

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF  
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD  
SEPTEMBER 28, 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 on the Zoom remote connection meeting platform on Wednesday, September 28, 2022.

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

**A. Attendees**

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

Advisory Board Member: Ronice Latta

Present:	Vin Tufo
	Natalie Coard
	Jon Gottlieb
	Lisa Reynolds
	Sam Feda
	Jackie Figueroa
	Raul Gomez
	Brethela Love-Ortiz
	Ken Montanez
	Jamie Perna
	Megan Shutes
	Peter Stothart
	Michele Tarulli
	Tyra Wallace
	Chris Warren
	Christine Young

**B. Approval of Minutes**

- Approval of minutes of the COC Board Meeting of August 24, 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		

**Public Comments** – No public comments.

**C. Board Committee Reports**

**Human Resources Committee** – Commissioners Rutz, Ostuw, McKoy and Williams-Brown and Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Feda, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Ms. Love-Ortiz, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Soares, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, and

Ms. Young attended the HR Committee meeting on 9/27/2022. Ms. Tantimonico provided an overview on open positions. Ms. Tantimonico discussed COC's recruitment strategy. Mr. Gomez provided an update on upcoming employee engagement events.

**Finance Committee** – Commissioners Rutz, Ostuw, McKoy and Williams-Brown and Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Ms. Love-Ortiz, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Soares, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Stothart, Ms. Silverio, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Galasso, Mr. Warren, and Ms. Young attended the Finance Committee meeting on 9/27/2022. Mr. Paulemon reported on the Scofield Manor operating results as of 9/30/22 (FY 2022) noting that we expect an operating loss of about \$55K due to higher than budgeted vacant beds. Mr. Paulemon presented the Scofield Manor Operating Budget for FY 2023, with a projected \$106K operating gain; He reported on significant changes and trends in both revenue and expense categories. For revenue, Mr. Paulemon noted the recent increases to the Medicaid rate, the grant from the City of Stamford, the one-year ARPA grant and assumptions related to vacancy rates and the impact of empty beds on the bottom line. For expense areas, Mr. Paulemon highlighted employee benefits, utilities and insurance fluctuations related to inflation and market conditions.

Ms. Silverio provided the resolution: Acceptance of Charter Oak Communities Write-Off of Tenant Accounts Receivable Balances Over \$5,000, noting that these write-offs exceed the \$5K policy threshold and require approval of the Board. Ms. Perna provided additional detail on the cases and described the court process and the efforts made to mitigate these write offs. Ms. Reynolds reviewed the Fiduciary Checklist, noting accomplishments in Q3 2022 and several policy reviews that were not accomplished as planned and so will be deferred until Q4 2022.

**Operations Committee** – Commissioners Rutz, Ostuw, McKoy and Williams-Brown and Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Perna, Ms. Love-Ortiz, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Soares, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Stothart, Ms. Silverio, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Galasso, Mr. Warren, and Ms. Young attended the Operations Committee meeting on 9/27/2022. Ms. Figueroa reported on the recently released FY 2023 Fair Market Rents (FMRs) published by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The new FMRs are effective 10/1/2022 for the Stamford-Norwalk Metropolitan area and are used to adopt Payment Standards for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV). Given the high rental market in Stamford, payment standards are set at 110% of FMRs. Ms. Figueroa noted that COC was granted an exception waiver from HUD approving our request to set the payment standards at 120% for all new voucher issuances. The FY 2023 FMR's will increase resident options and benefit rental calculations for Project Based HCVs to those who may be facing rent burden and empowering their rental power to remain competitive in the high Stamford rental market. The payment standards will be applied 11/2022 for new move-ins and 12/2022 for annual renewals.

Mr. Fedra described the decrease in the A/R for 08/2022 across several properties due to rent relief activity. Ms. Perna reported that COC received approximately \$48K in UniteCT funds and noted that \$7,500 in approved payments are pending. There are 19 remaining applications with UniteCT and two with Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut (CAAWC). Mr. Montanez and Ms. Perna provided a presentation on COC's efforts to provide residents Wi-Fi service. Clinton Manor was used as a pilot building to estimate upfront and monthly costs depending on the length of the contract. Mr. Montanez noted that COC's current IT capability does not have the capacity to support devices for 1,200 units. This was purely an informational item and, if implemented, would require a significant investment of external funding.

Mr. Stothart provided an update on the Lawn Avenue Townhouses Site Renovations capital project. Mr. Stothart discussed tonight's resolutions: Accept City of Stamford Year 48 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Improvements to Cold Storage Walk in Cooler and COVID-19 Expense Reimbursement for Scofield Manor and Award Contract to D. Sal Electrical Contractors, Inc. for Electrical Contractor Services.

