

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

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The Executive Committee Meeting convened on Thursday, February 18, 2020 at the Washington County Community Development Agency, 7645 Currell Blvd., Woodbury, MN 55125. Staff present Melissa Taphorn, Acting Executive Director; and Lori Creamer, Administrative Specialist.

**Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm.**

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioner Widen and Commissioner Ryan were present. Commissioner Belisle was absent.

**DISCUSSION Performance Evaluation Goals of Executive Director for First Quarter of 2020**

Commissioner Widen and Commissioner Ryan reviewed the draft Employment Agreement and asked for clarification regarding the provisions and terms of the agreement.

Melissa Taphorn, Acting Executive Director, shared with the committee the new performance and evaluation system. PerformYard is the software that will be used to track SMART (Specific, Motivating, Attainable, Relevant, Trackable) Goals and the tool used to conduct performance evaluations. The Executive Director's performance assessment will be based on 80% of the individual SMART Goals and 20% on the Agency SMART goals. Directors are also evaluated in the same way; 80% individual and 20% department goals. The Executive Committee is scheduled to meet four times a year to discuss the progress on a quarterly basis and to set expectations for the next quarter.

Ms. Taphorn reviewed each of the proposed goals and the deliverables for quarter one. Deliverables define what a good job looks like and what a bad job looks like to be able to evaluate each goal when completing the performance evaluation.

Goal 1: Increase influence on housing policies. Ms. Taphorn indicated several actions have been completed with legislative efforts and involvement in regional policy making.

Goal 2: Fill three staff vacancies. The Housing Specialist position has been filled and the employee will start on February 28, 2020. Commissioner Ryan asked if there are candidates who have dual Human Resource and Communication Coordinator skills. Ms. Taphorn responded for the Deputy Executive Director position, the person really needs to be in the industry and be familiar with how agencies such as the CDA functions. She stated she sent the job posting specifically to people who are ready for the next step in their careers along with several on-line job sites. As for the Human Resource and Communications Coordinator position, if it was posted specifically Human Resources, then applicants may only have that type of experience and a similar outcome if it was posted specifically Communications Coordinator.

Commissioner Widen asked about how long the position is posted for and how the process works. Ms. Taphorn responded both positions have been posted internally and externally. After two weeks from the initial posting, staff would review the applications and begin setting up interviews. This process would continue until the positions are filled.

Commissioner Widen asked if the Agency has an orientation for new employees coming on board. Ms. Taphorn stated currently the on-boarding process includes initial paperwork and covering the benefits such as medical and dental. Areas of improvement include helping new hires feeling welcome and help them acclimate.

Commissioner Widen asked if there was a new employee check in within 30, 60 or 90 days to find out about how they are feeling. Ms. Taphorn stated there are processes in place, but that is one of the areas that needs improvement.

Goal 3: Coordinate a Homeless Shelter. This was a goal started with Barbara Dacy's tenure. The county does want to continue developing a homeless shelter for single people. The goal for this first quarter is to assist with the service provider request for information and then based on submittals, define the CDA's role moving forward.

Goal 4: Advance CDA Strategic Initiatives. This will involve coaching and checking in with department heads and empowering employees to meet their goals using the Situational Leadership model of matching leadership style to individuals' development levels, by task.

Commissioner Widen asked if the Agency has taken a pulse of the staff with all the changes, particularly with the key positions. One key piece to the puzzle is the Agency's financial stability under Aaron Christianson's leadership. He has a good handle on the finances and wants to make sure he is happy and is not planning on leaving. Ms. Taphorn indicated that she wants to make sure employees still feel valued and heard. It is a big change for everyone. She has met individually with the department heads to learn and understand what they need from her.

Commissioner Ryan stated with the captain leaving the ship, hopefully it is not how the staff are feeling. Ms. Taphorn stated it has been helpful for staff to see the continuity in leadership, but the community development staff has expressed anxiety of the unknown that comes with a change in their direct supervisor.

Commissioner Widen commented on how well Ms. Taphorn articulated the goals. Commissioner Widen and Commissioner Ryan both agreed the four proposed goals should be established for the first quarter of 2020.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

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Chair/Vice Chair

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
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The Washington County Community Development Agency Board of Commissioners convened in Regular Session at Washington County CDA, 7645 Currell Blvd., Woodbury, MN on February 18, 2020. Staff present: Melissa Taphorn, Acting Executive Director; Chris Eng, Economic Development Director; Aaron Christianson, Finance Director; Ann Hoechst, Housing Assistance and Administrative Services Director; Ryan Gruber, Human Resources and Communications Coordinator; Ashley Engh, Finance Assistant Director; Bill Lightner, Project Manager II; Kathryn Paulson; Project Manager II; Kristen Scobie, Project Manager II; Elena Shulman, Project Manager I; Becky Nelson, Senior Accountant; Angie Shuppert, Community Development Programs Manager; and Lori Creamer, Administrative Specialist.

