

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF KANSAS CITY, KANSAS**

Thursday, February 28, 2020
12 noon

Administrative Office
1124 N. 9th Street

On the 28th day of February 2020 at noon the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of Kansas City, Kansas met in special session via conference call. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Watkins, and upon roll call, the following members of the body were present:

Matthew T. Watkins, Chairman
Rev. Jimmie L. Banks, Vice-Chairman
Jacques Barber, Commissioner
Rachel Jefferson Commissioner
P. Anne McDonald, Commissioner
Timothy J. Rhodes, Commissioner
Denise Tomasic, Commissioner
Cardelia Walker, Commissioner
Linda Warner, Commissioner
Charles Wilson, Commissioner

ABSENT: Broderick Crawford, Commissioner
Don Jolley, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT: Thomas M. Scott, Executive Director/CEO
Jacqueline D. Randle, Executive Services Manager

Chairman Watkins called the meeting to order and roll call was taken. Commissioners Barber, Rhodes and Warner were not present at roll call, but arrived during the conference call.

Chairman Watkins thanked Board members for their participation in today's meeting. He noted there are three critical positions that we are trying to fill and we are trying to allow for the best and brightest to lead the organization. We are trying to attract folks. He noted that he would open the floor for discussion on the residency policy, allow for questions, a potential motion and a second. Chairman Watkins then opened up the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Jefferson questioned what the vote would entail. Chairman Watkins explained that the issue on the table was the residency policy. The discussion would be of the potential to remove the residency policy. Commissioner Jefferson asked if the policy would be removed altogether or would it be temporary, to fill the open positions. She noted there was a robust conversation, face to face, about the residency requirement; and she would hate to make a rash decision during a 30-minute conference call without giving it due process. She asked if the Board could look at lifting the residency requirement temporarily as opposed to lifting it altogether.

Chairman Watkins noted that after several discussions, it is time to lift the residency requirement altogether. Vice-Chairman Banks noted that he has clearly stated his opinion based on his experience in the industry. He suggested that you always open the hiring to outside of the area. There is always the choice of going local or outside of the area. He further noted this action is for the future and he did not see the value in lifting the residence requirement temporarily. We are looking for the best wherever that resides. We need the option of going outside to get the talent necessary to run the organization. Commissioner McDonald responded that we need to have the top talent and professionals that will perform at peak performance whether or not they live in the county. She believes Board members have rethought this and it appears we need to take action at the point of hiring for three management positions. She thinks this has been building for quite some time. Commissioner Barber noted that he is torn on this issue. 1) He agrees that we need to search for the best talent, and 2) the search would include looking outside the county, but he would prefer someone that already resides here, but it's not a requirement. He noted that it is okay if they come from out of state, but someone on the management level should move into the county. He is concerned with people getting the best paying jobs and moving out of the county. Wyandotte County, on average, has some of the best paying salaries in the entire state; but we are still the poorest county in the state. This brings a lower tax base. Commissioner Barber noted he is torn, because we need to get the best talent. He ended stating there are nice areas in Wyandotte County for people to live. Commissioner Jefferson agreed we need to talk about this, but it feels somewhat rushed. She understands trying to find the best and the brightest, but like Commissioner Barber, she is also torn and does not want to contribute to the highest paid salaries going outside of the county. She knows we need to make a decision and that is why she wants to look at temporary vs. permanent removal of the residency requirement.

Commissioner Tomasic offered that it could be included in the policy that with all things being equal, the preference would be given to someone living within our community. Vice-Chairman Banks agreed with Commissioner Tomasic and questioned why you would want to go outside if there was someone already available inside the community. By the same token, most jobs are able to attract good people and we should only be concerned with the quality of their work, and

not how far they have to drive. His experience has been that, during inclement weather, people driving distances were more likely to come in than those living in closer proximity to the plant. Mr. Scott agreed that we really want to hire folks out of our own county with everything being equal. He is concerned there are qualified applicants outside of this community and it would be difficult to relocate families to move to another county. It would be different for someone in another state as opposed to another county. He indicated that Wyandotte County has a lot of great places to live for people coming from the east or west coast.

Commissioner Wilson noted the requirement to live within the county was discussed several months ago and if the goal is to get the best qualified; we should expand our options and not limit ourselves. He is in favor of lifting the residency requirement.

