

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
JUNE 22, 2022

A regular Board meeting of the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford was held at 40 Clinton Avenue, Stamford, Connecticut and a remote connection meeting platform, Zoom, on Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

Commissioner Rutz called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

A. Attendees

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

Advisory Board Members: Laura Burwick
Ronice Latta

Present: Vin Tufo
Natalie Coard
Jon Gottlieb
Lisa Reynolds
Sam Feda
Jackie Figueroa
Luisa Correa
Brethela Love-Ortiz
Jamie Perna
Jan Tantimonico
Chris Warren
Christine Young

Public: Ms. Frances Lane
Ms. Cynthia Bowser

B. Approval of Minutes

- Approval of minutes of the COC Board Meeting of May 25, 2022

➤ Commissioner Rutz moved, Commissioner Shinn-Desras seconded

The minutes were approved.

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

C. Public Comments – Ms. Lane requested to know about the plan for transfer of Scofield Manor. Mr. Tufo stated that Center Management is still in negotiations with the City. Ms. Perna provided an update on the Connecticut Avenue apartments with kitchen doors that do not have screen doors. Ms. Perna stated that PM has provided accommodations to offset absence of the screens and reported that the residents are pleased.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Rutz, Ostuw, Williams-Brown, Shinn-Desras and Advisory Board members Burwick and Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Perna, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Love-Ortiz and Ms. Young attended the HR Committee meeting on 6/21/2022. Ms. Tantimonico provided a recruitment update including new hires and open positions. Ms. Tantimonico discussed recent changes in COC’s recruitment efforts, which have resulted in some new hires. Mr. Gomez provided an update on an upcoming workplace award. Ms. Tantimonico gave an update on employee engagement events, which included the Juneteenth holiday and celebration at Fairgate Farm. Ms. Tantimonico noted that there will be updates on the summer picnic, which will be organized this year by the Finance Team.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Rutz, Ostuw, Williams-Brown, Shinn-Desras and Advisory Board members Burwick and Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Perna, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Love-Ortiz, Ms. Young, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Soares and Ms. Silverio attended the Finance Committee meeting on 6/21/2022. Mr. Fedra and Mr. Soares provided an overview and highlights of the FY 2022 Federal Low-Income Housing Program. They provided an overview of the multi-year process and the current phase underway to convert the remaining LIPH units to RAD and streamlined voluntary conversion. Mr. Fedra and Mr. Soares discussed the FY 2023 and 2024 financials for these properties showing a significant improvement in operating results at each development.

Mr. Paulemon provided an overview of the FY 2023 budgets for Rippowam Corporation and the Management, Administration and Enterprise (MAE) indirect cost center. Mr. Paulemon highlighted the significant revenue and expense areas and structural operating deficit. Mr. Paulemon described the annual cash resources available from loan repayments and surplus cash distributions to cover both the operating deficit for FY 2023 and to increase the cash reserve levels for the MAE and Rippowam Corporation budgets. Ms. Reynolds gave an overview of the fiduciary activities completed in Q2, which included the federal and state budgets. Ms. Reynolds reviewed the upcoming fiduciary activities for Q3. Ms. Reynolds noted that the quarterly Cyber Sub-Committee meetings were added to the fiduciary checklist. Ms. Silverio discussed the resolution: Acceptance of Charter Oak Communities Write-off of Tenant Accounts Receivable Balances Over \$5,000.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Rutz, Ostuw, Williams-Brown, Shinn-Desras and Advisory Board members Burwick and Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Perna, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Love-Ortiz and Ms. Young attended the HR Committee meeting on 6/21/2022. Mr. Fedra provided a report on the A/R for 05/2022. Ms. Perna reported that COC continues to process rent relief applications through both the UniteCT Rent Relief program and Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut (CAAWC). Ms. Perna noted that three UniteCT applications had been processed and paid since the 05/2022 Board meeting, totaling approximately \$12,300. COC has not received any CAAWC payments since the 05/2022 Board meeting but had one application approved for an unknown amount; there are eight applications pending.

Ms. Perna reported that COC has contracted with American Property Consultants (APC) to complete the annual Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS) inspections beginning 6/21/2022. Ms. Perna noted that COC approached six inspection companies for quotes and received five bids. APC was in the middle price range for quotes and had favorable referrals from other agencies. Ms. Perna noted that this would be COC’s first comprehensive inspection cycle since the pandemic began and that, in addition to the inspector, one maintenance team member and one property management team member would attend the inspections to check for housekeeping and compliance issues.

Ms. Perna reported that COC was in the process of executing a contract for attendant services for Wormser Congregate with Sentinel Maintenance that would be effective 07/01/2022. Ms. Perna stated that Sentinel’s manager met with all the Wormser staff to explain the transition and offer continued employment; all but one Wormser attendant was likely to transition to employment with Sentinel.

