

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
APRIL 27, 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, April 27, 2022.

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

A. Attendees

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

Advisory Board Member: Laura Burwick
Ronice Latta

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

Public: Ms. Frances Lane
Ms. Kindrea Walston

B. Approval of Minutes

- Approval of minutes of the Agency Plan Board Meeting of April 13, 2022

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded

The minutes were approved.

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

C. Public Comments – Ms. Lane stated that there have been several fire alarms in the Post House building the last several months. Ms. Lane expressed concern that many residents are not evacuating the building when the alarm sounds, and residents continue to smoke in the Post House building. The Post House Property Manager Ms. Alexander

has discussed the No Smoking policy, sent reminder notices that HUD no longer allows smoking in the buildings, and that residents must smoke far away from the buildings. Ms. Perna stated that a reminder notice to the residents on the importance of evacuating the building when a fire alarm sounds will be distributed. Ms. Perna stated that they are monitoring the building closely and will speak with Ms. Alexander.

Ms. Lane discussed the Western Connecticut Council of Governments draft proposal that would like to create a regional Housing Authority for those towns that have not reached their 10% of affordable housing paying into a fee and lieu fund. Mr. Tufo stated that COC has no official comment on the policy statement.

Ms. Walston inquired on the status of the vacant property manager position for Stamford Manor and Connecticut Avenue. Ms. Perna advised Ms. Walston that COC is currently recruiting for the position and will keep the residents informed. Ms. Walston stated that she would like to partner with COC staff to form a tenant association for the residents living at Connecticut Avenue. Ms. Coard stated that Rippowam Park is separate and would not be part of the resident council.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy, Shinn-Desras and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Burwick, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Gottlieb, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Fedá, Ms. Perna, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Young, Mr. Soares, Mr. Gomez and Mr. Persaud attended the HR Committee meeting on 4/26/2022. Ms. Tantimonico provided an update on a recent promotion, recruitment, and open positions. There was a discussion on the development of the newly created position, Director of Housing Opportunity, in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Ms. Tantimonico gave an update on the increase to COC’s medical premium effective 7/1/2022.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy, Shinn-Desras and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Burwick, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Gottlieb, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Fedá, Ms. Perna, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Young, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Alexander, Mr. Soares, Mr. Gomez and Mr. Persaud attended the Finance Committee meeting on 4/26/2022.

Mr. Paulemon presented an overview of the Oak Park State Development FY 2023 Budget. Mr. Paulemon stated that Oak Park is beginning its phases of a redevelopment/reconstruction project. As a result, newly vacated units are being held off-line for resident relocation. The planned vacancy loss is resulting in a projected net operating loss of \$73,000 for 2023. The loss will be funded from the property’s reserves.

Ms. Luzietti presented an overview of the Wormser Congregate FY 2023 Budget. Ms. Perna provided background on the planned outsourcing of the attendant and maintenance services. Ms. Luzietti stated that the net operating income (with outsourcing) is projected to be \$58,000 for FY 2023, increasing projected reserves to \$291,000.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Rutz, McKoy, Shinn-Desras and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Burwick, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Gottlieb, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Fedá, Ms. Perna, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Tantimonico, Ms. Young, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Alexander, Mr. Soares, Mr. Gomez and Mr. Persaud attended the Operations Committee meeting on 4/26/22. Mr. Fedá reported on the 03/2022 A/R status and 02/2022 results. Mr. Fedá reported that COC has received approximately \$28,000 in UniteCT Rent Relief funding for 04/2022. Ms. Perna reported that COC has 56 applications pending with the UniteCT program with three approved for payment. Ms. Perna stated that the UniteCT program closed document submission on 03/31/22 and that COC had submitted all required documents by the deadline. Ms. Perna noted that COC has resumed charging late fees in 04/2022.

Ms. Perna reported that the resolution to approve a rent increase of \$50.00 to the Use & Occupancy portion of the monthly tenant payment for Wormser Congregate will go before the Board. Ms. Perna noted that there is no proposed increase to the congregate fee portion of the payment and that the Use & Occupancy portion is subsidized, so residents will not pay more than 30% of their adjusted income. A special Wormser Congregate meeting was held to gather resident feedback on 3/16/2022. Mr. Stothart discussed the resolution to Award Contract to Peerless Electric, Inc for Electrical Contractor Service.

