

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
JUNE 23, 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, June 23, 2021.

Commissioner Rutz called the meeting to order at 6:21 p.m.

A. Attendees

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

Advisory Board Member: Ronice Latta

Present: Vin Tufo
Natalie Coard
Dorothea Dorante
Sam Feda
Jackie Figueroa
Jonathan Gottlieb
Jamie Perna
Suela Pergjoni
Peter Stothart
Lisa Reynolds
Dakota Arturo
Christine Young

Resident Present: Frances Lane

B. Approval of Minutes - Approval of minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of May 26, 2021

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner McKoy seconded

The minutes were approved.

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

C. Public Comment – Ms. Lane stated that she had no comments.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Shinn-Desras, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Coard, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Dorante, Ms. Perna, Ms. Figueroa and Ms. Young attended the HR Committee meeting on 06/22/2021. Ms. Dorante reported on the Eligibility Specialists and Fairgate Farm Trainees that were hired and the open Inspector position. Ms. Dorante provided an update of COC’s employment engagement activities, including the employee workshop by Family Centers and the company summer picnic. Ms. Tantimonico gave an update on the Hybrid Work Schedule Policy. Ms. Coard and Mr. Tufo reported on three strategic promotions. Ms. Coard reported on the promotions of Ms. Perna from Operations Manager to Director of Operations and Ms. Figueroa from Director of Operations to Deputy Executive Director/Transformation Officer. Mr. Tufo reported on Ms. Tantimonico’s promotion from Director of Human Resources to Chief Talent Officer/Director of Human Resources.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy, Ospina and Ms. Williams-Brown, Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Pergjoni, Ms. Dorante, Mr. Arturo, Mr. Stothart and Ms. Young attended the Operations Committee meeting on 06/23/2021. Ms. Perna presented an update on the state of Connecticut UniteCT Program, noting that 34 households have applied to the program. Ms. Perna noted that payments have been received from DOH for two households managed by Stone Harbour and one for a COC household. Two additional households have been approved for payment. Ms. Perna noted there have been some revisions to program guidelines and clarity on the types of documents needed; going forward, we anticipate applications to be approved more quickly. Ms. Perna noted that COC staff and Resident Service Coordinators (RSCs) continue to encourage all eligible residents to apply to the program. Ms. Perna gave an update on the Charter Oak Communities-Family Centers Rent Relief Program. Currently, 33 households have enrolled in RRP 1.0 and a total of 31 households enrolled in RRP 2.0. Total program funding expended to date is \$194,000. There is approximately \$2,500 remaining in funding, which will be distributed by the end of 6/2021.

Mr. Fedra presented the accounts receivable dashboard. Ms. Perna reported that COC hosted its last on-site COVID-19 testing event at Clinton Manor on 6/8/2021. Ms. Figueroa noted that June is the last month that bi-weekly testing will be offered at Scofield Manor. Additional testing will be scheduled if needed. Ms. Perna reported that COC is participating in a new initiative between Family Centers and Stamford Health to knock on all doors in identified census tracts to inform Black, Latino, immigrant, and low-income communities about vaccine availability. Locations are selected each week in coordination with on site, pop-up vaccination clinics. Residents are also offered in-home vaccinations if they are bed bound or have mobility challenges. To date, Family Centers has knocked on resident doors at Clinton Manor, Post House, Palmer Square, Westwood, Greenfield, Park 215, Connecticut Avenue and on the East Side.

Ms. Perna reported that Person-to-Person is resuming operation of their mobile food pantry. The mobile food pantry truck will begin serving Stamford Manor, weekly, on Mondays from 2 pm to 4 pm beginning 7/12/2021. The pantry is open to the local community and offers participants the opportunity to select items such as fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, frozen items and non-perishable items. Ms. Figueroa reported that COC has been awarded 43 Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs), which are funded through the American Rescue Plan. COC is one of five agencies in Connecticut selected by HUD for this allocation. COC will execute a Memorandum of Understanding with a local Continuum of Care organization to provide supportive services to applicants during the admissions and post-admissions periods. Applicants will be accepted, based upon mandated criteria, via a direct referral process.

Ms. Figueroa discussed the “relaunch” initiative currently underway in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) department. With the expansion of the HCV Program due to increased vouchers and portability growth, the relaunch initiative was introduced to ensure the team continues to achieve COC’s mission of expanding affordable housing opportunities while enhancing the customer experience and supporting employees. The relaunch will include recruiting, training and solicitation of contract services for additional support.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy, Ospina and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Shinn-Desras, Ms. Coard, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Ms. Pergjoni, Mr. Fedra, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Arturo, Ms. Silverio, Ms. Luzietti, Ms. Tarulli, Ms. Shutes and Mr. Warren attended the Finance Committee meeting on 06/22/2021.