Commissioner Barber clarified that as far as the search goes, it should be nationwide. After selection, the residency requirement would kick in. He noted that living within the metro could also be discussed. He wanted to clarify between the search and the requirement to live in the county after being hired. Commissioner McDonald noted that if applicants see that, we would limit our pool unnecessarily. Vice-Chairman Banks added that these are not local government funds, these are federal government funds and we are being held hostage by a local requirement. One last thing, a person at a certain level of management experience, and is moving from California or east coast; in order to transfer the financial aspects, they may not find that in Kansas City, Kansas. They may be looking at amenities for luxury homes which are lacking in Wyandotte County. This is a reality that we are looking at for recruitment. Commissioner Jefferson expressed she heard Mr. Scott say, the difficulty is with people who are in nearby communities having to relocate to Wyandotte County. She said that if someone is coming from outside of the state, they do need to think about establishing residency in Wyandotte County. She explained that she would consider lifting the residency requirement for people in surrounding communities, but those out of the state need to relocate to Wyandotte County. Vice-Chairman Banks insisted that Cerner, Amazon and major employers in Wyandotte County do not require this. Commissioner Jefferson noted we should be holding ourselves to a higher standard. She is more likely to say yes, for someone out of the state than someone in a neighboring community. Vice-Chairman Banks insisted that it doesn't matter where they are relocating from.

Commissioner Rhodes noted that he hires people for positions all over the city. He provided examples of how far people are travelling. His staff is not necessarily residing in the community they work in. He added the residency requirement is causing more problems than solutions. He agrees that people should consider living in Wyandotte County if they are from out of state. However, if they have kids, they are not going to want to move to Wyandotte County due to the school system. He cited that four of the top five schools are in Johnson County. He noted we need to decide where we are willing to

compromise. Are we willing to not get the best, because they do not want to live here; or are we willing to lift the residency requirement to get the absolute best person.

Commissioner Warner commented that she understands the challenges of the job market. The positions we have require unique skills and we have not attracted the pool of applicants that we need. In the end, commissioners are charged with fulfilling the mission of the organization. If lifting the residency requirement helps us to do that, then we must focus on the needs of the organization. Equity and the needs of the county are important, but this will give us the best shot at getting the right people in place. She stated that we need to lift the residency requirement, even if she does not like the optics of having the lead of the housing authority reside outside of Wyandotte County. She is willing to lift the residency requirement to get the right people in place.

Mr. Scott noted that he was born and raised in Wyandotte County. His father worked for the school district for 37 years. Thirty years ago when he came to the housing authority, he had to replace 75 people in two years. He was able to hire a good staff out of the county and got a good staff for maintenance and purchasing. Over the next 10—15 years, it has become difficult to hire maintenance people. Small business ownership has began to dwindle and we are ordering at Home Depot, Lowe's and online. The last 21 people hired, since the residency requirement was lifted for those below directors, have come from outside of Wyandotte County. The labor and groundskeeper positions were still able to be filled from within the county. The situation he faces with the finance department is that we have a director that lives in Lee's Summit that came into an environment that is absolutely terrible. She has continued to work here, we extended her residency requirement. Of the people interviewed, that could provide succession, if she were she to leave rather quickly; the top two candidates are in Shawnee. The Assistant Director position does not have to live in Wyandotte County, but when the time comes for succession, they may not be willing to relocate and we would have the same thing.

Commissioner Barber asked what it means if we lift the residency requirement and hire someone from out of state or the metro area. What does that mean for that person? Ms. Scott noted that the due diligence should be to encourage Wyandotte County residency, and have someone to take them around and show them homes and churches. Vice-Chairman Banks indicated that when he moved to Washington, someone was assigned to him to show him neighborhoods in different counties. He thinks we should do the same. We will never get to the point where everyone is outside of Wyandotte County due to the different levels of employees. He noted that certain levels of staff are in demand where there are no residency requirements. Commissioner Barber noted he was just talking about people we make offers to from out of state. He noted we may not have time to debate this today, He suggested we offer assistance to those looking to relocate in Wyandotte County, but not outside of the county. Several Board

