

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
SEPTEMBER 23, 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, September 23, 2020.

Commissioner Ostuw called the meeting to order at 6:01 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
Natalie Coard
Dorothea Dorante
Sam Feda
Jacqueline Figueroa
Jonathan Gottlieb
Darnel Paulemon
Jamie Perna
Lisa Reynolds
Peter Stothart
Janice Tantimonico
Christine Young

B. Approval of Minutes - Approval of minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of August 26, 2020

➤ Commissioner McKoy moved, Commissioner Rutz seconded

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

Nays: None

C. Public Comment – Ms. Lane a resident of Post House inquired on possible data irregularities of the Allure affordable housing waiting list. Ms. Figueroa stated that before COC had the contract for Allure to provide affordable housing management services a different company processed the applications. COC has been in contact with the applicants for this list and inserted language on the applications that is clear on the income requirements and restrictions.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, Williams-Brown, and McKoy, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Coard, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Dorante, Ms. Figueroa, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Rodriguez and Ms. Young were in attendance at the HR Committee meeting on 9/22/2020. Ms. Tantimonico and Ms. Dorante reported on the Employee Engagement Strategy, which reinforced COCs’ mission, values and core objectives to strengthen the employee engagement initiative. Initiatives discussed were: Work-life Training Session of How to Handle Stress during COVID-19 and Escape Room Teambuilding events.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board Member Ospina, Ms. Coard, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Feda, Ms. Tantimonico and Ms. Young were in attendance at the Operations Committee meeting on 9/23/2020. Ms. Figueroa presented an overview of the operational and financial status for Scofield Manor. Ms. Figueroa provided details on the short- and long-term strategies that have been implemented to establish a sustainable financial foundation, while highlighting the State requirements. Ms. Figueroa discussed Scofield Manor’s projected outlook, financial constraints and the need to evaluate the program’s long-term sustainability. Ms. Perna presented an update on the Charter Oak Communities and Family Centers COVID-19 Rent Relief Program. Ms. Perna provided an overview of the program and detailed outreach efforts to the residents, which have included flyers, informational packages, phone calls and Zoom information sessions. To date, there are ten households enrolled in the program accounting for approximately \$14,000 in donor funds allocated to resident rent arrearages. Ms. Perna noted that the State and Federal eviction moratoria have played a role in increasing accounts receivables. Ms. Perna noted that the court has begun to schedule remote hearings on existing cases and that the State moratorium is set to expire 9/30/2020. Ms. Coard

discussed the City of Stamford rent relief efforts for landlords. The City is currently compiling data to determine the extent of lost revenue due to unpaid rent. Ms. Perna discussed the Person-2-Person (P2P) Rent Relief Program. This year P2P has provided over \$28,000 directly to COC on behalf of 62 households toward unpaid rent, which is up to \$600 per household. Mr. Stothart provided the status of current capital projects. Mr. Stothart stated that the Scofield Manor Gutter, Cornice and Slate Roof Improvement project has been completed. Mr. Stothart discussed details on the Connecticut Avenue A & B Kitchen, Window and Siding Replacement project and the Lawn Avenue Townhouses Window Replacement project. Mr. Stothart noted that the RFP - Refuse Removal Services Contract is out to bid, and proposals should be returned in time to present at the October Board meeting.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, Williams-Brown, McKoy, Advisory Board Member Ospina, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Feda, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luziotti, Ms. Silverio and Mr. Arturo were in attendance at the Finance Committee meeting on 9/22/2020. Mr. Feda presented the September AR dashboard outlining the status of receivables at the properties most impacted by COVID-19 income changes (State, straight Tax Credit and Market Rate). The results were similar to those experienced the prior month. Mr. Feda added some additional property information to the dashboard including debt service ratio and cash and operating reserve levels. The Board will be updated on this important information monthly. Ms. Reynolds and Ms. Silverio presented the Committee with the current AR policy, AR data and graphics from 2019 and 2020 and a working document for staff and Board recommendations from this policy review. The Board provided additional feedback with recommendations that will be incorporated into a final document at next month's meeting.

At the August Committee meeting John Mahoney, USI Insurance Consultant, provided the Board with an overview of the Directors and Officers and Public Officials insurance coverages. Ms. Reynolds followed up with highlights of this insurance product including who is protected and what types of claims are covered under this policy. The Board will be given an update and review of these policies bi-annually or when there is a significant change to coverages, limits, exclusions or a change in circumstance. Mr. Feda provided an update to the planned conversion of the financial system from HAB to MRI. The project is estimated to be completed in 01/2021 and will provide significant improvements and upgrades from HAB, including additional automation, single access systems, better reporting and analyses features. Mr. Feda will keep the Board apprised on the conversion process.

E. Election of Officers –

Mr. Tufo stated that Mr. Nelthropp has withdrawn as Chairman of the COC Board of Commissioners. Mr. Nelthropp will remain on the Board until the end of his term, 12/01/2020, and will continue as an Advisory Board member. Mr. Tufo applauded Mr. Nelthropp's exceptional contributions for over 20 years in guiding COC to recognizing unique opportunities and achieving a remarkable transformation from being a traditional housing authority to a self-sustaining, progressive entity.

Mr. McKoy conveyed his gratitude to Mr. Nelthropp's legacy in providing expert leadership and compassion to the individuals in the community seeking decent housing and way of life. Ms. Rutz stated that the Board is committed to maintaining the high-level of Mr. Nelthropp's accomplishments of over 20 years. Ms. Williams-Brown recognized Mr. Nelthropp's years of hard work and that he would be difficult to replace. Ms. Ospina expressed delight that Mr. Nelthropp will continue on the Board as an Advisory Board member to provide common sense and wisdom that will benefit the Stamford community.

- Commissioner Ostuw nominated, Commissioner McKoy seconded, Commissioner Rutz as Chairwoman
- Commissioner Rutz nominated, Commissioner McKoy seconded, Commissioner Ostuw as Vice Chairman
- Both appointments were approved by unanimous vote.

F. Report from Executive Director – Ms. Coard provided an update to COC's participation in Stamford Stands Against Racism (SSAR), a community wide call-to-action committing to specific actions to eradicate systemic racism. The mission of SSAR is to work with organizations to train and educate leaders and employees within the Stamford area on racism. The committee is searching for more African American and Latinos to respond to increase their participation in the movement. Ms. Coard discussed the homicide that took place at the Oak Park parking lot on 9/20/2020. Ms. Coard described the relationship with the Stamford Police Department and the security measures in place to ensure the safety of the residents and surrounding community. Further evaluation of the parking lot will be decided and reported back to the Board at the next meeting.

G. Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer– Mr. Tufo stated that the Strategy Committee has begun active recruitment for new Advisory Board members. Mr. Tufo discussed the structured approach focusing on the top three traits: real estate experience, financial background and community activism. The Committee has already identified leaders in the community as contacts to refer to potential candidates.

Mr. Tufo provided comments on the homicide at the Oak Park parking lot, which took place 9/20/2020. Ms. Coard, Ms. Perna and the property managers have worked diligently for nearly five years with the Stamford Police Department (PD) to call attention to the trespassing and loitering in the parking lot. Ms. Rutz inquired what the Board can do. Mr. Tufo stated that the Board will be a catalyst to influence change to revitalize Oak Park.

H. Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

I. Adjournment

At 6:44 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Ostuw and seconded by Commissioner Williams-Brown, the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director