Guests present Daniel Udem, Assistant City Administrator, City of Forest Lake; Eric Johnson, City Administrator, City of Oak Park Heights.

**The regular meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.**

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners present: Green, Zeller, Widen, Karwoski, Ryan, and Dingle.  
Commissioner Absent: Belisle

**OPEN FORUM**

None

At the request of staff, Vice Chair Ryan stated item A-4 Resolution No. 20-11 will move from the Consent Calendar to Administration for further discussion.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Minutes of Regular Meeting  
January 21, 2020

Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting  
January 21, 2020

Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting  
February 6, 2020

Abstract of Bills January 2020  
Total \$1,418,590.63

A-1 Resolution No.20-08. Resolution Authorizing Execution of the City of Woodbury HOME Investment Partnerships and Community Development Block Grant Loan Documents for the Cobble Hill Foundation and Flashing Repair Project

A-2 Resolution No. 20-09. Resolution Approving Organizational Documents for the Formation of the Washington County Community Development Agency Family Housing, LLC

A-3 Resolution No. 20-10. Resolution Authorizing Reservation of Gap Financing for Redevelopment and Rental and Ownership Housing in Washington County (GROW) Fund for the Hemingway

A-5 Resolution No. 20-12. Resolution Authorizing Cash Transfer of Funds for 2019

**Commissioner Zeller moved to approve the Consent Calendar, as amended with item A-4 removed, seconded by Commissioner Green. Motion carried 6-0.**

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### A-6 Resolution 20-13. Resolution Amending the Housing Choice Voucher Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan

Ann Hoechst, director of housing and administrative services, stated this is a public hearing on the Public Housing Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan and the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan. The changes in each document have been reviewed in the two previous board meetings. Staff recommended opening the public hearing, receive comments and approve a motion to close the public hearing and adopt the resolution.

**Commissioner Zeller moved to open the Public Hearing, seconded by Commissioner Dingle. Motion carried 6-0.**

Director Hoechst provided comments and responses received from residents regarding the changes in the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan and the Administrative Plan. Comments received from the Resident Advisory Board were supportive of the changes. Individual comments were read into the record.

Vice-Chair Ryan asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to provide public comment. Seeing no one, Vice-Chair Ryan asked if the commissioners had any comments or questions for Director Hoechst. There were none.

**Commissioner Zeller moved to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Commissioner Widen. Motion carried 6-0.**

**Commissioner Zeller moved to approve Resolution No 20-13, seconded by Commissioner Green. Motion carried 6-0.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### A-7 Resolution No. 20-14. Resolution Approving Pre-Development Finance Fund Grant Agreement with the City of Forest Lake Economic Development Authority.

Chris Eng, economic development director, introduced Daniel Udem, assistant city administrator for the city of Forest Lake. The City of Forest Lake requested grant funding for the purpose of conducting a study on the revitalization of the downtown area. This would include an analysis of sewer system capacity and hiring a planner to work with the city's Economic Development Authority to develop a master plan. The City is requesting a \$40,000 grant from the pre-development finance fund which requires Agency Board approval. The City of Forest Lake will match the grant dollar for dollar.

Commissioner Zeller requested information on the annual budget for these types of grants and the amount of available funding. Director Eng stated this is the third year of the program and the Agency has a total budget of \$450,000. To date, \$267,000 of grants has been provided.

Commissioner Zeller requested when this report is completed that it be shared with the Board and other communities Director Eng affirmed it could be shared at the economic development work group meetings.

Commissioner Zeller asked if there was an active chamber of commerce in the city of Forest Lake. Assistant City Administrator Udem responded there is an active chamber of commerce. The Forest Lake Area Chamber of Commerce is invited to the City's Economic Development Authority meetings and takes part in all the activities as well as the downtown planning.

Commissioner Karwoski stated Commissioner Miron, who could not be here today, was very supportive of this grant application.

Vice-Chair Ryan asked if there were any other questions or comments for either Director Eng or Assistant City Administrator Udem. There were none.

**Commissioner Zeller moved to approve Resolution No. 20-14, seconded by Commissioner Karwoski. Motion carried 6-0.**

A-8 Resolution No. 20-15. Resolution Approving Pre-Development Finance Fund Grant Agreement with the City of Oak Park Heights.

Chris Eng, economic development director, introduced Eric Johnson, city administrator for the city of Oak Park Heights. The City of Oak Park Heights requested grant funding to develop a redevelopment plan for the Xcel Energy Allen S. King Power Plant to prepare for when Xcel Energy decommissions the plant in 2028. The impact of the decommissioning will be a loss of about one third of the City's tax base and about 90 good paying jobs.