E. **Report from Executive Director** - Ms. Coard stated that there were no noteworthy activities to discuss this month. Ms. Coard briefly discussed the Area Median Income (AMI) limit increase and potential impact to residents and applicants. She will provide a more in-depth presentation at the May Board meeting.

Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer – Mr. Tufo stated that Mayor Simmons’ administration has committed to several recommendations of her transition team. The mayor’s First 100 Days report indicates an effort to address some immediate needs of the city. Mr. Tufo stated that the report includes: creating an Affordable Housing Council; advancing economic prosperity; enhancing support for education; creating the city’s first Climate Council; and other measures. The mayor has commenced her administration recognizing the work we do in affordable housing. Mr. Tufo requested Board members to help COC build and strengthen our relationship with the mayor and other elected officials.

Mr. Tufo reported that a Lawnhill Terrace Phase 4 press event was held 4/13/2022 with Mayor Simmons, Congressman Himes, Board members and staff. This was an opportunity to showcase COC’s work and discuss the importance of our work in the community. Comments from the Congressman and Mayor on COC were positive and supportive. Mr. Tufo stated that COC has engaged two East Side Representatives, Robert Roqueta and Megan Cottrell, as informed advocates for COC’s proposal to revitalize Oak Park. COC has received positive feedback on our progress to date.

F. **Board Discussion – Board Member Attendance at Committee Meetings**

Ms. Rutz stated that there are many ways for Board members to be involved at COC. Originally, it was expected that all Board members would need to attend all the committee meetings, but expectations are changing. Ms. Rutz encouraged new Advisory Board members to attend each committee meeting for the first three months, and then opt to choose the committee of their preference. Ms. Rutz requested that the Board members give thought to where they are most interested in making contributions. Mr. Ostuw commented that when he joined the Board everyone participated in the Finance Committee, but there was limited participation in the HR and Operations Committees. Over time, Board members began to attend all three committee meetings. Mr. Ostuw stated that it’s better with broader participation, but it’s more of a time commitment. Mr. Ostuw requested that members select a regular meeting to participate in for Finance, HR or the Operations Committee meeting, but that everyone is welcomed to attend all.

Ms. Rutz requested to hear thoughts and perspective from the Board members on not having to attend every committee meeting. Ms. Latta appreciated making it optional to attend all three committee meetings. She stated that all meetings are important, but time is a factor, and she appreciates the flexibility.

G. **Resolutions:**

22-09 Approve FYE June 30, 2023 Budget for State Moderate Rent (Oak Park)

- 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 Budget State Moderate Rent Program (Oak Park) is adopted for the Fiscal Year starting July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 subject to final approval by the DOH and CHFA as applicable.

The resolution was passed.

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

Nays: None

22-10 Approve FYE June 30, 2023 Budget for Wormser Congregate Program

- Commissioner Ostuw 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 Wormser Congregate facility are adopted for the Fiscal Year starting July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 subject to final approval by the DOH and CHFA as applicable.

The resolution was passed.

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

22-11 Approve 2022 Congregate Fee and Rent Increases for Wormser

- Commissioner Williams-Brown 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 monthly rent increase of \$50 for Wormser Congregate is adopted effective July 1, 2022 and continuing thereafter, subject to final approval by the Connecticut Department of Housing.

The resolution was passed.

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

22-12 Award Contract to Peerless Electric, Inc for Electrical Contractor Services

- Commissioner Williams-Brown 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 Executive Director is authorized to enter into a contract for Electrical Contractor Services with the Peerless Electric, Inc. for a term of five years and for an amount not to exceed \$320,000.00. Further Board approval will be required if the contract amount exceeds 110% of authorized amount.

The resolution was passed.

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

22-13 Approve Easement, Right of Access and Associated Documents for City of Stamford to Construct Pedestrian Bridge at 26 Main Street

- Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded.

Be it resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford that the easement, right of entry and associated documents in favor of the City of Stamford for siting the Main Street bridge at the Stamford Manor property be approved as submitted.

The resolution was passed.

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

Nays: None

H. Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

I. Adjournment

At 6:59 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