

MINUTES
WEST HARTFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY
Regularly Scheduled Monthly Meeting via Teams and Dial-In
May 13, 2025

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Clare Dowd, Abdul Rahman, Lee Reynolds

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Milagros Acosta

OTHERS PRESENT: Beatrice Acevedo, FSS Coordinator; Forest Berwick, Director of Operations; Jill Corrado, Executive Director; Tim Mable, Director of Property Management; Yadira Mora, Voucher Programs Director; Adam Teneyck, Director of Finance; Barbara McGrath, Corporate Counsel

Ms. Dowd called the meeting to order at 5:13 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the regularly scheduled meeting of March 11, 2025 were approved on a motion from Ms. Reynolds and seconded by Ms. Dowd.

Financial Report

Ms. Corrado introduced Mr. Teneyck as our new Director of Finance.

Audits underway for WHHA and Federal Program HCV files.

Trend data was presented on average HAP, Number of HCV units and Per-Unit-Cost for the trailing 12 months. Segmentation of voucher type under the West Hartford program was presented. The Camelot received their certificate of occupancy, our 15 PBV's are coming on line and units are being inspected this month; which has been communicated to HUD.

We just received our funding notice today from HUD and our projections of \$400,000 shortfall appear to be tracking. HUD bases 2025 funding on the number of units leased in 2024.

A year ago, HUD was pushing HA's to be at 100% of funding authority so everyone's numbers were increasing, now everyone is in shortfall. We received official notification from HUD that we are officially in shortfall for FY2025, as expected and previously discussed. As mentioned at the last meeting, we have already communicated with HUD that we are no longer issuing new vouchers. Similarly, we will not be absorbing port-ins as we have done in the past. We are also limiting landlord rent increases to a \$50 maximum.

Now that we are officially in shortfall, we will be working with a HUD team who will be providing additional specific guidance as to how we make it through the year. We have been

through this once in the past and HUD worked with us to avoid elimination of program participants due to lack of funding, however we may be directed to lower payment standards.

Ms. Corrado reminded the Board that this shortfall affects 2025, news of HUD budgetary cuts at the Federal level would affect 2026 budgets.

Trailing twelve-month voucher segmentation data by program (West Hartford, J. D'Amelia) and voucher type was presented. The State has not yet limited rent increases, however they have ceased issuing vouchers except for specialty programs, e.g. VASH.

Occupancy and collections trend data were presented for managed properties for the trailing twelve months. Rent collection portfolio wide averages 95% and average occupancy is tracking at 93% portfolio wide for the same period.

Profit and Loss data was presented for the year through March. The \$30,000 loss in Management Services is due to timing differences in payments. Ms. Dowd asked what the management fees are, if there are limitations on what we can charge. Ms. Corrado replied that this is specified in the Management Agreement for each property but typically around 5% of rents collected. Changes would necessitate investor and CHFA approval, which is highly unlikely.

FSS Report

Ms. Acevedo reported we currently have 19 active program participants, 2 new enrollments for May and a number of additional enrollments are pending.

We have continued to market the program heavily with social media postings and continued outreach with various entities, including Advancing CT Together (ACT), CT Money School, CMS, and The Financial Coaching Program. Collaboration with WHHA caseworkers as a source of referrals continues.

A financial literacy workshop has been scheduled for 5/21/25 – this will be a virtual workshop over Zoom to facilitate participation.

A FSS coordinating committee has been established with Community Partners in Action, Hartford Reentry Welcoming Center, My Sisters Place Housing Mobility Program, and Town Social Services.

A monthly newsletter continues to be mailed to all program participants.

Ms. Dowd suggested contacting Goodwill, Ms. Acevedo mentioned that she already had and would reach out again.

Ms. Dowd asked about the HUD grant funding for the FSS program. Ms. Mora responded that the NOFA is typically released by HUD in late summer with the application process in the Fall. This past year the NOFA was considerably delayed.

HCV Report

Ms. Mora reported we have 568 HCV participants including port-outs. We had 13 port-outs, we have ceased to absorb port-ins, of which there are now 7. Average HAP is \$1,235. The volume of people moving in the past 2-3 months has been relatively enormous...

The DOH program is at 2,126 accounts comprised of 734 RAP certificates and 1,392 State voucher holders.

Wallingford is at 12 units.

Ms. Mora reiterated that the Camelot is coming on line and we have scheduled PBV inspections for this week. We are also seeing other voucherholders (outside of our 15 PBV's) coming to the property. Lease-up target date is May 30th.

Voucher program audit is forthcoming.