members were in agreement. Vice-Chairman Banks asked if there was a policy that only incentivizes work at a certain level. Commissioner Barber noted this would be a separate discussion. He expressed that our first duty is to the agency, but he still has feelings as a citizen of Wyandotte County. He believes we are only talking about those coming in from out of state. If we do away with the residency requirement and offer assistance to those living in Wyandotte County, it would be the same as giving preferential treatment to those already living here. Vice-Chairman Banks did not agree with this and Commissioner Barber noted we could run this by our counsel. McDonald agreed that it would need to be vetted by our attorney, but agreed that this was not part of the discussion today. Chairman Watkins agreed that the discussion today was for the residency requirement. He noted this is an opportunity to be a leader. We need to show that we are growing. Whether the Unified Government (UG) decides to do this is different. Working for the City is different because they get local dollars to operate.

Commissioner McDonald made a motion to amend the personnel policy to remove the residency requirement at all levels of employment. Vice-Chairman Banks seconded the motion.

Chairman Watkins asked if there was any more discussion. Commissioner Jefferson noted she would like to have language that we would give preference to someone who lives in Wyandotte County. Commissioner Rhodes and Vice-Chairman Banks indicated they did not believe we would want this in the policy. Chairman Watkins noted this is intrinsic in what has already happened. Commissioner Jefferson questioned if it was specifically stated anywhere. Vice-Chairman Banks noted it is an established practice. Chairman Watkins noted he was not aware of it being written down anywhere. Commissioner Jefferson questioned why we would not want to write it down. Commissioner Rhodes noted it could open us up to liability that we would not want to be a part of. Commissioner Jefferson further asked why. Commissioner Rhodes indicated that if a Wyandotte County resident is not selected, they could say that they should have been given preferential treatment; but you gave the job to someone outside of the county and we could be in legal trouble. Commissioner Jefferson noted that Commissioner Tomasic made the suggestion and she is an attorney. Commissioner Tomasic noted that she does not think it would be an issue and indicated she is a defense attorney for the UG and in the RFP; it states there would be a preference for Wyandotte County attorneys. Commissioner Rhodes noted the preference could be put in the job description or an RFP, but he does not think it should be in our policy. Vice-Chairman Banks agreed. Commissioner Barber suggested running this by our attorney and there was agreement to do so.

Vice-Chairman Banks noted there was a motion and second on the floor. Chairman Watkins asked that if there was any further discussion. Seeing none, he called for the vote. Ms. Randle was asked to do a roll call. Commissioner

Walker noted there was discussion about whether there would be an opening for a lawsuit if preferential treatment was not given to someone from Wyandotte County, but the vote is yes or no for the residency requirement. She asked was that correct. Chairman Watkins noted that was correct. Commissioner McDonald agreed that was correct, but Board members want to explore the possibility of a preference at a later date. It is not part of the motion put forward today. Commissioner Walker asked how the preference would come up again if we vote today. Vice-Chairman Banks explained it would come up as a separate motion at a later date. Commissioner McDonald noted it would come up later after we have checked with legal counsel regarding the perimeters. Commissioner Walker noted she is feeling that if the vote asks if we should get rid of it, then how do you go back, if it is not in the motion. Commissioner McDonald noted that Mr. Scott and Mr. Watkins will do this and anyone can make the motion at a future meeting. Commissioner Walker noted it is stated that it will be reviewed, but we are voting on it today. Chairman Watkins explained this is all being memorialized in the minutes. He and Mr. Scott will bring this back as a topic on a later agenda. Commissioner Walker added that she has been listening attentively.

Chairman Watkins noted there was a motion and second on the floor and asked if there were any further questions or discussion, there being none, discussion was closed. Ms. Randle was again asked to call the roll. The following vote was taken:

AYES: Banks, Barber, McDonald, Rhodes, Tomasic, Warner, Watkins, Wilson

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Crawford, Jolley

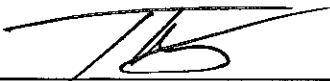
ABSTAIN: Jefferson, Walker

Motion carried.

Chairman Watkins thanked everyone for their comments and suggestions as this is a very important decision that no one takes lightly. This gives Mr. Scott some clarity and is in the best interest of the organization moving forward. Chairman Watkins made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Vice-Chairman Banks seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.



Matthew T. Watkins, Chairman



Thomas M. Scott, Executive Director/CEO