

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF  
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD  
FEBRUARY 23, 2022

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, February 23, 2022.

Commissioner Rutz called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**A. Attendees**

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

Advisory Board Member: Ronice Latta

Present: Vin Tufo  
Natalie Coard  
Jon Gottlieb  
Lisa Reynolds  
Sam Feda  
Jackie Figueroa  
Ken Montanez  
Darnel Paulemon  
Jamie Perna  
Peter Stothart  
Megan Shutes  
Jan Tantimonico  
Michele. Tarulli  
Chris Warren  
Christine Young

Public: Ms. Frances Lane

**B. Approval of Minutes**

- Approval of minutes of the COC Board Meeting of January 26, 2022

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner Shinn-Desras seconded

The minutes were approved.

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

**C. Public Comment –No public comments.**

**D. Board Committee Reports**

**Human Resources Committee** – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy and Williams-Brown, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Young, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Gottlieb and Mr. Feda attended the HR Committee meeting on 2/22/22. Ms. Tantimonico provided an update on recent promotions, recruitment

and open positions. Ms. Tantimonico provided a summary on the Commissioners Conflict of Interest Policy. COC's communication and engagement initiatives for the calendar year were reviewed. Ms. Tantimonico discussed the resolution: Approve 2021 Discretionary 401(a) Plan Contribution.

**Finance Committee** – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy and Williams-Brown, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Young, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Gottlieb, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Luzietti, Ms. Silverio, Ms. Shutes, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Tabora, Mr. Guyder and Mr. Remus (Marcum LLP) attended the Operations Committee meeting on 2/22/22.

Marcum LLP, the independent auditing firm for COC, represented by Mr. Guyder and Mr. Remus presented the results of the COC Y/E 06/30/21 financial audit. COC received an unmodified and "clean opinion" for FY 2021 with an award of excellence for its FY 2020 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The scope of the audit and the financial variances from year to year were discussed.

Mr. Fedra presented the financial statements for Y/E 12/31/21. Mr. Fedra discussed the highlights by property and program and the unaudited year-end results for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and Multi-Family properties. Mr. Fedra presented the quarter-end results for the Federal programs, MAE, Rippowam Corporation and State properties. Scofield Manor's quarterly results were presented. Mr. Paulemon presented an audit update for COC, the Tax Credit properties, Multi-Family properties and Scofield Manor. Property audit results will be presented in the March 2021 Board meetings.

**Operations Committee** – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy and Williams-Brown, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Young, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Gottlieb, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Luzietti, Ms. Silverio, Ms. Shutes and Mr. Paulemon attended the Operations Committee meeting on 2/22/22. Mr. Fedra provided an update on the 02/2022 accounts receivable status noting an increase in A/R arrears over 12/2021. Mr. Fedra noted that COC continues to receive funds from UniteCT Rent Relief program.

Ms. Perna gave an update on the UniteCT Rent Relief program recognizing that the program was closed to new applications as of 2/15/22. Ms. Perna noted that pending applicants have until 3/31/22 to complete their applications, or they will be rejected and removed for consideration. Ms. Perna stated that there are 133 applicants currently in the UniteCT portal with 55 having received payments totaling \$459,000 to date; eight applicants have received the maximum program benefit of \$15,000. Ms. Perna explained how the property management team is working closely with the RSCs and finance team to identify which residents continue to accrue arrears so that we may quantify what additional resources might be needed to bring delinquent accounts current. COC could seek additional rent relief funds from non-program sources.

Ms. Perna and Ms. Figueroa reviewed the Quarterly Operations Board Report of 12/31/21. They presented highlights across property management, maintenance, procurement and HCV areas, including updates on COC's building enterprise efforts and outreach through Family Centers. Ms. Figueroa discussed the resolution: Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) Proposed Schedule for Allowances for Tenant Furnished Utilities and Other Services. Ms. Perna reported that a request for proposal (RFP) has been published seeking professional management services for Taylor Street Condominiums with proposals due 03/15/22.

