

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF  
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD  
FEBRUARY 22, 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, February 22, 2023.

Commissioner Ostuw called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**A. Attendees**

Present:	Rich Ostuw	Absent: Bianca Shinn-Desras
	John Coff	Lester McKoy
	Divya Malhotra	Ari Goldstein
	Sheila Williams-Brown	Ronice Latta
		Jaclyn Williams

Present:

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

Public: Ms. Patricia Viesti, Post House resident

**B. Approval of Minutes**

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

➤ Commissioner Coff moved; Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded.

The minutes were approved.

Ayes:	Rich Ostuw	Nays:	None
	John Coff		
	Sheila Williams-Brown		

**C. Public Comments** – There was no public comment.

**D. Board Committee Reports**

**Human Resources Committee** – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, Williams-Brown and McKoy, Advisory Board members Latta and Malhotra, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Feda, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Soares and Ms. Young attended the HR Committee meeting on 2/21/2023. Mr. Gomez discussed the new hires, promotions and open positions for 02/2023. Ms. Tantimonico provided an overview of the annual review of the Board of Commissioners Conflict of Interest Policy and accompanying questionnaire. Mr. Tufo expanded upon the conversation by providing examples to ensure clarity and importance of this policy. Ms. Tantimonico reviewed the Teamsters Local 145 Maintenance and Local 145 Scofield two-year ratified collective bargaining agreements.

**Operations Committee** – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, Williams-Brown and McKoy, Advisory Board members Latta and Malhotra, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luziatti, Mr. Soares and Ms. Young attended the Operations Committee meeting on 2/21/2023. Mr. Fedra provided a 01/2023 accounts receivable update noting delinquent accounts are undergoing legal enforcement. Mr. Fedra stated that the accounts that remain uncollected will be presented to the Board for write-off approval. Ms. Coard discussed the increased legal activity that has occurred during this reporting period for lease enforcement matters, specifically non-payment of rent. Since the expiration of the eviction moratorium, Ms. Coard noted that COC began to refer cases to legal; however, most recently there has been a spike in legal activity with more cases proceeding to the court hearing process. Ms. Coard explained that, while there is a strong effort to execute repayment agreements when appropriate, there are instances when an eviction order must be pursued.

Ms. Figueroa provided an overview of the 2023 utility allowance schedules for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Ms. Figueroa explained that the schedules include updates to the structure types – Single Family, High-Rise and Low-Rise - and reflect rate updates for each utility source. Ms. Figueroa noted that 82% of Housing Choice Voucher participants pay some form of their own utilities.

Ms. Figueroa stated that the self-service electronic kiosk usage has increased by 64% since the last update. Ms. Figueroa noted that the kiosk allows users to scan, submit and print documents electronically to the intended COC team members and is available 24/7. Ms. Figueroa stated that mass notifications have been sent to all COC residents, and ongoing communications will continue in an effort to increase the awareness of this tool. Mr. Stothart provided an update on the Lawn Avenue Townhouses site renovations. Mr. Stothart noted that the project is near completion with final work pending to include completion of the retaining wall, sidewalks and railings.

**Finance Committee** – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, Williams-Brown and McKoy, Advisory Board members Latta and Malhotra, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luziatti, Mr. Soares and Ms. Young attended the Finance Committee meeting on 2/21/2023. Mr. Fedra presented the 12/31/2022 Quarterly Financial Report on the tax credit and multifamily developments highlighting variances and expected cash distributions in accordance with the individual waterfall agreements to COC and Rippowam Corporation based on 2022 year-end operating results. Mr. Fedra gave projected results for the 6/30/2023 year-end properties (Federal, State, MAR and Rippowam Corporation). Mr. Paulemon provided an overview of Scofield Manor and discussed significant variances in revenue, improved vacancy rate and expenses for utility increases and contracted labor to cover mandatory CNA shifts due to staff vacancies.

