

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD

JUNE 26, 2024

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, June 26, 2024.

Commissioner Ostuw called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

A. Attendees

Present: Rich Ostuw
John Coff
Divya Malhotra
Alexandro Morris

Absent: Lester McKoy

Advisory Board: Ronice Latta
Ari Goldstein
Bianca Shinn-Desras
Jaclyn Williams

Absent:

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

B. Approval of Minutes

- Approval of minutes of the COC Board Meeting of May 22, 2024

➤ Commissioner Coff moved; Commissioner Malhotra seconded.

The minutes were approved.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw
Divya Malhotra
John Coff
Alexandro Morris

Nays: None

C. Public Comments – There was no public comment.

D. Board Committee Reports

Human Resources Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, Malhotra, McKoy and Morris, Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Janney, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Feda, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Galasso, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Soares, Ms. Caselli and Ms. Young attended the Human Resources Committee meeting on 6/25/2024. Ms. Coard discussed the Director of Facilities position and recruitment efforts. Mr. Tufo provided an overview of the recruitment efforts for the Rippowam Corporation Project Manager position. Ms. Reynolds announced Mr. Gomez’s promotion to Senior Human Resources Generalist. Ms. Reynolds

provided highlights for an upcoming event this summer. Mr. Tufo provided highlights of the Employee Volunteer Day held at Fairgate Farm. Ms. Reynolds provided some background and an overview of the Request for Proposal (RFP) and selection process for the Labor and Employment Legal Services contract. The Annual Employee survey results were deferred until the 7/24/2024 Board meeting.

Operations Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, Malhotra, McKoy and Morris, Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Janney, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Galasso, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Soares, Ms. Caselli and Ms. Young attended the Operations Committee meeting on 6/25/2024.

Ms. Figueroa and Ms. Janney reported on several HUD initiatives that are under development and will be implemented over the next several months to year. The National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) is a new inspection model which replaces the over 20-year-old REAC inspection protocol. NSPIRE provides a single model to be used across all HUD properties, which include Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher and Multi-Family. The implementation date for the NSPIRE Voucher program has been extended to 10/2025. The Housing Information Portal (HIP) replaces the Public and Indian Housing Information Center (PIC). HIP is designed to reduce the administrative burden on the collection and reporting of data and will be cloud based which would result in fewer system interruptions for maintenance and outages. HIP was initially slated for 8/2024, however, the new timeline has not been established. The Housing Opportunity through Modernization Act (HOTMA) is on track for a 1/1/2025 implementation date.

Ms. Janney provided an update on the NSPIRE pre-inspections for all properties. The inspections will be completed by 6/28/24. The properties due for Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) and the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) are the scattered sites (Sheridan, Lawn Avenue, Ursula Park and Connecticut Avenue), Stamford Manor and Glenbrook Manor, which will be completed first. For the remainder of the portfolio, the Housing Quality Standard (HQS) inspections will be used to identify any health and safety issues.

Mr. Fedra and Mr. Galasso provided a 05/2024 accounts receivable (AR) update. They noted that AR has increased slightly from 04/2024; COC received \$31K in rent relief funds for two residents at Park 215. Mr. Stothart presented three resolutions: Award Contract to Brian Capone Land Services for Snow Removal Services, Award Contract to Nouveau Elevator Service Corporation for Elevator Maintenance Services and Approve Contract Change Order No. 1 to the Contract with Family Centers, Inc.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Ostuw, Coff, Malhotra, McKoy and Morris, Advisory Board member Latta, Mr. Tufo, Ms. Coard, Ms. Janney, Mr. Montanez, Mr. Fedra, Ms. Figueroa, Ms. Reynolds, Mr. Stothart, Mr. Warren, Mr. Galasso, Mr. Paulemon, Mr. Soares, Ms. Caselli and Ms. Young attended the Finance Committee meeting on 6/25/2024.

Mr. Paulemon presented the FY 2025 Management, Administration and Enterprise (MAE) operating budget and the resolution for approval. Mr. Paulemon described the 2024 results and 2025 highlights. He provided an overview of the funding structure of the program, which includes surplus cash distributions to fund the expected structural deficit. Mr. Paulemon presented the FY 2025 Rippowam Corporation operating budget and the resolution for approval. Mr. Paulemon described the projected results from 2024 and highlights from the 2025 budget; he described the cash inflows and outflows related to upcoming development activity. Mr. Paulemon presented the FY 2025 RAD Properties operating budget with the resolution for board approval. Mr. Paulemon described the projected results for 2024 and highlights from the 2025 budget. He described the mid-year 2025 changes to revenue due to the conversion from operating summary to voucher payments and the outyear impact of the transition to the higher revenue source.

