

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
JUNE 24, 2020

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, June 24, 2020.

Commissioner Ostuw called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

A. Attendees

Present: Rich Ostuw
Susan Rutz
Sheila Williams-Brown
Lester McKoy

Absent: Courtney Nelthropp

Advisory Board Member: Adriana Ospina

Staff Members Present: Vin Tufo
Jonathan Gottlieb
Christine Young
Natalie Coard
Jacqueline Figueroa
Jamie Perna
Peter Stothart
Janice Tantimonico
Lisa Reynolds
Sam Feda
Darnel Paulemon
Alexis Luzietti
Dakota Arturo
Ken Montanez
Marcia Bennett

B. Approval of Minutes - Approval of minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of May 27, 2020

➤ Commissioner Rutz moved, Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded

The minutes were approved. Ayes: Rich Ostuw
Susan Rutz
Sheila Williams-Brown
Lester McKoy

Nays: None

C. Public Comment - No public comments.

Board Committee Reports

- Human Resources Committee** – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, Williams-Brown, and McKoy, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Coard, Ms. Reynolds and Mr. Tufo were in attendance at the HR Committee meeting on 6/23/2020. Ms. Tantimonico reviewed the projected costs for renewal of the medical, dental and vision plans through the Connecticut State Partnership Plan, which included the regionalization costs. The Committee discussed the costs and other possible options.
- Operations Committee** – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board Member Ospina, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Coard, Ms. Perna, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Feda, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Arturo, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Montanez and Ms. Bennett were in attendance at the Operations Committee meeting on 6/24/2020. Ms. Figueroa provided an update on the COVID-19 testing held at Scofield Manor, Wormser Congregate and Quintard Manor. Ms. Figueroa reported that they are awaiting testing results for two residents at Scofield Manor who tested positive during the last testing event. Ms. Perna discussed the application to apply for a Resident Fund Basic Needs Pantry sponsored by Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA); the pantry will provide non-perishable food items, cooked meals, grocery gift cards, masks, gloves and other household essentials to residents of Oak Park, Lawnhill Terrace and Wormser Congregate. The sponsorship would provide \$30 per household; Family Centers resident service coordinators will assist in selecting eligible households. Ms. Perna provided an update on the East Side office construction and renovations; a second floor will be added to the current management office space, which will provide additional meeting space for residents. The property management offices will be located on the second floor; the office space should be completed by mid-summer. Mr. Feda and Ms.

Figueroa provided an overview of tenant account receivables for all properties. Mr. Stothart provided a procurement update and discussed the resolution: Award Contract to IPM in Housing Communities, LLC. for Pest Control Services.

- 3. Finance Committee** – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, Williams-Brown and McKoy, Mr. Tufo, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Coard, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Arturo, and Mr. Montanez were in attendance at the Finance Committee meeting on 6/23/2020. Mr. Paulemon discussed the Management, Administration and Enterprise (MAE) budget for FY 6/30/2021 and, with Mr. Tufo, reported on the structure and funding sources of the MAE. Mr. Paulemon showed the cash reserves and balance sheet items to provide a picture of the financial health of the MAE and its ability to support this structural operating loss. To provide a better view of the MAE's budget impact, the financial model will be presented in the July 2020 Finance Committee meeting.

COVID-19 Related Activities Report—COC staff provided a presentation of all departments' activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

OSG: Ms. Coard reported that the Operations Service Group has been operating remotely, except for the maintenance team and Scofield Manor. All areas continue to be fully functional during the pandemic. Ms. Coard stated that it was a priority to keep residents and applicants informed of COC activity. Residents and applicants communicate with staff via website updates, email, mail, telephone and drop boxes located at the various property locations. Ms. Figueroa reported on the HCV department stating that the team continues to carry out their normal functions conducting annual and interim recertification and issuance of vouchers; managing unit transfers, lease ups and portability. Ms. Figueroa stated that, with the help of the IT Department, staff has successfully transitioned to working remotely seamlessly. Ms. Perna reported on the Property Management team's ability to complete annual and interim recertification, process applicant files, and conduct hearings remotely. Ms. Perna noted that the maintenance team continues to work primarily on site but is responding only to emergency calls. (A total of 429 emergency work orders have been completed to date during this time.) Ms. Figueroa briefly discussed the protocols and aggressive actions that were taken at Scofield Manor prior to the onset of the pandemic. Ms. Figueroa noted that the hard work and dedication of the Scofield Manor team in collaboration with COC's Maintenance, HR and Finance teams has also played a pivotal role in managing through the crisis.

