

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
AUGUST 25, 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, August 25, 2021.

Commissioner Rutz called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

A. Attendees

Present: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Lester McKoy
Sheila Williams-Brown
(Joined 6:30 p.m.)

Absent: Bianca Shinn-Desras
Courtney Nelthropp

Advisory Board Member: Ronice Latta

Present: Vin Tufo
Natalie Coard
Dorothea Dorante
Sam Feda
Jackie Figueroa
Jonathan Gottlieb
Ken Montanez
Jamie Perna
Peter Stothart
Lisa Reynolds
Jan Tantimonico
Christine Young

Resident Present: Frances Lane

B. Approval of Minutes

- Approval of minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of June 23, 2021

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner McKoy seconded

The minutes were approved.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Lester McKoy

Nays: None

- Approval of minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of July 28, 2021

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner McKoy seconded

The minutes were approved.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Lester McKoy

Nays: None

C. Public Comment – Ms. Lane stated that she was pleased that the Post House elevator was repaired timely. She raised concerns over Post House residents not evacuating the building when the fire alarm sounded on 8/22/2021. Ms. Lane noted that the Post House janitorial staff are doing a great job keeping the facility pleasantly clean.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz and McKoy, Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Coard, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Perna, Ms. Dorante, Ms. Figueroa, Mr. Montanez and Ms. Young attended the HR Committee meeting on 08/25/2021. Ms. Dorante provided an update on recruitment and COC’s recognition and engagement activities. Ms. Tantimonico reviewed Governor Lamont’s Executive Order 13B for mandatory vaccination of long-term care facility staff and the Hybrid Work Policy – Chapter #213.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz and McKoy, Advisory Board members Latta and Shinn-Desras, Ms. Coard, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Fedra, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Arturo, Ms. Silverio, Ms. Luzietti, Ms. Tarulli, Mr. Warren and Ms. Young attended the Finance Committee meeting on 08/24/2021. Mr. Fedra reviewed the 6/30/21 financial report discussing the unaudited 6/30/21 results for the federal and state properties and programs. He reviewed the Scofield Manor financials, and he highlighted the recent Medicaid rate increase and the approval of the FEMA application for reimbursement of partial COVID-19 related costs incurred 03/2020 to 06/2020.

Mr. Paulemon reviewed the fiduciary checklist highlighting the major accomplishments for 03/2021 through 6/2021 and reviewed the 07/2021 through 09/2021 checklist planning, which includes budget approvals, audit reviews and policy reviews. Mr. Paulemon provided an overview of the 6/30/21 audit process. The HUD audit process requires both an unaudited reporting segment that is underway now due on 9/15/21 as well as a traditional audit performed by external auditors that will begin soon and be completed by 12/31/21.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz and McKoy, Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Dorante, Mr. Stothart and Ms. Young attended the Operations Committee meeting on 08/25/2021. Ms. Perna provided an update on our participation in the UniteCT Rent Relief Program noting that, between COC and Stone Harbour-managed properties, COC has submitted a total of 64 applications with 20 paid. The funds received to date total approximately \$126,000. Ms. Perna noted that our team of property managers continues to enroll residents with rent arrearages. Residents who don’t use email are being enrolled with the help of Resident Service Coordinators who are registered as ‘tenant representatives’ in the UniteCT system. Ms. Perna reported that Person-to-Person continues to assist residents with financial relief on a case-by-case basis with a maximum contribution of \$1,000 per household per application.

Mr. Fedra reported on the July accounts receivable status for all properties. Ms. Figueroa and Ms. Perna presented highlights from the Quarterly Operations Report of June 30, 2021. Ms. Figueroa reviewed the HCV dashboard, emphasizing efforts to include voucher utilization, portability and recertifications. She noted that, although initial inspections have been ongoing, annual inspections were paused due to the pandemic but would resume this month. Ms. Perna reviewed the Operations dashboard, highlighting occupancy statistics, tenants account receivable and supportive services efforts. Ms. Perna reviewed status of the COC-Family Centers Rent Relief Program, the Childcare Stipends program, efforts to assist residents access to the COVID-19 vaccine and testing, the application for a Crime and Drug Safety Security grant at Stamford Manor, and building-wide renovations at Rippowam Manor and Glenbrook Manor. Ms. Figueroa reviewed COC’s accomplishments in Business Enterprise, noting that COC has executed two new affordable housing management (AHM) services contracts, increasing COC’s current AHM portfolio to 189 units. Mr. Stothart reviewed procurement activity as well as ongoing capital improvements at Connecticut Avenue and Lawn Avenue Townhouses. Mr. Stothart noted that additional projects are in the planning stages at Scofield Manor and Lawn Avenue Townhouses.