Mr. Fedra presented an overview of the auditor RFP process and the selection results. Whittlesey, P.C. has been selected to perform the audit for the Mixed Financed Low Income Housing Tax Credit properties and Scofield Manor for the fiscal years ending 2024 through 2028 with a resolution for approval. Marcum LLP was selected to perform the Housing Authority Audit, the Multi-Family Audits and Scofield Manor Cost Report with the resolution to be approved by the Board.

Ms. Caselli provided two programs and financial reviews. She described the Quality Assurance review and explained that this is a standard HUD review/reconciliation of the Voucher Management System (VMS) and general ledger data. Ms. Caselli described the Cost Report Rate review audit performed by the Department of Social Service (DSS) office used to verify eligible expenses and review documentation. Updates will be given as the results are finalized. Ms. Reynolds provided a written update on the Yardi project in BoardPaq.

E. **Board Discussion – Enhance Board capability and performance** – Commissioner Ostuw noted that this discussion topic is a follow-up to the SP24 Retreat activities. Commissioner Ostuw began the discussion asking the Board members if there are any gaps, skills and/or training opportunities that the Board members should have to enhance their capability and performance. Commissioner Coff suggested that it would be helpful to go through the cycle of a real estate development deal to improve members’ understanding as there are many aspects with which they are unfamiliar. Advisory Board member Latta stated that Board members credit the staff for keeping them apprised of COC activity to the point where sometimes there are few questions left to ask. The staff is thorough, and detail oriented to be sure members understand the information provided. She stated that, at times, they may be receiving too much information. Commissioner Malhotra added that, from the regulatory standpoint, she is in favor of receiving more information, because she is not as familiar with the industry. Advisor Goldstein stated that, although he has some understanding of the industry, it is important for the Board to meet monthly due to regulations changing.

Commissioner Ostuw asked if the size of the Board of Commissioners, specifically the Advisory Board, is adequate. Advisor Latta stated that we have a culturally diverse Board with lived experiences and perspectives. She would like the Board to work on a pipeline so that, when Board members leave, others are prepared to take a seat. Commissioner Coff stated that five Board Commissioners make sense and that it is important to have the various experiences and depth of the Advisory Board members. Commissioner Morris agreed with the comments that it is a diverse Board, and he feels welcome to add his opinions. Commissioner Ostuw believes that the Board is a good size with five Commissioners and four Advisory Board members which provides a diversity of knowledge, experience and perspectives. Advisor Shinn-Desras echoed the sentiments and stated that the staff is thorough in providing information, and that she is not aware of any gaps. The Board and staff members are engaged, and COC is a proactive organization. Advisor Latta applauds the spirit of excellence and culture at COC with Mr. Tufo as Chief Executive Officer and would be concerned if this level of senior level expertise was to change. Commissioner Ostuw noted that, from his previous Board experiences, the level of detail and performance is comparable to a well-functioning Board-Staff relationship. Commissioner Ostuw thanked the Board members for their comments and will contact each Board member for a follow up discussion.

F. **Report from the Executive Director** – Ms. Coard applauded the tenure of Mr. Peter Stothart who will be retiring after nearly 34 years of service with COC. Ms. Coard stated that Mr. Stothart has been an active contributor to the transformation of the organization and that he has left a physical representation of his contributions at many of our properties. Ms. Coard added that Mr. Stothart handled the procurement process from inside out, site improvements and making sure that work was completed in a timely, quality manner. Mr. Stothart handled many contracts and capital projects and cultivated extensive relationships with the city. Mr. Stothart will be missed by his colleagues, and we thank him for his dedication and service in providing residents with a decent and safe place to live.

G. **Strategic Overview from Chief Executive Officer** - Mr. Tufo discussed two handouts regarding the mayor’s push for allocating additional capital funds in the upcoming FY25 budget. The first describes a wholesale rehabilitation of 26 Main Street, which will be a tax credit deal with commercial debt funded by the expected increase in operating subsidies. Second is the request for city funding that will support the tax credit application for Oak Park phase two. The mayor is an enthusiast of Stamford Manor and the preservation of senior development generally. Mr. Tufo added that we have a unique partnership with the mayor. We will continue to encourage her to be an advocate for these development initiatives and remember to thank her for her contributions and support.

