

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
NOVEMBER 16, 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, November 16, 2022.

Commissioner Rutz called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

A. Attendees

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

Advisory Board Members: John Coff
Shari Johnson
Ronice Latta
Divya Malhotra

Present: Vin Tufo
Natalie Coard
Jon Gottlieb
Lisa Reynolds
Sam Feda
Jackie Figueroa
Brethela Love-Ortiz
Ken Montanez
Megan Shutes
Peter Stothart
Jan Tantimonico
Michele Tarulli
Chris Warren
Christine Young

Public: Ms. Ruth Pierre Paul

B. Approval of Minutes

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

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved; Commissioner McKoy seconded

The minutes were approved.

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

Commissioner Rutz announced that Commissioner McKoy has been reappointed to the COC Board of Commissioners for a five-year term.

C. Public Comments – Ms. Ruth Pierre Paul requested an update on the Quintard Manor exterminations in her mother’s unit. Ms. Coard will follow up with a phone call.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Rutz, Ostuw, McKoy and Williams-Brown and Advisory Board members Coff and Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Love-Ortiz, Mr. Warren and Ms. Young attended the HR Committee meeting on 11/15/2022. Ms. Tantimonico provided an overview of open positions and announced a new hire. Ms. Tantimonico provided an update on a wellness activity and upcoming events. Mr. Gomez reviewed a presentation on current employees’ multi-generational workforce challenges.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Rutz, Ostuw, McKoy and Williams-Brown and Advisory Board members Coff and Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Love-Ortiz, Mr. Warren, Ms. Young, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Galasso and Mr. Soares attended the Finance Committee meeting on 11/15/2022. Mr. Montanez reported on this quarter’s Cyber Security Sub-Committee meeting. Mr. Montanez gave an overview of the elements of COC’s cyber program including a system defense, prevention/awareness activities, mitigation, and an emerging threat analysis. An update on the remediation efforts from the 2021 Cyber Security Assessment and COC’s plans for a 2023 assessment was given. Mr. Montanez described some ongoing and emerging threats COC is monitoring and proactively addressing.

Mr. Fedra provided a high-level overview of the Quarterly Financial Report of 9/30/2022, noting the overall results by property and program highlighting issues related to vacancy rates and variances in selected expense lines. Mr. Fedra discussed the additional interest income revenue COC has estimated resulting from the launch of our new investment program. Ms. Luzietti provided an update on the COC audit activities including auditor requests related to internal controls and the implementation of the new required related to recognition of capital leases. The COC audit is expected to be available in draft form by the end of 11/2022 and will be finalized in 12/2022. The auditors will present the financials, and COC will prepare a resolution to the Board for acceptance of the FY 2022 audit. Ms. Luzietti noted that pre-audit work is underway to prepare for the Scofield Manor audit that will begin in 12/2022 and will be finalized in 2/2023.

E. Report from Executive Director - Ms. Coard provided a staffing update in the Operation Service Group. Ms. Coard described the implementation and onboarding process for new employees. Ms. Coard discussed the importance of having adequate training and time needed with the new employees to invest in rebuilding the property management team and to develop a strong workforce.

F. Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer/Board Discussion: Stamford Housing Study – The Stamford Housing Affordability Study (Study) began at the end of 2019, before the pandemic, with the final report produced at the end of 2021 following an extensive community engagement process. The Study then went through the City of Stamford board approval process with Planning Board approval granted in April 2022. The original Steering Committee, on which COC serves, is now focused on implementing the Study recommendations in collaboration with the Community Advisory Committee.

Mr. Tufo stated that the demographic and housing use data utilized in the Study reflects a comparison between 2010 and 2020 American Community Survey/US Census data. The cost information discussed is the level of affordability and how it affects people at different income levels, which was based on pre pandemic costs all of which have increased significantly. As Board members, it’s important to be aware of the Study, keep it on the forefront and think about how we can participate in its implementation.

Commissioner Ostuw stated it’s striking how widespread the housing need is. This should encourage us all to think about the opportunities ahead to perhaps attend or speak at meetings. Advisory Board member Latta said it was alarming to see the numbers so large as to how many people need housing with balancing their incomes with affordable housing rates. It’s important to have accountability and keep this alive because people are homeless or living in unsanitary conditions and living with too many people in one place. Commissioner McKoy noted that there were areas that the city should review such as land use and educating the public on how it’s important that we have affordable housing for librarians, nurses, police officers, custodians for our schools, servers, etc. and people working an average living. Commissioner McKoy stated that, ultimately, it’s the mayor’s job to make sure that these

recommendations are implemented, but that there are no goals to hold people accountable. There needs to be alignment between the goal and the process to improvement. Stamford is a developer-driven community; we need to go from a developer-driven solution to a public policy solution and balance the two. There should be a way to get this plan implemented for housing built or preserved in Stamford. We need the support of others and should call upon the mayor, talk with local representatives and community leaders. Commissioner Rutz stated that this was a good discussion to keep at the forefront and encouraged everyone to remain engaged to make a difference in the Stamford community.

- G. **Resolution** – The resolution to renew the contract for Integrated Building Systems (IBM) was deferred to a future meeting.
- H. **Executive Session** - No Executive Session was held.
- I. **Adjournment** - At 7:04 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner McKoy and seconded by Commissioner Williams-Brown the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director