

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
NOVEMBER 18, 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, November 18, 2020.

Commissioner Rutz called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

A. Attendees

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

Absent: None

Advisory Board Members: Adriana Ospina

Present: Vin Tufo
Natalie Coard
Dakota Arturo
Dorothea Dorante
Sam Feda
Jonathan Gottlieb
Darnel Paulemon
Jamie Perna
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 October 28, 2020

➤ Commissioner Rutz moved, Commissioner Ostuw seconded

The minutes were approved.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Lester McKoy
Courtney Nelthropp
Sheila Williams-Brown

Nays: None

C. Public Comment –No public comments.

D. Recognition honoring the legacy of Courtney Nelthropp

Mr. Tufo spoke on the remarkable tenure of Mr. Nelthropp as Chairman of the COC Board of Commissioners for 20 plus years. Mr. Tufo noted Mr. Nelthropp’s extraordinary contributions in guiding COC to recognizing unique opportunities and achieving a transformation from a traditional housing authority to a self-sustaining, progressive entity. Mr. Gottlieb thanked Mr. Nelthropp for valuing the staff’s commitment to his vision in guiding COC forward. Mr. Ostuw stated that Mr. Nelthropp’s qualities of inclusiveness and passion will continue to be carried out with the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Rutz stated that the Board is committed to maintaining the high-level set by his accomplishments. Ms. Williams-Brown recognized Mr. Nelthropp’s openness to change and encouraging individuals to speak up and ask questions. Ms. Reynolds and Ms. Coard spoke of Mr. Nelthropp’s gracious manner, “never give up” personality and his dedication to improve the quality of living standards for the residents of Stamford. Mr. McKoy thanked Mr. Nelthropp for his many years of dedicated service. Mr. Nelthropp’s legacy in providing expert leadership and compassion to the individuals in the community will be missed.

E. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, Williams-Brown, and McKoy, Advisory Board Member Ospina, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Coard, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Dorante, Ms. Perna, Mr. Tufo, and Ms. Young

were in attendance at the HR Committee meeting on 11/17/2020. Ms. Tantimonico and Ms. Dorante reported on the employee survey results, Your Voice Really Matters to Us, conducted 10/2020. The survey was conducted to evaluate how employees have transitioned from a remote to socially distant work environment and its potential impact on COC. The survey results were positive with employees appeared dedicated to COCs' commitment to strengthen the organization and fulfill its mission. With an overwhelmingly positive work culture, employees continue to be engaged and satisfied with their work even during these uncertain times. Ms. Tantimonico also provided an update on COVID-19 employee testing and events.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Nelthropp, Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy and Ms. Williams-Brown, Advisory Board Member Ospina, Ms. Coard, Ms. Perna, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Fedra, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Arturo, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Dorante, Mr. Montanez and Ms. Young were in attendance at the Operations Committee meeting on 11/17/2020. Ms. Perna presented an update on the COC/Family Centers Rent Relief Program (RRP). To date, twelve households have enrolled in the program with approximately \$16,000 in program funds dispersed. Ms. Perna informed the Board that COC has offered a temporary incentive to new participants who sign up through the end of 11/2020 where program funds will pay all arrears beyond the participant's 30% contribution leaving them with a zero balance and no deferred rent. If accepted, this incentive may be offered retroactively to existing RRP participants. Ms. Perna noted that approximately five residents have been approved for Connecticut Temporary Rental Housing Assistance Program (TRHAP) and that funds were pending. Ms. Perna stated that TRHAP is also allowing landlords to apply to the program on behalf of ten residents. COC is in the process of identifying households that would obtain the maximum benefit of participating in the TRHAP and will submit applications on their behalf. The ten households will be chosen based on arrears owed and likelihood to be approved based on program criteria. COC Property Managers and RSCs continue to contact all residents to offer support in applying for all available assistance programs.