Mr. Tufo discussed the planned SP24 follow-up activities for the 07/2024 Board meeting to include a strategic discussion on Succession Planning. Mr. Tufo noted that it would focus on director-level succession planning and that the staff are preparing a matrix to focus on the Finance, Operations, Human Resources, Development and Executive departments. The anticipated challenges, transition process and outcomes will be discussed to preserve institutional knowledge and functionality.

H. **Resolutions** –

24-22: Approve Contract with Whittlesey, P.C. to provide annual auditing and tax Preparation for the Mixed Financed Low Income Housing Tax Credit properties and Scofield Manor for the fiscal years ending 2024 through 2028

- Commissioner Coff 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 Whittlesey, P.C. be selected for the Mixed Financed Low Income Housing Tax Credit properties and Scofield Manor for Auditing & Tax Preparation for a total cost not to exceed \$1,400,000 for a term of 5 years. Further Board approval will be required if the contract amount exceeds 110% of the authorized amount.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw Nays: None
John Coff
Divya Malhotra
Alexandro Morris

24-23: Approve Contract with Marcum LLP to provide annual auditing and tax services for the Public Housing Authority, Multi-Family (2 Properties) and Scofield Manor Cost Report for the fiscal years ending 2024 through 2028

- Commissioner Coff 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 Marcum LLP be selected for the Public Housing Authority, Multi-Family (2 Properties) and Scofield Manor Cost Report for a total cost not to exceed \$635,000 for a term of 5 years. Further Board approval will be required if the contract amount exceeds 110% of the authorized amount

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw Nays: None
John Coff
Divya Malhotra
Alexandro Morris

24-24: Award Contract for: RFP 24-0004, Labor and Employment Legal Services to Kainen, Escalera & McHale, P.C.

- Commissioner Malhotra moved; Commissioner Coff seconded.

Be it resolved by the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford that the CEO is authorized to enter into a contract with Kainen, Escalera & McHale, P.C. for Labor & Employment Legal Services. The contract is for an initial two- year period with three additional one-year terms for a five-year maximum contract in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.00. Furthermore, that the CEO be authorized to act as contracting officer and perform all duties as outlined in the HUD General Conditions, including executing Change Orders; provided, however, that further board approval will be required prior to executing change orders that result in the contract price exceeding 110% of the original contract price stated above.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw Nays: None
John Coff
Divya Malhotra
Alexandro Morris

24-25: Award Contract to Brian Capone Land Services for Snow Removal Services

- Commissioner Malhotra moved; Commissioner Coff seconded.

Be it resolved by the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the Executive Director is authorized to enter into a five-year contract with Brian Capone Land Services, LLC, of Stamford, CT for Snow Removal Services. The total cost of this contract shall not exceed a total amount of \$740, 000.00 over a five-year period. Further Board approval will be required if the contract amount exceeds 110% of the authorized amount.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw Nays: None
John Coff
Divya Malhotra
Alexandro Morris

24-26: Award Contract to Nouveau Elevator Service Corp. for Elevator Maintenance Services

- Commissioner Coff moved; Commissioner Morris seconded.

Be it resolved by the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities that the Executive Director is authorized to enter into a contract with Nouveau Elevator Service Corp. of Stamford, CT for Elevator Maintenance Services. The total cost of this procurement shall not exceed \$830,000.00 over a five-year period. Further Board approval will be required if the contract amount exceeds 110% of the authorized amount.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw Nays: None
John Coff
Divya Malhotra
Alexandro Morris

24-27: Approve Contract Change Order No. 1 to the Contract with Family Centers, Inc. for Resident Services, Family Self-Sufficiency and Relocation Services

- Commissioner Malhotra 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 Executive Director is authorized to approve Change Order No. 1 to the contract Family Centers, Inc. for the amount of \$2,618,538.00, for a total contract amount not to exceed to \$4,723,038.00. Further expenditure shall not be exceeded without Board authorization.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw Nays: None
John Coff
Divya Malhotra
Alexandro Morris

24-28: Approve the Management, Administrations & Enterprise (MAE) operating budget for the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2025

- Commissioner Malhotra 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 Budget for the Management, Administrations & Enterprise are adopted for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw
John Coff
Divya Malhotra
Alexandro Morris

Nays: None

24-29: 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, 2025.

➤ Commissioner Coff moved; Commissioner Morris 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, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

The resolution was passed.

Ayes: Rich Ostuw
John Coff
Divya Malhotra
Alexandro Morris

Nays: None

I. Executive Session – No Executive Session was held.

J. Adjournment - At 6:59 p.m., after a motion duly made by Commissioner Coff and seconded by Commissioner Malhotra the Board meeting was adjourned.

Natalie Coard
Executive Director