Ms. Mora discussed several potential ideas as to how we may address shortfall, which may include reducing our payment standards, however, we will see what HUD thinks and directs us to do when we meet with them in the coming weeks.

Ms. Dowd asked if we have ever had a situation where we have had to limit landlord rent increase, and if this has happened has there been a negative effect on a family. Ms. Mora replied that this was the case in 2017, and as time went on, landlords realized it was not our doing. Currently approving only \$50 increases is becoming an issue as some landlords cannot accept this – they are seeing sizeable increases in taxes and utilities. To compound matters, we are starting to see a drying up of funding sources for security deposits for those families who may have to move. Ms. McGrath reminded the board that many other HA's are faced with the same issues across Connecticut, and we will not be the only ones dealing with these issues.

Resolution 2025-2 to adopt 2025 Utility Allowances

Ms. Mora introduced the annual Section 8 Utility Allowances to be adopted July 1 of each year. This year all utilities increased with the exception of oil-based utilities and cold water.

Resolution 2025-2 was unanimously approved on a motion by Ms. Reynolds and seconded by Mr. Rahman.

Operations Report

Occupancy is at 95% or more for all the properties, except for 540 New Park and the Faxon.

Spring and summer landscaping activities have commenced for the Maintenance Department.

Goodwin first impressions project was completed. This was funded from the re-financing.

Transition of VOIP devices to a new vendor is in process, projected cost avoidance is around \$200 per month, however the primary reason for the switch is better management reporting software.

Development Committee Report – none

Finance Committee Report – Ms. Corrado and Ms. Dowd met last week to discuss budgets and finances.

Resident Services Committee Report - none

Executive Directors Report –

Housing Choice Voucher Program:

- a. FSS reach out is being made on a targeted basis as well as the traditional postcard amount.
- b. FSS grant amount document executed for 2025.
- c. Camelot wait list opening, lease up activities under way.
- d. Pulling names from PBV wait lists to fill vacancies.
- e. No longer absorbing vouchers, only billing.
- f. Reviewing HUD's two-year tool and forecasting for upcoming leasing and identification of shortfall for CY2025.
- g. Funding notices should be released in the next week. Watching FY26 budget proposal for funding cuts to HUD programs. Ms. Corrado attended a MTW conference a couple weeks ago and the Assistant Deputy Secretary of HUD addressed the group about the current administration's policy objectives:
 1. Those receiving assistance must be a citizen;
 2. They would like to promote FSS;
 3. They are exploring time limits for those on assistance;
 4. Replace Public Housing with more sustainable models (We do not have any Public Housing, this may be an opportunity for TBRA to consult with other HA's)
 5. Hold HA's accountable (More audits)
 6. Upgrade HUD technology
 7. Deregulate to local entities for better outcomes.

Ms. Corrado has reached out to state legislators and congressional representatives.

- h. We are now being audited by the State under the JDA program.

Property Management/LIHTC Compliance:

- a. Filling vacancies and rent collections at all 6 properties
- b. Continual reporting to investors, CHFA, Spectrum, NHT, investors, including reporting and site visits. Spectrum on site and file audit completed for AE Plant.
- c. One Park compliance review to be conducted in May.
- d. Facilities best practices being refined.
- e. Seasonal transition/change over and planned maintenance activities for second quarter.
- f. Capital planning for all buildings being refined.
- g. Goodwin signage replacement completed.
- h. Goodwin loan refinancing complete.
- i. Goodwin lobby refresh and hallway carpeting project complete.

Other:

- a. Elle weekly job meetings being held on site, monthly funding requisitions completed by the 10th of the month. Town building inspections have been positive.
- b. Elle landing page for progress monitoring is being designed.
- c. Preparing policy to address Immigration and Customs Enforcement with an external law firm.
- d. Social media postings for WHHA continue on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- e. Monthly All Employee Meetings, May is in person.
- f. Employee handbook update is in process.
- g. Technology upgrades, including telephone switchover to new provider.
- h. Staffing changes and look to the future.

NEWS FROM PARTNERS/STAKEHOLDERS

- a. Reporting to NEF, NHT, CHFA and M&T Bank is up to date.
- b. WHHA and TBRA audits underway.

Executive Session – The Board broke into Executive Session at 6:22 p.m. to discuss personnel matters on a motion by Ms. Reynolds and seconded by Ms. Dowd. The Board came out of Executive Session at 7:00 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Reynolds seconded by Ms. Dowd.

Chairperson's Comments – Ms. Dowd thanked the management team for their hard work, foresight and proactive efforts.

Old Business - none

New Business – none

Meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Reynolds seconded by Ms. Dowd.