**D. Report from Executive Director** - Ms. Coard presented on the recently hired vendor, Connecticut Pest Elimination, Inc. Ms. Coard described the client portal that is available to all property managers and maintenance staff 24/7. The portal provides detailed service notes on what was inspected, the type of infestation, treatment type, recommendations, and next steps for treatment. Ms. Coard stated an aggressive extermination timeline has been scheduled for all of COC properties to address the infestation concerns.

**E. Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer** – Mr. Tufo discussed the first session of the Mid-Year Progress Update presentations to the Board and request feedback on the presentations. Ms. Latta noted that she’s impressed by the work of the staff; Commissioner Rutz stated that she likes the simplicity of the slides, and there’s a lot of material to balance with the discussion. Commissioner Shinn-Desras liked the precision and how it was interconnected with each other but would like to know more of the lessons learned and missed opportunities. Commissioner Ostuw stated that the format works well, and it would be helpful to list the other goals so we can see what is still in progress. Mr. Tufo noted that COC’s strategic plan is updated every six months, for participants to connect to the core objectives, with a large refresh every two to three years.

Mr. Tufo discussed the Stamford Affordable Housing Plan that was completed in the spring of 2022. He noted that two things were not included: The Plan didn’t provide actionable goals, but recommendations for types of solutions, and it was decided not to incorporate specific target projections. Currently, the community is contesting small initiatives that propose clusters of units throughout the city, which is highlighting division among various interests. Mr. Tufo suggested that the Commissioners might reflect on this situation to arrive at a message and set of priorities to bring to the mayor for addressing the affordable housing needs of Stamford. The goal is to be a voice in helping bring others together in the community and to facilitate a broader discussion.

**F. Board Discussion: Board Member Recruitment** – Commissioner Rutz announced that three Board Commissioners’ terms will be expiring 12/2022 and that Commissioner Rutz with Resident Commissioner Williams-Brown would be stepping down. Also, Laura Burwick has stepped down from the COC Board due to being elected to the Board of Finance. Commissioner Rutz stated that we have been actively recruiting to have a strong bench to fill the five Commissioner positions with a *pipeline*. Ms. Coard stated that the lengthy appointment process for a Resident Commissioner has begun although Commissioner Williams-Brown will remain on the Board until a replacement is found. Mr. Tufo discussed how the committee is interviewing viable prospects. COC would like to have one Commissioner and two to three Advisory Board members join the Board.

**G. Resolutions:**

**22-25 Accept City of Stamford Year 48 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Additional Funding for Improvements to Cold Storage Walk in Cooler at Scofield Manor**

- Commissioner Ostuw moved; Commissioner Shinn-Desras seconded.

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford that the Executive Director is authorized to accept \$15, 955.00 YR 48 CDBG Grant from the City of Stamford for the Improvements to the Cold Storage Walk-in Cooler Unit at Scofield Manor. The Executive Director is authorized to execute a contract and related documents, including requests for payment from this grant.

The resolution was passed.

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

Nays: None

**22-26 Award Contract to D. Sal Electrical Contractors, Inc. for Electrical Contractor Services**

- 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 Executive Director is authorized to enter into a contract for Electrical Contractor Services with D. Sal Electrical Contractors, Inc. for a term of five years and for an amount not to exceed \$300,000.00. Further Board approval will be required if the contract amount exceeds 110% of authorized amount.

The resolution was passed.

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

Nays: None

**22-27 Increase Payment Standards for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program to comply with HUD FY2023 Fair Market Rent Calculations.**

- 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 hereby proposed Housing Choice Voucher Program Payment Standards for new and current participants are hereby adopted effective October 1, 2022.

The resolution was passed.

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

Nays: None

**22-28 Authorize CT Light & Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy to install and maintain utility distribution lines on and across the property known as Lawnhill Terrace 4.**

- Commissioner Ostuw moved; Commissioner Shinn-Desras seconded.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that:**

1. The Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford approves the granting of a utility maintenance easement to Connecticut Light & Power Company d/b/a Eversource Energy for the installation and ongoing maintenance of electric and gas distribution lines. The easement agreement is attached to this resolution and incorporated by reference.
2. Jonathan Gottlieb, as President, and Vincent Tufo, as Vice President, are authorized to execute agreements and documents as necessary to grant said easement. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

The resolution was passed.

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

Nays: None

**22-29 Acceptance of Charter Oak Communities Write-Off of Tenant Accounts Receivable Balances Over \$5,000**

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved; Commissioner Shinn-Desras seconded.

**Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford that the uncollectable funds of \$57,949.04 be written off to reduce current A/R balances.**

The resolution was passed.

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

Nays: None

**H. Executive Session**

No Executive Session was held.

**I. Adjournment**

At 7:00 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Ostuw and seconded by Commissioner Shinn-Desras the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard  
Executive Director