E. Appointment of Commissioner –

- Commissioner Rutz motioned to approve Commissioner Shinn-Desras to the Board, Commissioner McKoy moved, Commissioner Ostuw seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Vaccination Policy – Board members and staff discussed a COVID-19 vaccination policy for COC. Mr. Tufo stated that our current policy of strong encouragement has been successful in getting COC (without Scofield) to an 88% vaccination rate. Mr. Tufo stated that COC is currently collecting sample policies and examining data on other organization’s mandatory vaccination policies to learn and understand appropriate next steps for COC. Mr. Tufo welcomed the Board members comments and guidance stating that this will take our combined efforts.

- G. **Rent Relief Presentation** - Ms. Perna provided a Power Point presentation on the successful implementation of the Charter Oak Communities – Family Centers Rent Relief Program. Ms. Perna highlighted how the program was funded, eligibility for the program, the number of residents the program assisted and its success in eviction prevention.
- H. **Report from Executive Director** - Ms. Coard provided an update on the resignation of the HCVP Manager Suela Pergjoni and the impact it has had on the HCV department and operations. The HCVP Manager position is a key role in that it has 10 direct reports, 2000 HCV participants and relationships with over 700 landlords. Ms. Coard stated that Ms. Figueroa will be more hands-on within the HCV Department while the recruitment and re-organization efforts are underway.
- I. **Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer** - Mr. Tufo discussed the governmental advocacy meetings with Ms. Coard and Stamford’s congressional staff and state representatives. The goal has been to engage and develop relationships with our elected officials to influence legislation, regulation, appropriations and government operations to strengthen our portfolio, build resident and community support and improve operational efficiency. Mr. Tufo stated that by enhancing elected official’s understanding of how COC’s housing programs work along with the needs and aspirations of resident and applicants of the broader community, they will develop an understanding to effectively advocate for us in Stamford, Hartford and Washington. Mr. Tufo discussed upcoming opportunities with Board members and legislators to participate in property tours and a legislative breakfast to broaden their knowledge and ability to speak convincingly of COC.
- J. **Board Discussion – Children’s Playgrounds at COC Properties**
Commissioner McKoy stated that the Board Discussion would be postponed to the 9/22/2021 Board meeting.

K. **Resolutions** –

21-22: Authorize Change Order No. 4 for Added Funding for Architectural and Engineering Services No. 16-0001 with Hibbard and Rosa Architects

- 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 Executive Director is authorized to execute Change Order No. 4 for additional funding for Architectural and Engineering Services with Hibbard and Rosa Architects for the amount of \$60,000.00 raising the total authorization to \$320,000.00. Further expenditure shall not be exceeded without Board authorization.

The resolution was passed.

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

21-23: Authorize Change Order No. 3 to the Contract w/ Creative Culinary Services, Inc. for Added Funding and Term Extension for Scofield Manor Food Services

- Commissioner McKoy moved, Commissioner Ostuw seconded.

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the Executive Director is authorized to approve Change Order No. 3 to the contract with Creative Culinary Services, Inc. in the amount of \$276,000.00, bringing the total not to exceed contract amount to \$2,361,600.04.

The resolution was passed.

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

21-24: Award Contract for Specialized Legal Services to Reno and Cavanaugh PLLC.

➤ 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 Executive Director is authorized to enter into a contract with Reno & Cavanaugh PLLC for Specialized Legal Services. The contract is for a five-year maximum contract in an amount not to exceed \$300,000.00. Further expenditure shall not be exceeded without Board authorization.

The resolution was passed.

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

L. Executive Session

At 7:25 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Rutz and seconded by Commissioner Ostuw, the Board went into an Executive Session. Mr. Tufo reported to the Board on Alexander Wu and Scofield Manor.

M. Adjournment

At 7:50 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Rutz and seconded by Commissioner Ostuw, the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director