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## **WHA revokes security, last month's rent deposit policy** *Commissioners acknowledge 'hardship for tenants'*

**WORCESTER, Massachusetts** – Acting on a recommendation from Worcester Housing Authority CEO Alex Corrales, the Board of Commissioners has rescinded the agency's Security and Last Month's Rent Policy.

The change went into effect August 17, after which new tenants will only be required to pay the first month's rent before moving into their apartment.

"This just makes sense," Board Chair Joseph P. Carlson said. "We are well aware of the financial challenges facing so many people, with inflation increasing the cost of food, gas, and other necessities. With all that, we feel the policy as currently constituted served to place an undue burden on prospective tenants, and actually discouraged or prevented them from accepting a unit."

In his recommendation to the Board, Corrales noted the impact on tenants as well as the administrative costs and burdens for the WHA, which have included approximately \$88,000 a year associated processing and managing the deposit accounts, which is greater than the roughly \$82,000 in average deposits collected each year; time-consuming and tedious tasks associated with monitoring the monthly interest for each security and last month's rent deposit; potential human error which can lead to the WHA being responsible for triple damages; and a negative impact on rent collection and vacancy turnaround time as the result of a delay in move-ins.

Tenants, Corrales said, find it difficult to pay triple the cost before the move-in date, not to mention the cost of moving. While they can apply for assistance to cover the expenses, this can force a delay in the move-in process.

"The policy has created additional stress and burdens for tenants, and has strained our resources as well," Corrales said. "I appreciate and thank the Board for rescinding this policy and giving some relief to our tenants. This will help us lease up available units more quickly, and that is particularly important at a time when so many people need a place to live."

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