Mr. Fedra provided an overview of the November A/R delinquency rates for all properties. Mr. Fedra noted that funds from the TRHAP for approved residents would be applied when received, further reducing the total balances. Ms. Perna reported that COVID-19 testing events have been held monthly at all senior properties. Ms. Perna reported that December testing events are in the process of being scheduled. Ms. Perna stated that Inspirica is donating 200 Harvest for Hope Thanksgiving bags to COC families. The bags will be distributed to families at Oak Park and Lawnhill Terrace on 11/24/2020. Ms. Perna reported that the Stamford Police Department is donating eight Thanksgiving meals to Sheridan Mews residents.

Mr. Stothart reported on the RFP issued for Security Guard Services and presented a comprehensive overview of the document. Mr. Stothart discussed upcoming RFPs that include Tenant Legal Services and Specialized Legal Services contracts. Mr. Stothart reported on the RFP for Refuse Collection Services that has been awarded. Mr. Stothart noted that Capital Improvement contracts are underway for Connecticut Avenue Replacement of Windows, Siding and Kitchens; Mr. Stothart noted that the Lawn Avenue Erosion Control project will go out to bid January 2021.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, Williams-Brown, McKoy and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board Member Ospina, Advisory Board member Ms. Murphy, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Perna, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luzietti, Ms. Ball, Ms. Silverio and Mr. Arturo were in attendance at the Finance Committee meeting on 11/17/2020. Mr. Fedra presented the 9/30/2020 Quarterly Financial Report for all COC properties. Mr. Fedra noted the revenue and expense budget variances and provided explanations for those exceeding 5%. Mr. Fedra provided an overview of the COVID-19 related funds received, expended and pending from all sources. Mr. Fedra presented the 10-year (2020 – 2030) COC and Rippowam Corporation financial models of unrestricted cash inflows and outflows. Mr. Fedra identified the conservative assumptions and components in the model and highlighted the assumptions most at risk for adjustments. The semi-annual committee review of the Cash Model has been completed on the Q4 2020 Fiduciary checklist.

Ms. Luzietti presented an overview of the components of the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) Model for 2020 through 2023. Ms. Luzietti described how HUD determines budget authority and COC assumptions for the HCVP Model. Ms. Luzietti discussed COCs' leasing strategy and program goal to maximize the vouchers COC is able to issue in the Stamford community while staying within the HUD budget authority. The semi-annual committee review of the HCVP model has been completed on the Q4 2020 Fiduciary checklist.

F. Report from Executive Director –Ms. Coard reported that COC has signed an additional contract with Building and Land Technology (BLT) to provide leasing services to the building, Escape. This is COC’s fourth contract with BLT to provide services, which include waitlist management, lease ups and ongoing recertification. Ms. Coard reported that COC has returned to Phase One of the Reopening Office Plan due to the spike in positive COVID-19 cases in Connecticut. Phase One of the plan contains mandatory office protocols which must be adhered to. HR has scheduled department meetings to discuss the Plan with the staff.

G. Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer - Mr. Tufo stated that preparation is being made for the 12/2020 Annual Board meetings to include officer elections, Board seats and directorships to maintain all entities in good standing. Mr. Nelthropp’s term on the Board of Commissioners will expire 12/01/2020, at which time Mr. Nelthropp will assume an Advisory Board member status. Mr. Ostuw will be reappointed 12/2020 to another five-year Board term. Ms. Ospina, previously an Advisory Board member, is in the appointment process to become a new Commissioner. Mr. Tufo stated that the Strategy Committee, as a recruitment body, has been aggressively recruiting new Advisory Board members to help replenish and develop a more robust Board. Ms. Murphy has recently been added as a new Advisory Board member. Mr. Tufo noted that Board Training modules will be given in 2021 to new Advisory Board members and existing Board members to provide a greater understanding of the organization. Mr. Tufo stated that the Strategic Planning process will be further developed in 2021 to help staff develop their core objectives into performance goals, which will assist to bring the organization together as we continue to navigate challenges in the community.

H. Executive Session
No Executive Session was held.

I. Adjournment
At 6:57 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Rutz and seconded by Commissioner Ostuw, the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director