Ms. Luziatti gave an audit update on Scofield Manor, Multi-Family and Tax Credit properties. She noted that both the COC 6/30/2022 audit is complete and was submitted to HUD and Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). Ms. Luziatti stated that the Scofield Manor audit and cost report are finalized and have been submitted; the tax credit audits are underway with 11 or 16 completed. Auditors, Whittlesey & Hadley, P.C., will be presenting the Scofield Manor and the Tax Credit audits at the 03/2023 Finance Committee meeting.

- E. **Report from Executive Director** – Ms. Coard described a panel discussion in which she participated, sponsored by Congressman Jim Himes surrounding the documentary film, [Grit & Grace: The Fight for the American Dream](#). The film describes economic disparity and inequality in America and the struggle of many people to obtain the American dream; it depicts how Americans are struggling just to make ends meet. The event began with a reception and remarks by Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmons, UConn President Radenka Maric, former U.S. Senator Chris Dodd, U.S. Congressman Jim Himes, and *Grit & Grace* director Oscar Guerra. Congressman Himes led the panel discussion, which included other community leaders contextualizing the film.
- F. **Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer** – Mr. Tufo highlighted the recent [Vita Health & Wellness Partnership](#) meeting that focused on housing insecurity. Mr. Tufo noted that Vita members consist of organizations from across all sectors, including health, education, social services, food, mental health, that intersect with the issues of housing affordability and availability in Stamford. This forum formed a meaningful picture and is the first in an

upcoming series. Commissioner Ostuw and Mr. Tufo will be meeting with Mayor Simmons to encourage her support and promote participation with COC to strategize a system wide, community effort to address Stamford's insufficiency of affordable housing.

Mr. Tufo stated that the upcoming 2022 Year-End Progress Report presentations will begin 3/1/2023. The senior staff will be highlighting Strategic Goals and Accomplishments (July - December 2022) in alignment with COC's eight Core Objectives. The staff will present proposed Goals for the next two years, 2023 – 2024, that align with our strategic direction.

**G. Resolutions –**

**23-02: Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) Proposed Schedule for Allowances for Tenant Furnished Utilities and Other Services**

- Commissioner Coff 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 proposed allowances for tenant furnished utilities and other services is hereby adopted, effective March 1, 2023.**

The resolution was passed.

Ayes:	Rich Ostuw	Nays:	None
	John Coff		
	Sheila Williams-Brown		

**23-03: Approve 2022 Discretionary 401(a) Plan Contribution**

- Commissioner Coff 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 Employer's Discretionary Contribution for calendar 2022 to the 401(a) plan shall be authorized at 6% for the period of 1/1/22 – 12/31/22. The Chief Executive Officer is authorized to execute such documents as necessary to implement the approved contributions to the 401(a) plan.**

The resolution was passed.

Ayes:	Rich Ostuw	Nays:	None
	John Coff		
	Sheila Williams-Brown		

**23-04: Authorize Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Teamsters Local 145 Maintenance**

- Commissioner Coff moved; Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded.

**NOW, THEREFORE 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 hereby authorized to enter into a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Teamsters Employees Local 145 Maintenance for the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2024. The Contract shall be substantially in the form of the prior contract between the parties except as noted above.**

The resolution was passed.

Ayes:	Rich Ostuw	Nays:	None
	John Coff		
	Sheila Williams-Brown		

**23-05: Authorize Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Teamsters Local 145 Scofield**

- Commissioner Coff moved; Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded.

**NOW, THEREFORE 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 hereby authorized to enter into a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Teamsters Employees Local 145 Scofield for the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2024. The Contract shall be substantially in the form of the prior contract between the parties except as noted above.**

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw                      Nays: None  
          John Coff  
          Sheila Williams-Brown

**H. Executive Session** - No Executive Session was held.

**I. Adjournment** - At 6:44 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Coff and seconded by Commissioner Williams-Brown the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard  
Executive Director