The City of Oak Park Heights is working with Stantec on the redevelopment planning process, which will begin with an advisory panel. The City of Oak Park Heights is looking for someone from the Washington County CDA Board who would be interested in serving on the panel.

Commissioner Zeller asked what role Xcel Energy would be taking in the redevelopment process. City Administrator Johnson responded Xcel Energy will be a major resource and participant in the conversation both as a presenter and a fount of information about what's happening at the site from an environmental standpoint and from a landowner standpoint.

Commissioner Zeller asked if they have taken other plants offline anywhere else in the country and are there any examples of what has come up. City Administrator Johnson stated Xcel Energy has certainly been involved in decommissioning one in Michigan. Stantec will be compiling details on how that process worked.

As a matter of full disclosure, Commissioner Zeller stated he has worked with the City of Oak Park Heights on other projects but does not have any economic interests in this project. He stated he appreciated both applicants coming forward with matching funds.

**Commissioner Green moved to approve Resolution No. 20-14, seconded by Commissioner Karwoski. Motion carried 6-0.**

A-9 Resolution No. 20-16. Resolution Approving the Second Amendment to the Option Agreement for Outlot A, Block 1, Newport Station Addition, As Part of the Red Rock Crossing Redevelopment Project.

Chris Eng, economic development director, requested the Board extend the option to purchase Outlot A, Block 1, Newport Station Addition. An option agreement to purchase was entered into with the Washington County Regional Rail Authority in 2016. The option was extended from 2018 through March 2020. The March 2020 deadline is approaching. Staff is requesting approval of an 18-month extension to September 2021.

Mr. Eng stated the City of Newport's Planning Commission met last week and has recommended the area continue to be zoned a transit-oriented development permitting multifamily residential development and to implement the existing master plan adopted for the MX-3 zoning district around the transit station.

Commissioner Zeller asked if the Agency had the option to purchase the property from the Regional Rail Authority. Director Eng stated that is correct. Commissioner Zeller asked what the advantage to the Rail Authority is to extend the option agreement. Director Eng stated by extending the option agreement the Rail Authority retains control of the property and it costs nothing to extend the option, but they are gaining the property marketing completed by the Agency.

Commissioner Ryan stated it would be a challenge for the other partners, so it makes sense since the Agency is better equipped to sell the property.

**Commissioner Dingle moved to approve Resolution No. 20-16, seconded by Commissioner Karwoski. Motion carried 6-0.**

## **ADMINISTRATION**

A-10 Resolution No. 20-17. Resolution Authorizing Execution of Employment Agreement for the Position of Executive Director.

Ryan Gruber, human resource and communications coordinator, stated this item is a follow up to the discussion last month regarding the Agency's leadership. Melissa Taphorn was appointed acting executive director following the resignation of Barbara Dacy.

The Board authorized the Executive Committee to enter negotiations with Ms. Taphorn for the purpose of negotiating an employment agreement for the position of executive director. The Committee authorized Commissioner Widen to negotiate the agreement with Ms. Taphorn. The tentative agreement is attached to the resolution as an exhibit.

The annual salary negotiated was \$142,355, which reflects a 4% increase over Ms. Taphorn's current salary. There is a one-year initial term with the agreement set to automatically renew.

Commissioner Zeller asked if Commissioner Widen had anything to add from the Executive Committee meeting or negotiations. Commissioner Widen stated the discussions included the direction of the Agency, Ms. Taphorn's vision, and the employment agreement proposal.

Commissioner Zeller expressed total support of the decision and appreciated the succession planning that had been done.

Commissioner Green had a question regarding the termination without cause statement. As a senior position, three months or 90 days seemed short for termination. A longer period of notice is something the Board may wish to revisit at some point in the future.

The Personnel Committee may review this policy prior to the renewal of this agreement.

**Commissioner Widen moved to approve Resolution No. 20-17, seconded by Commissioner Zeller. Motion carried 6-0.**

Commissioner Green congratulated Ms. Taphorn as the new executive director.

MOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR

A-3 Resolution No. 20-10. Resolution Authorizing the Execution of a Memorandum of Agreement with AFSCME Council 5 Regarding Out of Class Compensation

Ryan Gruber, human resources and communications coordinator, provided background on the Memorandum of Agreement between the Agency and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employee (AFSCME) local 517 union to address an issue with an employee who is presenting working out of class. Current contract language is silent on this issue.

Staff is recommending approval through two motions. First motion would be to amend the agreement to change the February 19, 2020 start date to January 10, 2020. The second motion would be to approve the resolution with the amended agreement.

