

WHA Board of Commissioners

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Westwego Housing

Quality People. Quality Housing. Quality Services. 2016 Issue - June Edition

Housing Authority



PUBLIC HEARING

The Housing Authority of Westwego will hold its Board of Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, June 21st at 6 p.m.

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Words From The Executive Director, Dorian Rawles



I have been impressed by the work of our staff to make the Westwego Housing Authority a shining example of an efficient and service-based agency.

I also have been impressed with the level of care that our neighbors show each other on a daily basis. Whether it is cutting their neighbors' lawn or driving someone to the supermarket for supplies, our Westwego families seem to always help and support each other.

If you haven't already noticed, we have a new website www.wegohousing.com. There you can scroll through the calendar to find information on upcoming meetings. We also feature a customer survey on the website that will allow us to get feedback on how we're performing with work orders.

continued on next page



In This Issue

Betty Russell completes certification
WHA Spotlight - Mayor John Shaddinger
Energy Saving Tips

When you place a work order and our maintenance staff addresses your issue, please take the time to fill out our survey at www.wegohousing.com/survey.html

Please cooperate with our maintenance staff as we continue REAC inspections which will help this process and maximize our funding. They will check your electrical systems, fire prevention equipment, plumbing, ventilation, and exits.

I am looking forward to the future and all of the wonderful things that we can accomplish together. We should always be working to make sure we live up to our motto — “Quality People. Quality Housing. Quality Services.”

WHA Spotlight

Mayor John Shaddinger



What is your main goal or mission when it comes to serving the city of Westwego?

“It comes down to personal service. I want to make sure the community is safe and make sure that the office is available to the constituents. Obviously, we need that personal service and to make sure that those essential services, such as police, firefighters and senior services are a priority. As the mayor, it basically comes down to making sure the community’s needs are met. Everyone is important. They’re all important to us. We have a great staff and when our employees do their jobs, it makes it attractive to people who want to live here and work here. They want to raise their kids in a safe environment like the city of Westwego.”

How big of a priority is affordable housing in Westwego?

“It’s no question about it that it is an important factor. You are always trying to get people to move into your community. Jobs are important and housing is as important. You have to have a place to live and get your feet on the ground, and have employment. Access to schools are important as well. It’s just another component of essential services. You have to make it affordable for people to live here. We know people spend more to live here because they we know we have a safe community. There’s no other place in Louisiana where police officers will leave their business card at your door at 3 a.m. and it says we’re here. The housing authority is equally

important because we want to make an affordable community but also one that is both sustainable and attractive.

How has working closely with the Westwego Housing Authority changed your perspective on public housing or assisted living since becoming mayor?

“Well as a council member I was already very active because many of the units in public housing were part of my district. But since becoming mayor the change in leadership at the housing authority, we have seen some drastic improvements of what Mr. Rawles expects from his staff. I brought some things to the housing authority and it’s not falling on deaf ears. Just the other day I spoke to him about some street lighting issues. Obviously we have a great working relationship and we communicate. We are partners in providing the best affordable housing for our families. He has been leading the charge and making major improvements, life altering improvements. Especially for those people who have health issues it must be a sense of peace that they have someone who personally visits people — that’s unheard of. I have his personal cell and we have a great working relationship in a very short time. On a scale of 1 - 10, we’re on a 9.5.”

On The Cover:

Executive Director Dorian Rawles meets with plumber Mark Peterson to talk about replacing outdated pipes in the community.

WHA community member earns nursing aide degree



had to get her brain back into a classroom mode. “But, it gave me something to go on. The first day, they had three tests. I felt like I wanted to quit. For the first week they cram 18 chapters worth of work in. The more I got into the book and started studying. It got easier. I had to find out what works for me.”

Russell said she spent long nights studying for the exams and even changed her diet to help her focus on her goal. Normally parents encourage their children to work hard in school. But Russell found the role reversed this time as her children constantly pressured her to succeed.

“My children were very proud of me,” said Russell. “They were on me about it like they were the parents. They were very supportive.”

Russell’s drive comes from a passion to help people, particularly the elderly. She said that she’s a people person and enjoys helping seniors with their daily lives. The degree increases her salary but Russell said this is only the beginning of her journey.

“It’s more money and I’ve been praying,” said Russell. “I see myself going into business for myself really soon. I want to go to people’s homes and take care of them.”

Russell had advice for anyone who wants to pursue their dreams.

“Whatever you start finish it because in the end it’s worth it,” she said. “When you find something you like doing get certified in it. Don’t quit and pray.”

“Whatever you start, finish it because in the end it’s worth it. When you find something you like doing, get certified in it. Don’t quit and pray.”

-Betty Russell

Energy Saving Tips for the Summer

*Turn off your air conditioner before you leave home for an extended period of time. Or at least turn up the thermostat. It’s a straightforward way to use less power. Also, make sure the filter is clean. Dirty filters cause air conditioning units to work harder, using more energy.