorney Joseph J. Rodio, Jr.
Theresa Corbeille -Absent

2. Good and Welfare for the Audience - none
3. Good and Welfare for the Commissioners

Chairman Lahousse provided an update on Commissioner Corbeille whom he had just visited before the meeting and is now at Oakland Grove. He indicated that Commissioner Corbeille looked good and asked all to keep Commissioner Corbeille in their thoughts and prayers.

4. The Chairman asked for a motion to accept the minutes for the regular meeting of September 25, 2014. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse

Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Lemieux

5. Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to accept the bills paid for the month of September 2014. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Lemieux

6. The Chairman asked for a motion to accept and place on file for the purposes of discussion, the Communications and Interest of the Authority – A & B, Work Proposal and Resume of Leo P. Dauwer. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Vice Chairwoman Rochefort.

The Chairman spoke of the task ahead of the Board of hiring a new Executive Director for the Authority. He mentioned that Duncan had contacted Leo Dauwer and the Chairman reached out to Stephen Vadnais, the Executive Director of the Pawtucket Housing Authority (and former Executive Director of the Woonsocket Housing Authority). Mr. Vadnais offered his services of assisting the WHA with the search process. Mr. Vadnais is preparing a proposal for the Board. Commissioner Baldelli asked Counsel if he could vote on the new ED by conference call or proxy vote if he is out of state; no, not under the open meetings law. Commissioner Baldelli also expressed his desire for the new Director to be a Woonsocket resident. Commissioner Bouchard suggested that maybe there could be a requirement for the new ED to move into the City should s/he not already be a resident. There was some further discussion amongst the Commissioners. Commissioner Baldelli added that the City Mayor has always appointed the Executive Director (with the exception of Stephen Vadnais), and he would like to keep it that way. Attorney Rodio stated that cannot be a part of the process.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Lemieux

The Chairman asked for a motion to take New Business Item B. Presentation by Joseph Rodio, Jr. Discussion and authorization to advertise position of Executive Director for the Woonsocket Housing Authority, out of order. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

Attorney Rodio Jr. presented local area standards for public housing Executive Director positions and what were consistent requirements vs. preferences. He provided information on housing authorities of similar size and make up. He commented on trends for educational background, years of experience, PHM certification and the ability to be bonded, among others. There was some discussion about the changing role of the ED in the last few years in an effort to improve the quality of Executive Directors throughout the country. Commissioner Bouchard commented that there was no residency requirement noted in any of the given examples; can the WHA advertise that the candidate must reside within the boundaries of the City? Attorney Rodio said it likely would not survive a legal challenge. Ability to respond to emergency needs might be better criteria. There was discussion about a point system and awarding points (or not) based on residency. Attorney Rodio stated that it is not an advisable method to try to foster local people to get the position. He suggested that 'proximity to the agency' would be all that would be acceptable. Commissioner Baldelli expressed his desire to have the new Executive Director be a resident of the City. Discussion continued. Commissioner Bouchard asked why there appeared to be such urgency in moving forward with a consultant and an ad. The Chairman commented that Deputy Speel is leaving at the end of December, or thereabouts, and with the holidays approaching, it is going to be January before we know it. He explained that the hiring process is going to take a couple of months, and he feels that the Board needs to take action to start the process. Chairman Lahousse stated that Stephen Vadnais' proposal is due by Tuesday. There was discussion as to whether or not to send Attorney Rodio's research.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse

Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard

Commissioner Lemieux

7. Report of the Secretary

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to accept and place on file, the report of the Deputy Director, for purposes of discussion. A motion was made by Commissioner Anthony and seconded by Commissioner Anthony.

The Deputy submitted his report as written and asked if there were any questions. Commissioner Anthony asked the Deputy if he was really leaving at the end of the year. The Deputy said he was looking at maybe the first or second week of the year.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Lemieux

7B. Reports of Direct Staff, Legal and Financial

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to receive and place on file, the reports of Direct Staff, Legal and Financial. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by the Chair.

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

AYES

NAYS

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Lemieux

8. Report of Committees – none

9. Unfinished Business – Update on Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant.

The Chairman gave an overview and stated that the Committee met recently and they are approaching the point of looking at an MoU with a developer, maybe for a vote in November for Veterans Memorial. There will be one-for-one replacement so the 296 current units will be reduced to 100 units with the addition of 200 market-rate units, studios and one-bedroom units that would be fully taxed. Fifty of the 200 being moved, 50 would remain in the Fairmount area; the other 150 somewhere within a 25 mile radius. The WHA, under an MoU, would be leasing our land under a 99-year lease to a private developer. The remaining units would be under a voucher system. Commissioner Bouchard asked if the City administration had been apprised of the WHA's intent. The Chair said yes and that he has a meeting scheduled with the Mayor to further update her.

10. New Business

A. Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to approve Resolution #1135, Approval of the Annual and Five Year Plan. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Bouchard. There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken; the following were the "Ayes" and "Nays".

AYES

Chairman Lahousse
Vice Chairwoman Rochefort
Commissioner Anthony
Commissioner Baldelli
Commissioner Bouchard
Commissioner Lemieux

NAYS

11. Adjournment

Chairman Lahousse asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Commissioner Baldelli and seconded by Commissioner Anthony
5:31 p.m.

Roll call vote was unanimous.

Duncan C. Speel
Deputy Director