



REGULAR BOARD MEETING

March 24, 2021

6:15 p.m.

Zoom Conference

AGENDA

1. Approve Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 24, 2021
2. Public Comment
3. Board Committee Reports
 - HR Committee Meeting
 - Operations Committee Meeting
 - Finance Committee Meeting
4. Report from Executive Director
5. Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer
6. Resolutions:
 - 21-08 Adopt Payment Standards for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) to comply with HUD FY2021 Fair Market Rent Calculations
7. Executive Session
 - Legal Matters, Real Estate Items, Personnel Items.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
FEBRUARY 24, 2021

A regular Board meeting of the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford was held using a remote connection meeting platform Zoom on Wednesday, February 24, 2021.

Commissioner Rutz called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

A. Attendees

| | | | |
|----------|---|---------|--|
| Present: | Susan Rutz Rich Ostuw Lester McKoy Sheila Williams-Brown | Absent: | Courtney Nelthropp Adriana Ospina Angie Murphy |
|----------|---|---------|--|

Advisory Board Members: Ronice Latta
Bianca Shinn-Desras

Present: Vin Tufo
Natalie Coard
Sam Feda
Jonathan Gottlieb
Jamie Perna
Suela Pergjoni
Lisa Reynolds
Peter Stothart
Janice Tantimonico
Christine Young

Resident Present: Frances Lane

B. Approval of Minutes - Approval of minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 26, 2021

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner McKoy seconded

The minutes were approved.

| | | | |
|-------|---|-------|------|
| Ayes: | Susan Rutz Rich Ostuw Lester McKoy Sheila Williams-Brown | Nays: | None |
|-------|---|-------|------|

C. Public Comment – Ms. Lane commented that the property management staff has been responsive in providing assistance and answering questions on COVID-19 concerns since the pandemic onset. Ms. Lane stated that Ms. Coard has provided constructive management at the resident vaccination clinics.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, Ospina and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Shinn-Desras, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Coard, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Dorante, Ms. Perna, Mr. Tufo, and Ms. Young attended the HR Committee meeting on 02/23/2021. Ms. Tantimonico and Ms. Reynolds reported on the launch of the Charter Oak Learning Exchange (COLE) and the positive feedback they have received from Board members and staff on this system. Ms. Reynolds stated that the training platform will provide training sessions for Board members and staff on an ongoing basis. Ms. Tantimonico and Ms. Dorante provided an update on the mandatory State of Connecticut Sexual Harassment Training that was by completed by the staff on COLE with feedback from employees. Ms. Tantimonico discussed COC’s communication initiatives based on the 2020 Employee Survey results.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy, and Ms. Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Shinn-Desras, Ms. Coard, Ms. Perna, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Feda, Ms. Pergjoni, Ms. Tantimonico and Ms. Young attended the Operations Committee meeting on 02/24/2021. Ms. Perna presented an update on the Charter Oak Communities-Family Centers Rent Relief Program (RRP). Six households were added to the program in February, bringing the total number of participants to 29 with approximately

\$125,441.00 program funds dispersed. Ms. Perna noted that the donor funds from 4-CT are now exhausted, and it is estimated that the program will continue to be supported through June with remaining funds from Family Centers and COC. Ms. Perna noted that COC has developed a variant for the Rent Relief Program - "2.0" - that provides a one-time, simple \$1,000 account credit to eligible families. Since the RRP 2.0 began 02/01/2021, 18 households have enrolled. Mr. Tufo reported that the Connecticut Temporary Rental Housing Assistance Program (TRHAP) program remains closed but is anticipated to re-open with additional federal stimulus funds in the coming weeks.

Ms. Perna reported that COC continues to work with Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) to offer on-site COVID-19 testing to all senior residents. Ms. Perna reported that attendance at the testing events has been steady and that residents have reported that they appreciate COC providing accessible, free testing. COC has organized a first dose vaccination clinic for Wormser Congregate residents for 03/05/2021.

Mr. Stothart provided an update on the interview held with EMEK Security Services for Security Guard Services. Commissioner McKoy provided feedback from the interview and his opinion of EMEK Security Services. Ms. Pergjoni provided an overview of The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) proposed Schedule of Allowances for Tenant Furnished Utilities.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy, Ospina and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board member Latta, Ms. Coard, Mr. Tufo, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Perna, Mr. Fedra, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luzietti, Ms. Silverio, Mr. Arturo and Mr. Guyder and Mr. Remus from Marcum LLC attended the Finance Committee meeting on 02/23/2021. Mr. Guyder and Mr. Remus presented an overview of the Y/E 6/30/2020 Audited Financial Statements in the new Comprehensive Annual Financial Report format. The results of the audit were discussed as to the financial statements and compliance with Federal and State requirements. The auditors issued no findings or management comments and issued a clean, *unmodified* opinion.

Mr. Paulemon provided an update on the status of the tax credit audits, which are in draft and final format. The Stamford Elderly Housing d/b/a Scofield Manor (Y/E 9/30/2020) audit and cost report are finalized. Auditors from Whittlesey & Hadley will present these audits in the 03/2021 Finance Committee.

E. Report from Executive Director –Ms. Coard reported on the meeting held with Advisory Board members Latta and Shinn-Desras regarding the Property Description and Procurement training conducted on the Charter Oak Learning Exchange (COLE). Advisory Board members Latta and Shinn-Desras provided positive feedback and stated the meeting was extremely helpful by connecting their questions with the information. Ms. Coard provided a brief description of the Family Self Sufficiency Program (FSS) and will provide a report at a future Board meeting on the *success stories* of families that graduated from the program.

F. Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer - Mr. Tufo reported that the Strategy Committee has been working on finalizing the 2021 Strategic Plan that is aligned with COC's (10-year) Core Objectives. Mr. Tufo stated it represents performance goals, across all divisions, through 2021 and into 2022 in alignment with the Core Objectives. Mr. Tufo stated that two special sessions, 3/10/2021 and 4/13/2021, will be held with staff presenting accomplishments of 2020 and a look ahead to 2021. COC will provide periodic updates of these objectives, every six months, with discussion so that Board members and staff remain aligned and connected.

G. Resolutions –

21-04: Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) Proposed Schedule for Allowances for Tenant Furnished Utilities and Other Services

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner McKoy seconded.

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the proposed allowances for tenant furnished utilities and other services is hereby adopted, effective March 1, 2021.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw

Nays: None

Lester McKoy
Sheila Williams-Brown

21-05: Award Contract to EMEK Security Services, LLC for Security Guard Services

- Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded.

Be it resolved by the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the Executive Director is authorized to enter into an annual contract with EMEK Security Services, LLC, of Woodbridge, Connecticut for Security Guard Services. The cost of this procurement shall not exceed a total annual amount of \$700,000.00 for a one-year contract with the option for four additional years up to five years. Further Board approval will be required if the contract amount exceeds 110% of the authorized amount.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Lester McKoy
Sheila Williams-Brown
Nays: None

21-06: Approve 2020 Discretionary 401(a) Plan Contribution

- Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner McKoy seconded.

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the Employer's Discretionary Contribution for calendar 2020 to the 401(a) plan shall be authorized at 6% for the period of 1/1/20 – 12/31/20. The Chief Executive Officer is authorized to execute such documents as necessary to implement the approved contributions to the 401(a) plan.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Lester McKoy
Sheila Williams-Brown
Nays: None

21-07: Accept the year end June 30, 2020 Audited Financial Statements for the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford

- Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner McKoy seconded.

Be it resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the year ending June 30, 2020 Financial Statements are accepted.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Lester McKoy
Sheila Williams-Brown
Nays: None

H. Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

I. Adjournment

At 6:37 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Rutz and seconded by Commissioner Ostuw, the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director

Agenda

Human Resources Committee Meeting

March 23, 2021

4:15 p.m.

1. Employee Engagement Communication/Event
2. Reopening Office Mandatory COLE Training for Managers & Employees
 - a. Office Protocols During Pandemic
 - b. Emotional Intelligence
 - c. Change Management
3. Charter Oak Learning Exchange (COLE) Update

Agenda

Operations Committee Meeting

March 24, 2021

5:15 PM

1. Rent Relief Program Update
2. Accounts Receivable Update – Sam
3. Annual Rent Increases for State & Tax Credit properties
4. HCV FY2021 Fair Market Rents (FMR) Resolution
5. Covid-19 Testing/Vaccination Update
6. Fairfield County Community Foundation Covid-19 Resiliency Fund Application
7. Capital Projects and Procurement Update
 - a. Resident Services RFP

Agenda

Finance Committee Meeting

March 23, 2021

5:30 p.m.

1. Review of Annual Audits - Whittlesey & Hadley, P.C.
 - Stamford Elderly Housing Corporation d/b/a Scofield Manor (year end 9/30/2020)
 - Tax Credit Audits (year end 12/31/2020)
2. Other Items

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
D/B/A/ CHARTER OAK COMMUNITIES
22 Clinton Avenue
Stamford, CT 06901

Board Meeting Date: March 24, 2021

Resolution Number: 21-08

RESOLUTION

Subject: Adopt Payment Standards for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) to comply with HUD FY2021 Fair Market Rent Calculations

Background: Effective October 1st, 2020, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has established new Fair Market Rents (FMRs). Charter Oak Communities (COC) is required to maintain a Payment Standard schedule for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program utilizing those FMRs. The Payment Standard establishes the maximum allowable monthly subsidy by unit size under the program.

HUD allows Payment Standards to be set at any level between 90% and 110% of the published FMRs without HUD approval. Since rents in Stamford are high, making it difficult for HCV participants to afford units outside of areas that are impacted by poverty, COC has typically established its Payment Standard at 110% of FMRs to increase the range of available units. Since federally appropriated funding is limited and by setting the Payment Standards at 110%, we assist relatively fewer families; however, the higher Payment Standard affords families the rental resources to lease quality apartments in a variety of neighborhoods and avoids forced displacement to other communities. Since HUD has decreased the FMRs, COC must decrease its Payment Standards accordingly.

To dispute the decreased the FMRs, COC contracted a third-party vendor to conduct a rent study via an Address-Based Sample (ABS) Survey. Our appeal efforts were not successful in increasing the Payment Standards to reflect current market rents within the City of Stamford. Therefore, since HUD has decreased the FMRs, COC must decrease its Payment Standards accordingly and adopt the FY2021 released on October 1, 2020.

The following compares the Payment Standards effective October 1, 2019, the new HUD published FMRs released as of October 2020 for fiscal year 2021, and COC's proposed Payment Standards for April 2021.

| Unit Size | Current Payment Standard Effective 10/1/2019 | New FMR FY 2021 | Proposed Payment Standard Effective 04/01/2021 |
|------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| 0 | 1,491 | 1,292 | 1,421 |
| 1 | 1,871 | 1,621 | 1,783 |
| 2 | 2,286 | 1,958 | 2,153 |
| 3 | 2,877 | 2,439 | 2,682 |
| 4 | 3,218 | 2,720 | 3,992 |

Resolution: Be it resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that effective April 1, 2021, the Housing Choice Voucher Program Payment Standards for new and current participants are hereby adopted.

Jacqueline Figueroa
Staff Member Submitting Report