

# WHA Board of Commissioners

*Delling Thibodeaux, III  
Courtney Watts-Reyes  
Jeanette Hardy  
Delores P. Manuel  
Carol Jones*

## PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing will be held on Tuesday April 26th at 6:00 p.m. at the office of The Housing Authority of Westwego in order to invite public comments on the Authority's Capital Fund for Fiscal Year 2016 and the Five Year Plan for Fiscal Year 2016-2020 and for consideration prior to its adoption. The Housing Authority is proposing to finish installing kitchen cabinets as needed, installing underground pipes due to erosion and to pour driveways for the units.

Public discussion will occur at the meeting. Written comments may be submitted no later than 3:30 on April 26th in order to be considered. Anything received after this time will be returned unopened. Comments can be hand-delivered, faxed, electronically submitted or mailed to:

Dorian Rawles, Executive Director  
Westwego Housing Authority  
P. O. Box 248  
1010 Sixth Street  
Westwego, Louisiana 70096-0248  
Fax#504-341-5545

# Westwego Housing

Quality People. Quality Housing.

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Housing Authority  
Quality People. Quality Housing.



Words From The Executive Director, Dorian Rawles

It is my pleasure to write my first message to the many families and seniors that live in Westwego. As the new Executive Director of the Westwego Housing Authority, I sincerely wish to meet and accommodate all of you.

I have worked in public housing and the low-income arena for more than 15 years. Previously under my leadership, we worked to complete the largest redevelopment of public housing in the history of our country as we revitalized thousands of public housing units in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Although the \$4 billion redevelopment sounds impressive, it pales in comparison to the passion that I have for client services. I have actively developed young people with scholarships, sports and the arts. I have

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worked with our adults with resume building, credit rehabilitation and job placement. Finally, I worked to bring social programs to our seniors and solved quality of life issues.

I would like to thank the Westwego Board of Commissioners and the Mayor of Westwego for entrusting the housing authority to me. Together we will work tirelessly to raise the quality of living in Westwego housing and ensure a safe, sanitary and decent environment for our families.

Employees of the Westwego Housing Authority are all classified as civil service employees. This is a designation that I take very seriously. We are servants here to serve you with your housing needs. I would like to extend an open door policy for all residents that have any issues. Please feel free to stop by the offices and speak directly to Toya Washington, who is featured in this newsletter, our Assistant Director Ellen Riedie or myself.

Thank you for reading our newsletter and I look forward to working together to create a great housing experience.

## Meet Your Employee Toya Johnson



Ms. Johnson has worked for the Westwego Housing Authority for more than 10 years.

Her primary duties are rent collection, working with tenants to resolve issues with their apartment, processing applications and managing applications, and analyzing statistics.

Johnson is the first person that people encounter when they enter the Westwego Housing offices.

“I get to interact with people,” said Johnson when asked about what she loves most about her job. “I love working with people. 90% of the time, I am a positive person. I love leaving people with a smile.”

Johnson said her biggest accomplishment so far has been the creation of a digital database that automatically calculates the waiting list.

“Everything used to be done by hand. We would have to go between several files and find the names in every file to find someone’s application status on the waiting list. I would have to go to the back office, open a file, We had to calculate the people by hand.”

## Housing Authority to conduct REAC inspections

The maintenance staff of the Westwego Housing Authority will begin conducting Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) inspections in each home this month.

REAC inspections help to upgrade and maintain a high quality of living for housing authority families while eliminating financial waste from administration by streamlining the maintenance of housing units.

“We are ready to conduct inspections in each unit,” said Westwego Housing Authority Executive Director Dorian Rawles. “This will be a major step for our community as we look to find out how we can improve our units and in turn improve the quality of life for all of our families.

Workers will come by and inspect homes and finally end their visit with a customer survey. Each visit should take 15 to 20 minutes.

REAC inspections and scores are important because it determines the amount of funds that housing authorities receive from the federal government.

## On The Cover:

*WHA resident Charles Holloway sits on his front porch. Mr. Holloway is very active in the Westwego community and is an inspiration to his neighbors.*

# Board Spotlight Courtney Watts-Reyes



### Years served on the Westwego Housing Authority Board of Commissioners?

Three years.

### Areas of professional expertise.

Licensed Insurance Producer

### Why did you decide to serve on the board?

“I have always been involved in my community and this was another important way to be involved and help others in the process.”

### How has working as a board member changed your perspective on public housing or assisted living?

“Before serving on the board I did not realize how important the need was for public housing. I was astonished by the ratio of people who need public

housing vs. the units we have available.”

### What has been your favorite moment working as a board member for Westwego?

“We did a back to school bash for the children in the development. It was great to meet some of the residents and to see how much fun the kids were having for the party. We had waterslides, sno-balls, and prizes for all the kids. It was a great time for everyone. We have done several of these events since then.

### What is your main goal or mission when it comes to serving on the board?

“To maintain the rules and regulations set by HUD, continue to house families in a safe environment. Also, to utilize every available asset we can find to make it Housing Authority the best it can be for the residents and the City of Westwego.”

## Adults must do community service, not for disabled or seniors

Please be advised that all adult members of assisted families must participate for at least 8 hours a month in community service or economic self-sufficiency training. This does not apply to elderly persons, disabled persons, persons already working or persons exempt from work requirements under State work programs, or persons receiving assistance under a State program.

The Housing Authority will refuse to renew the resident’s 12-month lease for failure to satisfy this requirement. This does not apply if you meet one of the following:

- If you have verifiable employment
- Resident is 62 years or older
- Resident is disabled as defined under 216(i) (1) or 1614 of the Social Security Act, and who because of this disability she or he is unable to comply with the service
- Resident if a primary caregiver of an individual

living in the household who is disabled according to the Social Security Act described above.

- Resident is engaged in work activities as described in HUD Rules and thereby exempt from performing Community Service (minimum of 20 hours per week).
- Resident is enrolled in the State administered Welfare to Work Program and in compliance with this program.
- Resident is receiving assistance, benefits, or services under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Section 601 et seq.) and has not been found by the State or other administering entity to be in noncompliance with the program.

Please call the office at 504-341-5255 or email [toya@wegohousing.com](mailto:toya@wegohousing.com) if you have any questions.