

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
MAY 24, 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, May 24, 2023.

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

A. Attendees

Board Members:	Rich Ostuw	Absent: Divya Malhotra
	John Coff	Ronice Latta
	Lester McKoy	
	Sheila Williams-Brown	

Advisory Board:	Ari Goldstein
	Jaclyn Williams

Present:	Vin Tufo
	Lisa Reynolds
	Sam Feda
	Ken Montanez
	Megan Shutes
	Peter Stothart
	Michele Tarulli
	Chris Warren
	Christine Young

B. Approval of Minutes

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

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved; Commissioner McKoy seconded.

The minutes were approved.

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

C. Public Comments – There was no public comment.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, McKoy and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Williams, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Feda, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Galasso, Ms. Young, Mr. Gomez, and Mr. Soares attended the Human Resources Committee meeting on 5/24/2023. Mr. Tufo discussed the executive search process for the Rippowam Vice President position. Mr. Gomez provided a general recruitment overview of open positions and Ms. Figueroa provided a review of the HCVP Manager role that has been difficult to fill. Mr. Gomez discussed the implementation of the ADP recruiting tool and on-boarding module.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, McKoy and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Williams, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Feda, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Galasso, Ms. Young, Mr. Gomez, and Mr. Soares attended the

Operations Committee meeting on 5/24/2023. Mr. Fedra provided an overview of the 04/2023 Accounts Receivable (A/R) results and discussed the Q1 A/R increase of approximately \$5K. Mr. Stothart provided an update on the capital projects that are underway and coming to completion, along with upcoming projects.

Ms. Figueroa provided a high-level review of the Quarterly Operations Board Report of 3/31/2023. Ms. Figueroa discussed the portability program, which COC does not receive direct funding from HUD; the program administered an average of 2,000 vouchers per month that resulted in over 840 transactions. Ms. Figueroa noted that COC was awarded 30 Mainstream Vouchers, which are designed to provide rental assistance to non-elderly disabled households; the applicants will receive wrap-around services and long-term case management as well. An overview of the property management dashboard highlighted COCs' PIC performance that met and exceeded the reporting requirements, A/R, supportive services, and overall occupancy below 1% across the portfolio. Mr. Fedra discussed our participation in the updated version of the UniteCT Rent Relief program, which we've received approximately \$27K for several households and continue to receive referrals.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, McKoy and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Williams, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Galasso, Ms. Young, Mr. Gomez, and Mr. Soares attended the Finance Committee meeting on 5/24/2023. Mr. Paulemon presented highlights of the Oak Park FY 2024 budget noting that a resolution to approve the budget would be brought before the 05/2023 Board meeting. Mr. Paulemon discussed significant changes to the budget related to revenue and expense adjustments in alignment with the upcoming property renovation plans expected to commence in early 2024. Due to the renovation, Oak Park will incur a planned budget loss of \$240K, which will be covered by operating reserves. Mr. Paulemon presented the Public Housing and RAD FY 2024 budgets noting that a resolution to approve the budget would be brought before the 05/2023 Board meeting. Stamford Manor is projected to incur a loss of \$80K in FY 2024 to cover critical operating needs including support and security services. In 2024, the other Low-Income Public Housing (LIPH) properties will be converted to the RAD program and begin receiving a higher level of per unit subsidy (for operating and capital needs) moving from an aggregate operating loss of \$15K to positive results of approximately \$182K in FY 24.

Mr. Fedra provided an overview of the 3/31/2023 Quarterly Financial operating results of all properties noting significant variances with most properties and programs meeting or exceeding budget estimates. The work accomplished across functions has positively impacted the property results, which includes positive occupancy rates, BMR program expansion work, and cost controls in utilities and insurance.

Mr. Tufo provided an overview of accounting practices at Stone Harbor, noting some deficiencies in their cash controls. Mr. Fedra provided a description of recommended changes to their practices and additional COC oversight steps to remediate the identified issues. This was intended as high-level Board communication to build context for the upcoming review of the Southern Connecticut Community Improvement Corporation (SCCIC) audit and governance letter.

- E. **Report from Executive Director** – Ms. Coard stated that COC has become more aggressive with bed bug exterminations due to recent infestations. In 06/2023, COC will conduct bed bug seminars to educate the residents on preparation of their personal items for proper exterminations of their apartments. Ms. Coard stated that COC would like to see the Board members attend future community events hosted by our nonprofit partners and will send information as it becomes available.
- F. **Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer** – Mr. Tufo announced the upcoming memorial service for former long-time board chairman, Courtney Nelthropp. The service will be held on Saturday, 6/3/2023 at Fairgate Farm; COC encourages all to attend.

Mr. Tufo discussed the 19th Stamford Charter proposed revisions released to the public less than a week prior to this evening's Charter Revision Commission public hearing. Mr. Tufo stated that the revisions, if adopted, have the potential to affect COC's business practices, governance, and future development activities. Mr. Tufo described the proposed revision that would create a new Housing Commission with a mandate appearing to overlap that of COC.

Another provision makes it more difficult and potentially prevents the mayor from making certain municipal board appointments. Mr. Tufo stated that COC is working with the Vita Partnership to request that the Board of Representatives defer its approval of the proposed Charter revisions until conducting a comprehensive community engagement process with sufficient opportunities to educate the public.

Mr. Tufo reported on the status of negotiations between the White House and Congressional leaders to raise the federal debt ceiling and avert default. Current proposals could 1.) roll back FY24 HUD spending to FY22 levels; or 2.) freeze it at the current FY23 level with a multi-year 1% cap on year/year increases, either of which would reduce subsidies and housing opportunities accordingly. (Note that subsequently adopted provisions appear to freeze the budget authorization at FY23 levels, although specific impact will be determined through the process of Congressional appropriations.)

G. Resolutions –

23-14: Approve FYE June 30, 2024, Budget for State Moderate Rent Program – Oak Park

- Commissioner Williams-Brown moved; Commissioner Malhotra 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 State Moderate Rent Program – Oak Park is adopted for the Fiscal Year starting July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 subject to final approval by the DOH and CHFA as applicable.

The resolution was passed.

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

23-15: Approve the Federal Low-Income Public Housing Program (LIPH) and the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), operating budgets for the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2024.

- Commissioner McKoy moved; Commissioner Coff 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 budgets for the Federal Low-Income Public Housing, and the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program are adopted for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

The resolution was passed.

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

H. Executive Session - No Executive Session was held.

I. Adjournment - At 6:58 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