Development and Asset Management/Rippowam Corporation: Mr. Gottlieb reported that the transition to working remotely has been relatively seamless for staff without any apparent reduction in output or efficiency. Mr. Gottlieb stated that Rippowam team members have played a key role in identifying financial resources available to COC and residents to help offset increased operating expenses and income loss resulting from the pandemic. Some of these resources include: Payroll Protection Program; Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA); CARES Act and HUD Policy Waivers; State Policies, Assistance, and Tenant Protections; Rent Forbearance Program; Local Rent Relief Program and Debt Forgiveness and Debt Service Temporary Moratoria. Mr. Gottlieb reported that, although active development projects have been interrupted and/or delayed due to the pandemic, the renovation of Lawnhill Terrace Phase 3, with some adjustments, has been able to continue renovations.

Finance: Mr. Fedra provided an overview stating that the Finance Department's transition to working remotely has been perceived as successful; 98 percent of key tasks are being completed effectively with certain tasks requiring designated employees to go into the office. Payroll has been processed timely; accounts payable check runs are being issued as scheduled; 2021 budgets are being developed collaboratively; month end close out, investor reporting; and other activities continue. Mr. Fedra stated that an area of increased responsibility is due to the ongoing tracking and analyzing impact of residents' loss of income. Mr. Fedra stated that the staff is ensuring proper allocations of COVID-19 related expenses. They are staying in close contact with our auditors and other experts to ensure fiscal accountability and compliance.

IT: Mr. Montanez reported that the Information Technology (IT) Department has been proactive and able to provide essential equipment to the staff prior to the quarantine. The IT Department was able to deploy and utilize the necessary technology resources to support a remote workforce, including laptops, printers, cell phones, etc. The department supported a varied workforce with an understanding and proactive approach that truly facilitated a smooth remote workforce transition for all.

Vita Health and Wellness Partnership: Mr. Tufo provided an overview of the work and contributions that Vita has had on the greater Stamford community. The Community Table under the Vita Health and Wellness Partnership has hosted weekly conference calls to support Stamford's large network of human service providers with an information exchange and joint problem-solving in response to issues and challenges of COVID-19. Vita has been instrumental in providing PPE to the Stamford front line workers and to the surrounding community. Mr. Tufo noted that Vita will reduce the frequency of these weekly conference calls to monthly meetings.

Fairgate Farm: Ms. Young provided an overview of activity underway at Fairgate Farm noting its 10th growing season. The Farm has had to "rethink" every facet of its operation due to COVID-19. Ms. Young reported that the Farm's website has been updated, and a reservation system was created to track participation of volunteers. Educational classes for the community were shifted to an online platform and have received great feedback. Ms. Young noted Fairgate Farm received

an emergency \$10,000 grant from the Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare Foundation to directly provide food to people in need during the COVID-19 crisis. The Farmers Market has opened for the season and serves patrons through an online ordering system with curbside pickup. The Farm was awarded the Connecticut Farm Viability grant from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. Those funds will be used to erect a climate controlled greenhouse that will allow for an indoor Winter Market.

D. Resolution

20-25: Approve the Central Office Cost Center (COCC) operating budget for the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2021.

➤ Commissioner Rutz moved, Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded.

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the Budget for the Central Office Cost Center are adopted for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

The resolution was passed.

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

20-26: Award Contract to IPM in Housing Communities, LLC. for Pest Control Services

➤ Commissioner Rutz 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 a contract with IPM in Housing Communities, LLC, of Stamford, CT for Pest Control Services. The total cost of this procurement shall not exceed \$523,095.00 over a five-year period. Further Board approval will be required if the contract amount exceeds 110% of the authorized amount.

The resolution was passed.

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

20-27: Authorization of Sale of Three Scattered Site Federal Public Housing Properties Each Containing Two Dwelling Units

➤ Commissioner Rutz moved, Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the properties located at 1-3 Oscar Street, 66-68 Durant Street, and 72-74 Soundview Avenue are approved for sale and that all previous actions by this Board in this matter are reaffirmed.

Be it also resolved that the CEO, Executive Director and/or designated staff are authorized to take such steps and execute such documents as necessary to facilitate the sale of the three properties.

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

The resolution was passed.

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

E. Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

F. Adjournment

At 6:59 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Rutz and seconded by Commissioner Williams-Brown, the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director