



REGULAR BOARD MEETING

September 22, 2021

6:10 p.m.

Zoom Conference

AGENDA

1. Approve Minutes of the COC Board Meeting of August 25, 2021
2. Public Comment
3. Board Committee Reports
 - HR Committee Meeting
 - Finance Committee Meeting
 - Operations Committee Meeting
4. Report from Executive Director
5. Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer
6. Board Discussion – Children's Playgrounds at COC Properties
7. Resolutions:
 - 21-25 Approve Payment Standards for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program to comply with HUD FY 2022 Fair Market Rent Calculations
8. 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
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
Rich Ostuw
Lester McKoy
Sheila Williams-Brown

Nays: None

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

Agenda

Finance Committee Meeting

September 21, 2021

5:30 p.m.

1. FY 2022 (10/1/21 – 9/30/22) Scofield Manor Budget Presentation - Darnel
2. Annual Report on Accounts Receivable Write-Offs (Board and ED Approved) - Tania
3. Investment Policy Review Update - Lisa
4. Audit Update - Darnel
5. Other Items

Agenda

Human Resources Committee Meeting

September 21, 2021

4:15 p.m.

1. Recruitment Update
2. Employee Recognition and Engagement
3. Outcome of Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 13B
4. Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Agenda

Operations Committee Meeting

September 22, 2021

5:15 PM

1. UniteCT
2. August Accounts Receivable Status
3. FY22 Fair Market Rents
4. Waitlist Openings – SRO (Three developments), Clinton Manor, Quintard Manor
5. Procurement Activity

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

Board Meeting Date: September 22, 2021

Resolution Number: 21-25

Resolution

Subject: Approve Payment Standards for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program to comply with HUD FY 2022 Fair Market Rent Calculations.

Background: Effective October 1, 2021, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established updated Fair Market Rents (FMRs), nationwide. Charter Oak Communities (COC) is required to maintain a Payment Standard schedule for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program based upon current FMRs. The Payment Standard establishes the maximum allowable monthly subsidy under the program, by unit size.

HUD allows Payment Standards to be set at a locally appropriate level between 90% and 110% of the published FMRs without further HUD approval. Since rents in Stamford are generally 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. The purpose is to increase the range of available units. Since federally appropriated funding is limited 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 to avoid forced displacement to other communities. Since HUD has increased the FMRs, COC must increase its Payment Standards accordingly.

The following table compares the Payment Standards effective April 2021, the new HUD published FMRs released as of October 2021 for fiscal year 2022, and the proposed Payment Standards for October 2021.

Unit Size	Current Payment Standards Effective 4/01/2021	New FMR FY 2022	Proposed Payment Standard Effective 10/1/2021
0	\$1,421	\$1,520	\$1,672
1	\$1,783	\$1,855	\$2,040
2	\$2,153	\$2,230	\$2,453
3	\$2,682	\$2,757	\$3,032
4	\$2,992	\$3,056	\$3,361

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

Jacqueline Figueroa

Staff Member Submitting Report



DRAFT PERSONNEL POLICY

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (“Policy”)

The below summary outlines our upcoming vaccination policy.

General

- The first responsibility of Charter Oak Communities (COC) is to do everything within its power and practical limitations to ensure the safety of its employees, residents, vendors and clientele within the Stamford community.
- The COVID-19 vaccines currently approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have proven to be the single most effective tool that is available to restrict personal contraction and community transmission of the virus. Therefore, consistent with its duty to provide and maintain a workplace that is as free as possible of recognized hazards, COC has continued to encourage COVID-19 vaccination for all COC employees.
- With the proliferation of COVID-19 cases due to emerging variants of the virus (e.g. Delta variant), we believe that the safest way to transition COC back to its normal operating mode is for employees to be vaccinated.

Vaccination Protocol

- “Vaccinated” means an employee has received a full course of a vaccine approved for use against COVID-19 by the FDA plus fourteen (14) days after receiving the final required dose. Future guidance on the administration of booster dosages may be incorporated into the Policy by reference.
- Proof of vaccination shall be made by presenting a COVID-19 Vaccination Card to Human Resources to be copied, and the copy kept in a confidential medical file. If Human Resources does not have a copy of an employee’s Vaccination Card, the employee will be considered unvaccinated under the Policy.
- Vaccinations will be provided at no cost to the employee.

Policy Exemption

- Employees may elect not to be vaccinated for medical reasons, sincerely held religious beliefs (as defined by the EEOC), or other reasons. Employees that chose not to be vaccinated must be tested as frequently as can be feasibly and efficiently accomplished. COC will determine



DRAFT PERSONNEL POLICY

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (“Policy”)

the appropriate frequency of testing. The goal is to require daily testing of unvaccinated employees as soon as this can reasonably be done.

Testing Protocol

- An employee who remains unvaccinated after the Policy effective date, including anyone who has been approved for an Exemption, is required to be tested for COVID-19 as frequently as is reasonably feasible. Provisions for isolation of any employee testing Positive will be defined in the Policy.
- As of the Policy effective date, the only acceptable test is polymerase chain reaction (PCR). Note that the type and frequency of testing is subject to change based on further information and guidance provided by the relevant administrative and/or regulatory bodies.
- The testing requirement applies to all unvaccinated employees. It does not apply to residents, vendors, and visitors.
- The unvaccinated employee is responsible to coordinate his/her testing and submittal of the test results to covidtestresults@charteroakcommunities.
- Cost of testing not covered by medical insurance will be the financial responsibility of the employee. Costs of testing not covered by medical insurance shall be the financial responsibility of the employee.
- If an unvaccinated employee does comply with the Policy testing requirement and/or provide scanned results within the required period, he/she shall be placed on unpaid leave until a scanned negative test result is submitted electronically. The leave is not to exceed five (5) workdays. If such employee does not adhere to the testing mandate on workday six (6) he/she may be terminated for cause.

Masking Policy

- The COVID-19 Employee Mask Policy, Chapter #212 modified on August 3, 2021, that requires all employees, contractors, and vendors, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask and maintain social distancing while in public settings at work remains in effect. (Reference Attached Policy)



DRAFT PERSONNEL POLICY

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (“Policy”)

Policy Implementation

- The following timeline will apply to Policy implementation:
 - October 18, 2021: Vaccine Policy effective date. Employees are required to be vaccinated unless requesting an Exemption or choosing to remain unvaccinated for other reasons.
 - October 18, 2021: Employees who remain unvaccinated or are partially vaccinated are required to undergo regular testing in compliance with the Policy

New Employees

- Prior to commencing employment at COC, all new (regular or temporary) employees must have received a full course of a vaccine approved for use against COVID-19 by the FDA plus fourteen (14) days after receiving the final required dose including booster dosages, if recommended, unless an Exemption request for a medical or religious reason as defined by the EEOC is approved by COC. If a new hire has received an Exemption, he/she shall follow the Policy testing mandate. Failure to meet these requirements will result in a rescission of a job offer or immediate termination.

Summary

- COC will vigorously encourage unvaccinated employees to be vaccinated. We recommend that unvaccinated employees seek the appropriate clinical education or counseling to address any reservations they may have about the efficacy or safety of the vaccine. If you would like a referral to such services, please contact Janice Tantimonico at the below email address.

The Charter Oak Communities COVID-19 Vaccination Policy is subject to modification at any time based on information and guidance provided by the relevant administrative and/or regulatory bodies. This policy will be fully reevaluated in six (6) months from the date of issuance.

For further information, please contact Janice Tantimonico, Chief Talent Officer/DHR at jtantimonico@charteroakcommunities.org.