

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
JULY 26, 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, July 26, 2023.

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

A. Attendees

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

Advisory Board:	Ari Goldstein
	Ronice Latta

Present:	Vin Tufo
	Natalie Coard
	Jon Gottlieb
	Lisa Reynolds
	Jackie Figueroa
	Ken Montanez
	Jan Tantimonico
	Michele Tarulli
	Chris Warren
	Christine Young

B. Approval of Minutes

- Approval of minutes of the COC Board Meeting of June 28, 2022

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved; Commissioner Williams-Brown seconded.

The minutes were approved.

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

C. Public Comments – There was no public comment.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, McKoy, Coff and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Goldstein, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Feda, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Stohart, Mr. Velez, Mr. Warren, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Young and Mr. Gomez attended the Human Resources Committee meeting on 7/25/2023. Mr. Gomez provided a recruitment update, which included year-to-date hires, terminations, and open positions. Mr. Gomez summarized upcoming employee engagement activities. Ms. Tantimonico provided an update on the Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS) employer contribution to the employees' pension fund. Ms. Tantimonico discussed possible consideration of other carriers for our worker's compensation plan, Berkshire Hathaway – The Guard.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, McKoy, Coff and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Goldstein, Mr. Tufo, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Coard, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Velez, Mr. Warren, Mr. Paulemon, Ms. Young and Mr. Gomez attended the Operations Committee meeting on 7/25/2023. Mr. Fedra provided an overview of the 06/2023 Accounts Receivable (A/R) results, which included an update on balances, repayment agreements, and potential write-offs. Mr. Fedra noted that not all the properties are presented in the report, and he will include them in the next A/R report. Ms. Coard provided an update on the leasing activity at Lawnhill Terrace 4. Ms. Coard highlighted that 21 out of the 34 units have been leased, and five units are scheduled to be leased during 08/2023; eight units remain unavailable due to water damage resulting from contractor negligence.

Ms. Coard provided an overview of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA) final rule. HOTMA is intended to streamline processes and reduce the burden on housing providers. This final rule proposes sweeping changes, specifically in the areas of income reviews, income limits for over-income families, deductions, and limitations on eligibility based on assets. Mr. Stothart reported on capital projects and procurement activity. Mr. Stothart discussed the closeout of the Lawn Avenue Townhouses Site Improvement project, the status of the fire restoration project underway at 197 Custer Street, and the Scofield Manor small roof replacement. Mr. Stothart provided an update on the contract with Eastern Mechanical Services for the Wormser Congregate air conditioning system, the Fire Alarm Inspection and Testing contract with TPC Systems, and the janitorial services request for proposal.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, McKoy, Coff and Williams-Brown, Advisory Board members Latta and Goldstein, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Mr. Gottlieb, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Montanez, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Velez, Mr. Warren, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Soares, Ms. Luzietti, Mr. Galasso, Ms. Young and Mr. Gomez attended the Finance Committee meeting on 7/25/2023. Ms. Reynolds provided an annual review of the Housing Choice Voucher (Budget Authority and Funding Model) as one of the items on the Board's Fiduciary Checklist, which describes the importance of the model's strategic planning capabilities and execution of the program goals. Ms. Reynolds noted that our Finance Board liaison, Mr. Coff, participated in the review and provided feedback for the presentation. Mr. Fedra further described the history of the model, how it has been expanded and improved over the years and serves as a reliable tool for program and financial management. Ms. Luzietti presented the model in more detail, describing the assumptions used and the management actions COC can take to pivot should resources in the out-years change. Ms. Luzietti further described the monthly review and planning process that occurs with Finance and the HCV teams to execute the program in accordance with the current model assumption.

Mr. Fedra provided a brief overview of the 12/31/2023 Glenbrook Road Elderly Housing Corporation and Southern Connecticut Community Improvement Corporation (SCCIC) financial audits. Mr. Fedra noted that both audits received unqualified and clean opinions. Mr. Fedra explained that the Glenbrook audit will be accepted by the Glenbrook Elderly Housing Board at tomorrow's Board meeting. Mr. Fedra noted one comment in the SCCIC governance letter that was resolved and is being managed through additional controls and oversight of Stone Harbour Management Company.

Mr. Montanez provided an executive summary of the Firewall Replacement project. Mr. Montanez described that a modern firewall is 'best practice' in cyber-security protections but also supports our ability to grow and implement new technologies. He outlined the selection process and collaboration with industry experts, the Cyber Sub-Committee discussion and review with our IT Board liaison, Commissioner Malhotra. Mr. Montanez noted that, although the cost of the project does not meet the threshold for Board approval, it should nonetheless be apprised given the importance and significance of our cyber-security footprint.

Ms. Luzietti provided an audit update for FY 6/30/2023 as to the progress currently in the planning stages. A draft report is required by HUD 9/15/23.

- E. **Report from Executive Director** – Ms. Coard discussed the various summer camps for kids throughout Stamford that are available through scholarship programs and grants to get children involved, keep them active and exposed to opportunities outside of our properties. Ms. Coard noted that Family Centers has been successful in getting many kids from our properties enrolled. Ms. Coard stated that Family Centers is providing an after-camp enrichment program at the Eastside and Fairgate properties; this program has enabled kids who did not attend camp to take part in enrichment activities with a curriculum.

Ms. Coard reported on the new requirement for Board commissioners to participate in housing authority commissioners training no later than 1/1/2024. Ms. Coard stated that there is a one-day training program, The Commissioners Guide to Monitoring and Oversight, available at the Mohegan Sun conference center 8/27/2023.

F. Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer - Mr. Tufo stated that Mayor Caroline Simmons' attendance at the 06/2023 COC Board meeting provided a valuable opportunity and insight into our organization and the way in which we interact and operate. Mayor Simmons commented on COCs' professional and knowledgeable staff and on its evident commitment to our mission.

Mr. Tufo reported on the United States Senate's proposed FY 2024 HUD Appropriations Bill and its potential Section 8 programs. Mr. Tufo noted that the Senate subcommittee responsible for the HUD budget approved their version, and we are closely watching the appropriations process move through Congress. When the bills from the Senate and House of Representatives are merged, we will be able to project final numbers of all COC's HUD funded programs. This year's budget setting process is significant given the rules agreed to in the previous debt ceiling negotiations and because of the way in which funding for the Section 8 Program becomes available (i.e., halfway through the current budget year).

G. Executive Session - No Executive Session was held.

H. Adjournment - At 6:53 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Coff and seconded by Commissioner McKoy the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director