Ms. Perna reported that COC had two RFPs out for bid: extermination and security services. Ms. Perna noted that COC had emailed 30 exterminators from the State of Connecticut’s Department of Energy and Environmental

Protection's list of licensed vendors regarding the RFP. Two vendors declined to bid citing the large scope of work; nine vendors requested the full RFP package. Ms. Perna noted that COC emailed 23 security vendors from the State of Connecticut Department of Public Safety's licensed list regarding the RFP, and nine had requested bid packages. Ms. Coard provided an update on the capital project for site improvements and erosion control at the Lawn Avenue Townhouses

E. Report from Executive Director - Ms. Coard provided an update on the work being done with The Stamford-Greenwich Housing First Collaborative. The Collaborative was created to solve the pressing problem of homelessness and the link to needed services. Ms. Coard described the need for continuous long-term case management for the residents that have been homeless that live at Charter Oak Communities properties. Ms. Coard discussed the significant gap in case management services for that population and lack of funding in Stamford to provide this necessary service. Ms. Coard stated that, once funding is available, the goal is for the Housing Collective to ensure Stamford receives the opportunity to apply for this much needed resource.

F. Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer – Mr. Tufo stated that, in 2021, the Vita Partnership had been working on a program concept with Family Centers called the Equitable Economic Recovery (EER) program to assist individuals living in Stamford to improve financial security by obtaining full-time living wage employment. Working in collaboration with key employer partners, this program would greatly improve outcomes for families in Stamford, especially for those who have been hit hard personally with job loss due to COVID-19.

Mr. Tufo discussed that in 2021 Governor Lamont allocated funding through the CARES Act carving out \$65m for innovative work force development programs to be administered around the state. The Vita Partnership, Family Centers, Norwalk Community College and two employers, Yale New Haven Health and Stamford Health, applied for the competitive funds and was awarded \$2.3m over a three-year period for the program entitled Pathways to Employment Growth. COC will collaborate with Family Centers to assist approximately 300 COC and Stamford residents with growth job opportunities in the healthcare field, providing temporary supports, transportation, childcare assistance, etc.

G. Board Discussion – Commissioner Rutz stated that Commissioner Shinn-Desras attended the NAHRO Commissioners Fundamentals Virtual Class 5/2022 with attendees from various states. Commissioner Shinn-Desras reported that the practices, strategic planning, trainings, and budgeting processes that COC has implemented appear superior to what other housing authorities are doing across the country. She stated that COC is advanced in its policies and procedures, and that we're doing a great job.

Ms. Rutz led the topic of discussion on the Stamford affordability study, which has been published in an extensive report. The study makes three primary recommendations: consolidating management of housing programs; scaling up investments in housing; and using land more effectively. Ms. Rutz asked for comments from the Board members on where COC could fit in and be more effective in the process.

Rich: COC is a more advanced housing authority than others in the state, but it's good to understand the changes to be made. The change in preferring fee-in-lieu funds make sense (over on-site BMR development), but how much more will be based on funding. Maybe there would be an opportunity to help where land could be donated instead of cash.

Ronice: This is a comprehensive and detailed study. I'm happy to see a formal process around this with the stakeholders involved. I believe that this comes down not just to money, but intentionality and accountability. The supplemental information that Vin provided was helpful. Vin made great points that affordability is a serious problem with people being pushed out and to bring education, health and employment into the conversation are important factors to consider. I would like to see them utilize the data to help those that have challenges living here.

Sheila: This is interesting information specially to know how many people are at 50% and above threshold for not being able to afford housing.

Bianca: The commitment to funding to scale up financial investments in housing is important. The city needs to put money towards it. It's possible to do, so our teachers and first responders can live in our community.

Sue: I found the recommendation to consolidate housing and development programs and joining our efforts with other providers of housing to compete for limited funds interesting because we haven't taken this approach before in housing.

Laura: We are in the early stages, but I was pleased to see the comprehensive report from the city. It will work its way through a cycle of committees, etc. The unfortunate part is that the budget cycle is once a year. It'll commence in January, and the mill rate is set in May. It will take a year of planning to get the funds. The second piece on land: the city has land with most of it being parks, which will be difficult to give up pieces for housing. Most of the affordable housing is in the downtown area because of transportation and amenities. It's an interesting idea for the city to give land for this, and there's not a lot of land for the city to give and donating land from the city is a complicated process to go through. The bigger the pool to give to affordable housing providers the better, but we struggle on where should the money come from – taxpayers, fee-in-lieu funds? We're at the beginning stages, but we should think what's best for us and have dialogue with the city to help shape things, so it works in our best interest.

H. Resolutions:

22-18 Approve the Central Office Cost Center (COCC) operating budget for the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2023

- 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 the Central Office Cost Center is adopted for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Bianca Shinn-Desras
Sheila Williams-Brown

Nays: None

22-19 Approve the Federal Low-Income Public Housing Program (LIPH), operating budget for the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2023.

- Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner Shinn-Desras 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, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Bianca Shinn-Desras
Sheila Williams-Brown

Nays: None

22-20 Acceptance of Charter Oak Communities Write-Off of Tenant Accounts Receivable Balances Over \$5,000.

- Commissioner Ostuw moved, Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded.

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford that the uncollectable funds of \$58,004.32 be written off to reduce current A/R balances.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Susan Rutz
Rich Ostuw
Bianca Shinn-Desras
Sheila Williams-Brown

Nays: None

I. Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

J. Adjournment

At 6:42 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Rutz and seconded by Commissioner Williams-Brown, the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director