**Commissioner Zeller moved to amend the exhibit to Resolution 20-10 as presented, seconded by Commissioner Dingle. Motion carried 6-0.**

**Commissioner Widen moved to approve Resolution No. 20-10 as amended, seconded by Commissioner Green. Motion carried 6-0.**

**DISCUSSION**

D-1 Home Improvement Loan Program Maximum Loan and Asset Limit Increase

Elena Shulman, project manager I, presented a proposal to increase the maximum loan amount and the maximum asset limit for the Home Improvement Loan Program. She provided the background of what types of

improvements are generally completed with this program, focusing on health, safety and energy efficient improvements. Currently there are twelve applicants on the waiting list for funds.

The current loan maximum is \$18,000, which has been the same since 2011. Staff proposes to increase the maximum loan amount to \$24,500 to ensure all health, safety and code compliancy work is completed with the loan and to increase the asset limit to \$24,500 as well to expand the homeowner eligibility. Requested action is for a green light to bring the proposal forward to the March board meeting.

Commissioner Zeller inquired about funding sources. Ms. Shulman responded the loans are made from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds. The proposed changes would be effective with the funding renewal in July of 2020.

Commissioner Zeller asked what the total outstanding loan balances were and how many loans are due to us. Angie Shuppert, community development programs manager, responded that she believed there is approximately \$1.5 million for 33 loans outstanding but could follow up later. The loans are paid back when the property is sold or refinanced. In some cases, the Agency will subordinate when refinancing if the borrower is going to receive a better interest rate and/or a more affordable monthly payment.

Commissioner Karwoski stated he supports the idea of increasing the maximum loan amount; however, asked why the amount being considered isn't greater. Ms. Shulman stated after looking at other cities, it may look a bit deceiving because they do not use all CDBG funds which has different restrictions. In order to assist as many households as possible and still complete as many necessary repairs as possible, staff recommends an increase to \$24,500.

Commissioner Zeller suggested collaborating with other cities such as Oakdale to help residents maximize dollars for home improvements needed.

Consensus from the Board was to move forward with the increases. An amendment to the Home Improvement Loan program policy will be on the March Board meeting consent calendar.

## **REPORTS**

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Melissa Taphorn, executive director, thanked Economic Development Director Chris Eng for assisting with reviewing the Community Development Department report. St. Andrew's Family Shelter was awarded the National Association for County Community and Economic Development (NACCED) award and, on February 20<sup>th</sup>, Angie Shuppert along with representatives from the County and St. Andrews will be featured on a NACCED webinar relating to the collaborative efforts.

Ms. Taphorn thanked everyone who was able to attend the Grand Opening at The Glen at Valley Creek on February 5, 2020. The Bulletin wrote an article on the event and professional photos are available. Commissioner Karwoski stated whenever possible in the future to invite the entire Washington County Board to events.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Chris Eng, economic development director, stated the credit for the work on the community development reports goes to the staff. As for Economic Development items there was nothing further.

Commissioner Karwoski commented he'd like to see the Workforce Development Board in conjunction with economic development collaborate on all fronts such as, assisting people find jobs, buy a house, etc.

### **FINANCE AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

Aaron Christianson, finance director, stated the tentative schedule for the 2021 budget will be on the next agenda. Generally, the Finance Committee meetings are May or Early June; however, if there are items to be discussed prior to that date, there can be additional Finance Committee meetings set up, or a presentation on a specific topic can be presented to the full Board at any time.

### **HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

Ann Hoechst, housing and administrative services director, stated there were no additional comments.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Melissa Taphorn, executive director, recognized Human Resources and Communications Coordinator Ryan Gruber for his work for the Agency over the past six years. He has accepted a position as a compensation analyst with the city of St. Paul. Commissioner Ryan thanked Mr. Gruber for his 6 years on behalf the board. Mr. Gruber thanked the Board for the opportunity to grow and learn.

The positions of deputy executive director and the human resource and communications coordinator have been posted. The goal is to interview candidates in the next couple of weeks and fill the positions in late March or early April. Tami Bayne starts on February 28 as a rental assistance specialist assisting with the new vouchers and public housing changes.

February 26, 2020 is Minnesota National Association of Housing and Redevelopment (NAHRO) Day at the Capital. Ms. Taphorn will be attending and asked that interested commissioners are welcome to attend.

Administrative Services has been working on a new board agenda packet software. The March board packet will be tested side-by-side with the current system. The goal is to go live for the April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. Commissioner training will be held between the March and April Board meetings.

Ms. Taphorn reminded commissioners of the Personnel Committee meeting at 2:00 pm on March 17<sup>th</sup>, prior to the Board meeting. The main topic will be staffing levels for the 2021 budget.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Karwoski stated the Washington County Board was excited with Ms. Taphorn's appointment to executive director. The Washington County Board expects the transition will be seamless.

ADJOURN

**Commissioner Zeller moved to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Widen.**

**Motion carried 6-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

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Chair/Vice Chair Commissioner