

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD
SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

A regular Board meeting of the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford was held at 22 Clinton Avenue, Stamford, Connecticut and on the Zoom remote connection meeting platform on Wednesday, September 25, 2024.

Commissioner Ostuw called the meeting to order at 6:22 p.m.

A. Attendees

Present: Rich Ostuw Absent: Alexandro Morris
John Coff
Lester McKoy
Divya Malhotra

Advisory Board: Ronice Latta Absent: Jacyln Williams
Bianca Shinn-Desras

Present: Vin Tufo
Natalie Coard
Jon Gottlieb
Lisa Reynolds
Sam Feda
Jackie Figueroa
Beth Janney
Ken Montanez
Jan Tantimonico
Raul Gomez
Megan Shutes
Michele Tarulli
Karen Coquillon
Amanda Danzi
Ms. Barbara Moye (Post House)

B. Approval of Minutes

- Approval of minutes of the COC Board Meeting of August 28, 2024

➤ Commissioner Ostuw moved; Commissioner Coff seconded.

The minutes were approved.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw Nays: None
Lester McKoy
John Coff
Divya Malhotra

C. Public Comments – Ms. Barbara Moye expressed her concerns regarding her residency at Post House and interactions with COC staff and Resident Service Coordinators.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, McKoy and Morris, Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Janney, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Feda, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Raul, Mr. Warren, Mr. Galasso, Ms. Silverio, Mr. Paulemon and Mr. Soares attended the Human Resources Committee meeting on 9/24/2024. Mr. Gomez and Ms. Tantimonico provided a recruitment update on

open positions. Ms. Tantimonico introduced Rippowam Corporation's new Project Manager, Ms. Karen Coquillon. Mr. Gomez presented preliminary 2024 employee survey findings and feedback from the employees' focus groups, one-on-one and department meetings. Mr. Gomez and Ms. Tantimonico provided an update on recent and scheduled employee engagement activities and events.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, McKoy and Morris, Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Janney, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Raul, Mr. Warren, Mr. Galasso, Ms. Silverio, Mr. Paulemon and Mr. Soares attended the Operations Committee meeting on 9/24/2024.

Ms. Figueroa provided an overview of the 211 United Way of CT waiting list notification system for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program and other federal affordable housing opportunities. Ms. Figueroa stated that this website is a great resource to share with the public, community advocates and partners seeking access to affordable housing. Ms. Janney reported that staff members of our Housing Choice Voucher and Property Management teams participated in the Domus Back to School event resource fair. The staff distributed school supplies and COC swag. Ms. Figueroa presented the FY25 Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and updated Payment Standard Schedule, which will be effective 10/1/2024. Ms. Figueroa explained that HUD allows Payment Standards to be set at a level between 90% and 110% of the published FMRs without further HUD approval. This year most bedrooms experienced a decrease, while two received a minimal increase and those are the one through three-bedroom units. With rents in Stamford generally high, making it difficult for HCV participants to afford units outside of areas that are impacted by poverty, COC has established its Payment Standard at 110% of FMRs. The purpose is to increase the range of available units. Ms. Janney provided an update on the Post House parking gates ordered; they are anticipated to be installed by the end of 09/2024. Ms. Janney noted that we have executed a new laundry lease agreement with Hercules for Stamford Manor, Post House, Clinton Manor, Quintard Manor, Wormser, Summer Place, Rippowam and Glenbrook. New equipment is scheduled for installation 10/2024.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, McKoy and Morris, Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Mr. Gottlieb, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Janney, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Reynolds, Ms. Tantimonico, Mr. Raul, Mr. Warren, Mr. Galasso, Ms. Silverio, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Soares and Ms. Caselli attended the Finance Committee meeting on 9/24/2024.

Mr. Paulemon provided an executive overview of the FY25 budget for Scofield Manor. He described the challenges facing the program and how they may impact expenses, revenues, and overall operating results. Mr. Paulemon provided an overview of the Scofield Manor reserve funds available and our planned use of a portion of those funds to resolve some residents' health and safety needs. Mr. Soares provided background on an A/R Scofield Manor write-off that requires Board approval as required by COC when exceeding \$5K.

Ms. Caselli provided an update on the status of the COC audit for the period ending 6/30/2024. Ms. Caselli advised that COC was awarded its fourth consecutive Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) award recognizing Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). Ms. Reynolds noted that a written report was provided in BoardPaq on the Yardi implementation and recognized the staff for their extraordinary efforts in getting the project to the current phase (go-dark, go-live).

- E. **Report from Executive Director** - Ms. Coard discussed the 2021 Capital Fund Emergency Safety & Security Program grant for \$250,000 that was previously denied by HUD in 2021 to address immediate safety and security needs at Stamford Manor. COC was recently awarded the grant. The grant proposal includes the installation of 51 Area of Rescue Stations and three Blue Light Wall Mount Stations to cover main open balcony areas across ten floors and common gathering areas on the main level. Additionally, a Base Station will be installed at the Main Security Desk for system monitoring, enabling users to call emergency personnel at the push of a button. Ms. Coard discussed the increased criminal activity affecting both Stamford Manor and Post House. Ms. Coard elaborated on the continued support from the Stamford Police Department and community meetings to strengthen resident-police relationships and enhance community engagement through events such as the summer barbecues.
- F. **Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer** – Mr. Tufo reminded the Board of the upcoming 2024 Midyear Progress report meeting 10/15/2024 for all Board members. Mr. Tufo discussed an upcoming strategy initiative with the city for a long-term affordable housing study. The needs-based approach will require that we define primary segments of Stamford's housing insecure population and learn of their specific housing needs such as low and very low-income

individuals and families, senior citizens, physically, mentally and cognitively disabled adults, immigrants to Stamford, disconnected and disengaged younger adults (18-25 years old), homelessness, etc. Mr. Tufo stated that we are early in the process and will convene a workgroup. Vita could be a potential partner to provide stories, data and relevance to help advocate and support the city's position.

G. Board Discussion: Planning for the impacts of full RAD/SVC conversion on the entire organization – Mr. Tufo summarized the unexpected changes in the final Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)/Streamline Voluntary Conversion (SVC), highlighting that the anticipated faster exit from the program was affected by HUD's decision to withdraw the original program. COC is now exploring an alternative plan with HUD taking initial steps for implementation. Mr. Gottlieb reviewed the new program's requirements, noting its advantages and disadvantages, particularly its potential for greater input during development and improved subsidy options for maintaining building conditions, especially at Stamford Manor. Ms. Coard, Ms. Figueroa, and Mr. Fedas discussed the implications of COC transitioning away from its role as a public housing agency.

H. Report from Board Chairman – Commissioner Ostuw stated Advisory Board member Goldstein has resigned from the COC Board. We are in appreciation for his knowledge and commitment that he contributed to supporting the organization's mission and goals. Commissioner Ostuw discussed the Board member's interest in additional Board education. Commissioners Ostuw and Coff, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard and Ms. Reynolds will form a subcommittee and present the Board with upcoming opportunities.

I. Resolutions –

24-33: Increase Payment Standards for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program to comply with HUD FY2025 Fair Market Rent Calculations

➤ Commissioner Coff moved; Commissioner McKoy seconded.

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the hereby proposed Housing Choice Voucher Program Payment Standards for new and current participants are hereby adopted effective October 1, 2024.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes:	Rich Ostuw	Nays:	None
	John Coff		
	Lester McKoy		
	Divya Malhotra		

J. Executive Session – No Executive Session was held.

K. Adjournment - At 7:19 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Coff and seconded by Commissioner McKoy the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director