Mr. Paulemon and Mr. Fedra provided an overview of the FY 2022 budgets for Rippowam Corporation and the Management, Administration and Enterprise (MAE) indirect cost center. The MAE budget reflects a structural operating deficit which is funded by surplus cash distributions primarily in the form of operating income and loan repayments from the tax credit developments. Rippowam Corporation is projecting a budget deficit this year due to the timing of receiving the developer fees earned. Both the Rippowam Corporation and the MAE budgets have ample cash reserves and strong ratios to support our commitments to these programs.

Ms. Luzietti and Ms. Pergjoni presented the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) Operating Budget for FY 2022. The program is projected to have a small operating deficit for that fiscal year; the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act grant will cover the deficit. The HCV Program is conducting a planned expansion to administer new vouchers including those from the RAD and streamlined conversions, emergency vouchers and portability program growth. The 2022 budget reflects associated increases to staffing levels that support this voucher growth and ensure program compliance for the present period and into the future.

Mr. Arturo provided an overview and highlights of the FY 2022 Federal Low-Income Housing Program. The budget reflects a net operating deficit mostly due to the costs of security services and the provision of resident services, neither of which are reimbursed by HUD in its operating subsidy formula. Mr. Arturo noted that the projected operating deficit for this year will be funded by program reserves, whereas, in the next few years, a streamlined conversion and RAD conversion will be completed that will ultimately provide long-term financial sustainability for these properties.

- E. **Report from Executive Director** –Ms. Coard provided an update on the 6/15/2021 meeting with the Stamford Police Department. The meeting was to discuss the safety concerns of the community that involve loitering and trespassing as well as the evident increase in gun violence. Mr. McKoy provided valuable information as it related to Community Policing and the gun violence occurring nationwide. Ms. Coard noted the first Meet & Greet event involving the Stamford Police Department and the residents of Oak Park and Lawnhill Terrace will be held 6/28/2021. The residents and the children will get an opportunity to engage with the police officers that patrol the area.
- F. **Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer** - Mr. Tufo presented a new initiative planned under the *Vita* Health & Wellness Partnership: the *Vita* Equitable Economic Recovery (EER) program. Mr. Tufo stated that this consortium-based initiative, with significant participation from Family Centers, will assist residents in achieving re-employment and to improve their economic status, standard of living and quality of life. Mr. Tufo stated that, through collective impact and strategic partnerships, we can offer our residents the prospect of improved economic security. The *Vita* partners plan to measure the benefits to learn what is working and how to expand the initiative to impact the community. Mr. Tufo stated that COC continues to gain insights from its participation in Stamford’s affordable housing study, with more to come.
- G. **Board Discussion** –
Commissioner Rutz stated that May’s Board discussion on an occupancy report was a good topic of discussion that resulted in suggestions to the staff. Ms. Coard presented the updated operations dashboard showing the properties broken down by type to include a summary of information. The additional comments of the Board will be implemented in the dashboard.

Ms. Rutz reviewed last month’s discussion on governmental advocacy for ideas and suggestions on how Board and staff members can best keep elected government officials informed of COC to enhance our impact in the community. The Strategy Committee discussed steps to move forward and agreed on several measures to engage elected officials to inform them of who we are, what we do and the impact of our programs. Mr. Ostuw noted that Board members should be thinking of specific areas of concern that they would like to discuss with the officials as these meetings occur.

H. **Resolutions** –

21-16: Award Contract for Resident Services, Family Self-Sufficiency and Relocation Services

- Commissioner Ospina 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 enter into a contract with Family Centers, Inc., of Greenwich, Connecticut for providing Resident Services, Family Self- Sufficiency and Relocation services. The cost of this procurement shall not exceed a total annual amount of \$1,052,250.00 per year for the initial two- year contract period, with the option of three one-year terms. Further Board approval will be required if the contract amount exceeds 110% of the authorized amount.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Adriana Ospina
Lester McKoy
Sheila Williams-Brown

Nays: None

21-17: Approve the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) Operating Budget for the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2022

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner Ospina seconded.

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the operating budget for the Housing Choice Voucher Program are adopted for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Adriana Ospina
Lester McKoy
Sheila Williams-Brown

Nays: None

21-18: Approve the Federal Low-Income Public Housing Program (LIPH), operating budget for the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2022.

➤ Commissioner Ospina 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 operating budget for the Federal Low-Income Public Housing Program is adopted for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Adriana Ospina
Lester McKoy
Sheila Williams-Brown

Nays: None

21-19: Approve the Central Office Cost Center (COCC) operating budget for the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2022

➤ Commissioner Ospina 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 Budget for the Central Office Cost Center is adopted for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Adriana Ospina
Lester McKoy
Sheila Williams-Brown

Nays: None

I. Executive Session

At 7:26 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Rutz and seconded by Commissioner Ospina, the Board went into an Executive Session. Mr. Tufo reported to the Board on Scofield Manor.

J. Adjournment

At 7:53 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Rutz and seconded by Commissioner Ospina, the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director