

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
JANUARY 25, 2023

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, January 25, 2023.

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

A. Attendees

Present:	Rich Ostuw	Absent:
	Bianca Shinn-Desras	
	John Coff	
	Lester McKoy	
	Sheila Williams-Brown	

Advisory Board Members: Ronice Latta
Ari Goldstein
Jaclyn Williams

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

Public:	Ms. Cynthia Bowser
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B. Approval of Minutes

- Approval of minutes of the COC Board Meeting of December 14, 2022

➤ Commissioner McKoy moved; Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded.

The minutes were approved.

Ayes:	Rich Ostuw	Nays:	None
	Bianca Shinn-Desras		
	John Coff		
	Lester McKoy		
	Sheila Williams-Brown		

C. Public Comments – There was no public comment.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff and McKoy, Advisory Board member Goldstein, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Feda, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms.

Figuroa, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Soares and Ms. Young attended the HR Committee meeting on 1/24/2023. Ms. Tantimonico provided a review of filled and open positions; there was a discussion on job posting venues. Ms. Tantimonico discussed COC employees' racial demographics for 2020, 2021 and 2022 along with the ethnicity demographics of employees, residents and housing choice voucher participants. Mr. Gomez reported on our most recent employee engagement event in 12/2022.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff and McKoy, Advisory Board member Williams, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedá, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figuroa, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Soares, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luzietti, Ms. Ball, Mr. Galasso, Mr. Andrew Remus (Marcum) and Ms. Young attended the Operations Committee meeting on 1/24/2023. Ms. Coard discussed the recent fires that have occurred at two of COC properties: The Lawnhill Terrace fire was an accidental occurrence, and the family has been relocated to another unit within the same community; the Stamford Manor fire was intentionally set by a resident who has since not returned, and for whom we already have an eviction pending.

Ms. Figuroa presented the 30 new Mainstream Vouchers that have been awarded to COC. These vouchers are designated to provide support to non-elderly, disabled individuals. Ms. Figuroa noted that we have established strong partnerships with service partners such as Abilis, Inspirica, Pacific House and The Housing Collective to provide Mainstream Voucher applicants with an array of wrap-around services to support them through the application and housing search process. Mr. Fedá provided an update on the 12/2022 A/R across several properties. Mr. Stothart provided an update on the status for the Lawn Avenue Townhouse Site Renovations project.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff and McKoy, Advisory Board member Williams, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedá, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figuroa, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Soares, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luzietti, Ms. Ball, Mr. Galasso, Mr. Andrew Remus (Marcum) and Ms. Young attended the Finance Committee meeting on 1/24/2023. Marcum LLP, the independent auditing firm for COC, represented by Mr. Remus, presented the results of the COC Y/E 06/30/22 financial audit. Mr. Remus provided an overview of the audit process, outlined managements and the auditors' areas of responsibility, and discussed the program scope as well as highlights of the audit results. COC received an unmodified and "clean opinion" for FY 2022.

Ms. Reynolds highlighted the importance of the Board's oversight as it relates to their audit and fiduciary responsibility. Mr. Fedá recognized his staff and others at COC for their support in preparing the Annual Comprehensive Finance Report for FY 2022.

Ms. Luzietti provided an update on the Scofield Manor, Multi-Family and Tax Credit audits. Ms. Luzietti noted that the Scofield audit is in draft form and will be finalized shortly. She noted the staggered completion status of the tax credit and multi-family audits noting they will be completed in 02/2023. These audits will be presented to the Board by the Whittlesey team in 03/2023. Ms. Reynolds presented an overview of the CY 2023 Fiduciary Checklist. Ms. Reynolds noted the checklist outlines by quarter the planned fiduciary activities required of the Finance Department and Board regarding audit acceptance, budget approval and policy reviews.

- E. **Report from Executive Director** – Ms. Coard referred to last month's discussion on the CT Examiner/Mirror article citing the many barriers that voucher holders face; not enough affordable inventory to meet the demand, security deposit, and credit worthiness. Ms. Coard stated that security deposits are not the main obstacle for participants being denied housing in Stamford, but credit worthiness was a contributing factor why families are unable to use the vouchers. Ms. Coard described how they will inform voucher holders on the wait list the importance of credit and include nonprofit agencies to assist with credit repair.
- F. **Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer** – Mr. Tufo discussed the upcoming 2022 Year-End Progress Report presentations to the Board. The senior staff will be highlighting Accomplishments and Impact from July 2022 through December 2022, which are each tied to one of COC's eight Core Objectives. Mr. Tufo noted that staff will be

reporting on proposed Goals for the next two years, 2023 – 2024, pursuant to past practice. This provides for consistency and alignment with our strategic direction.

Comments from the Board members on the relevance of this included:

Rich: It's great that we have such a comprehensive list of long-term objectives. The staff has done a great job of taking the short-term goals and fitting them into long-term objectives. It's a good way to stay grounded on what's happening to gain better insight into the organization. They are thorough and that's a tribute to COC.

Bianca: It's a helpful road map to have every six months as opposed to annually, as in many other organizations. You know and understand what's being captured although it's a lot of information; it's excellent.

Lester: I believe the staff look at the plan and try to work with it. For example, gaining more housing vouchers and helping people into housing. They try to figure out what they're doing and how we can make it more effective.

Ronice: This is part of the unique strength of this organization. It's good that we know the long-term strategic goals and we're able to see the progress being made. It's a great exercise to see if we're on track and where to adjust. It's nice to celebrate the wins as we go along and understand how things are moving along.

Mr. Tufo stated that COC practices Continuous Improvement, with a constant – and continuously evolving – strategic awareness.

G. Resolution –

23-01: Accept the Year-End June 30, 2022, Audited Financial Statements for the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford

➤ Commissioner McKoy 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, 2022, Financial Statements are accepted.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes:	Rich Ostuw	Nays:	None
	Bianca Shinn-Desras		
	John Coff		
	Lester McKoy		
	Sheila Williams-Brown		

H. Executive Session - No Executive Session was held.

I. Adjournment - At 6:34 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