**E. Report from Executive Director** - Ms. Coard discussed plans for COC's full reopening to provide in-person client services to the public. Due to the downward trend in the local COVID-19 positivity and case rate, the offices will reopen to the public in 04/2022. Ms. Coard stated the drop boxes will remain in place for self-service use until the forthcoming computerized kiosk is fully operational. Ms. Coard explained that COC will take all recommended precautions to protect the staff from exposure to the remaining virus; masks will be made available for the public as needed. Ms. Coard provided a brief update on the first-floor office construction; the anticipated completion is mid-March 2022.

**F. Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer** – Mr. Tufo discussed the Year-End Progress Report presentations by the Senior Staff (2/15/22) and requested feedback on the presentations that were intended to align with COC's eight

Core Objectives. Mr. Tufo stated that the objectives are essential to prioritize individual and collective goals and strategically move the organization into the future. Mr. Tufo stated that all COC divisions will be updating their 2021-22 goals by year end, removing completed items, updating ongoing goals and adding new ones, as appropriate. Mr. Tufo asked how the Board members would like to be involved in the process of establishing goals for the next two years (2023-24).

Mr. Tufo discussed an employment initiative that COC and Family Centers worked on to assist motivated individuals to move beyond marginal employment to opportunities that would pay a ‘living wage’ which would include benefits and potential advancement opportunities. Mr. Tufo stated that Connecticut’s Office of Workforce Strategy has issued an RFP for providing services that are consistent with this initiative. COC and Family Centers have developed a proposal, Pathways to Employment Growth, for employment readiness and training that, if funded, could launch this program. The proposal is in partnership with Norwalk Community College, Stamford Health and Yale New Haven Health to introduce residents to entry-level opportunities in healthcare and IT healthcare sectors. The grant proposal was submitted for \$2.5M for a three-year program under Family Center’s program, Reaching Independence Through Employment. This would be an extraordinary opportunity for our residents to take advantage of employment opportunities in the growing healthcare field with advancement opportunities and the prospect of living wages.

The Vita Health and Wellness Partnership has been appointed by the mayor’s office to work collaboratively with Stamford Health, Stamford Health Department, Stamford Public Schools and several other organizations throughout the city to organize and facilitate a coordinated initiative to deal with the Youth Mental Health (YMH) crisis with emphasis on service/care coordination, prevention and early intervention and improving the clinical infrastructure. *Vita*, as the backbone, will be key to developing this important initiative in collaboration with the city to work collaboratively across disciplines that are challenging, but beneficial to the entire community.

**G. Board Discussion – Recognition for COC**

Mr. McKoy stated that they would like to hold a future Executive Session to recognize all the noteworthy achievements that the employees have accomplished during the pandemic. Mr. McKoy would like the Board to provide appreciation to the employees and COC.

**H. Report from the Chairwoman**

Ms. Rutz announced that a Cyber Security Committee has been developed to mitigate cyber risks. Board members are welcome to be involved and will assist in providing oversight with the Committee. COC is utilizing Whittlesey as a consultant for remediation to provide training and create strategies. The Committee will update the Board on a quarterly basis or as needed.

**I. Resolutions:**

**22-03 Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) Proposed Schedule for Allowances for Tenant Furnished Utilities and Other Services**

- 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 proposed allowances for tenant furnished utilities and other services is hereby adopted, effective March 1, 2022.

The resolution was passed.

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

**22-04 Accept the Year-End June 30, 2021 Audited Financial Statements for the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford**

- Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner Shinn-Desras seconded.

Be it resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford that the year ending June 30, 2021 Financial Statements are accepted.

The resolution was passed.

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

**22-05 Approve 2021 Discretionary 401(a) Plan Contribution**

- Commissioner Williams-Brown 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 Employer’s Discretionary Contribution for calendar 2021 to the 401(a) plan shall be authorized at 6% for the period of 1/1/21 – 12/31/21. The Chief Executive Officer is authorized to execute such documents as necessary to implement the approved contributions to the 401(a) plan.

The resolution was passed.

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

**J. Executive Session**

No Executive Session was held.

**K. Adjournment**

At 7:04 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Rutz and seconded by Commissioner Shinn-Desras, the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard  
Executive Director