



TENANT SERVICES COMMITTEE

931 Yonge Street,
Toronto, M4W 2H2

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The Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”) of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (“TCHC”) held a hybrid Public meeting on June 10, 2024 via Webex and in-person at City Hall, Committee Room 1, 100 Queen Street West, commencing at 9:00 a.m.

TSC Directors Present: John Campbell (Chair) (in-person)
Marcel Charlebois (via Webex) (9:03 a.m. – 10:29 a.m.)
Debbie Douglas (via Webex) (9:00 a.m. – 10:16 a.m.)
Ubah Farah (via Webex)

TSC Directors Absent: Councillor Paula Fletcher
Ziva Ferreira

Management Present: Sean Baird, President & Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”)
Nadia Gouveia, Acting Chief Operating Officer (“COO”)
Dean Horner, Acting General Counsel & Corporate Secretary
Lily Chen, Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer (“CFO”)
Barbara Shulman, Chief People & Culture Officer
Jessica Hawes, Acting Chief Development Officer
Allen Murray, Vice President, Facilities Management
Ada Wong, Acting Vice President, Strategic Planning & Communications

John Angkaw, Senior Director, Business Operations
Lindsay Viets, Director, Operational Planning & Program Services
Allan Britton, Acting Senior Director, Community Safety Unit (“CSU”)
Mona Bottoni, Acting Senior Manager, Corporate Services, CSU
Arsema Berhane, Acting Director, Programs & Partnerships
Julio Rigores, Manager, Engagement Refresh
Alex Yeaman, Manager, Violence Reduction Program, Programs and Partnerships
Anne Stephenson, Assistant Corporate Secretary

A quorum being present, Mr. Campbell, serving as Chair, called the meeting to order, and Ms. Haji-Jama served as recording secretary.

ITEM 1 CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

DEPUTATIONS

The Chair polled for any depositions to be heard at the meeting. The following verbal depositions were presented:

- Item 5 - Business Arising from the Public Meeting Minutes and Action Items Update (*Catherine Wilkinson*)
- Item 7B - Tenant Funds for Common Area Projects – Interim Report (*Catherine Wilkinson*)
- Item 7C - Community Safety Unit 2023 Year-End Wrap Up (*Catherine Wilkinson and Miguel Avila-Velarde*)

The following written depositions were presented:

- Item 7C - Community Safety Unit 2023 Year-End Wrap Up (*Miguel*)

Avila-Velarde and Catherine Wilkinson)

ITEM 2 APPROVAL OF PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Douglas, seconded Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC unanimously approved the Agenda for its Public Meeting of June 10, 2024.

ITEM 3 CHAIR’S POLL RE: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Chair requested members of the TSC to indicate any agenda item in which they had a conflict of interest, together with the nature of the interest. **No conflicts were declared.**

ITEM 4 CONFIRMATION OF TSC PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 11, 2024

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC confirmed the above-captioned minutes as amended.

ITEM 5 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS UPDATE

A verbal deputation was received from Catherine Wilkinson with respect to action item 3 – 2023-24 Corporate Insurance Renewal, and action item 4 – People and Culture Division Update.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC received the matters reported as Business Arising from the Public Meeting Minutes and Action Items Update as of April 11, 2024.

ITEM 6 CSAC CHAIR'S REPORT VERBAL REPORT

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC deferred the CSAC Chair's Report and forwarded it to the Board of Directors.

ITEM 7A TCHC'S Q1 2024 OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES TSC:2024-24

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Ms. Gouveia, Ms. Viets and Mr. Angkaw were available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- The Q1 2024 operational performance report offered a detailed overview of TCHC's achievements and challenges over the past quarter.
- The overall vacancy rate was 1.39%, indicating efficient turnover and quick availability of rentable units.
- This achievement highlights the dedication of regional operations teams, particularly building staff and Tenant Service Coordinators.
- Significant progress was made in reducing the number of vacant rentable units, with a decrease of 52 units (8.04%) from Q4 2023 to Q1 2024.
- Improvements in the choice-based offer process and maintenance required stage contributed to this success.
- The completion rate of units within 60 days improved to 64% in March 2024 which is up from 40% in December 2023
- Non-rentable vacant units increased to 1,826, largely due to ongoing revitalization projects accounting for 84 units.
- A 98.3% collection rate for rent and parking charges was achieved in March 2024, despite a 4% increase in arrears from Q4 2023.
- Strategies to address arrears include early intervention, supporting tenants with annual reviews, and preventing loss of subsidies.
- Obtaining Notices of Assessment for Annual Reviews is a challenge; efforts included referring tenants to free tax clinics and hosting clinics in TCHC buildings.

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- Partnerships are being explored to provide broader access to income tax filing support, showing early success by the decreased arrears at the beginning of Q2.
- Changes to the arrears collection process are being piloted in June and July of this year, with an aim to implement later in the year.
- In Q1 2024, Client Care Centre handled over 124,000 calls, which is a decrease of 4,398 calls (3.4%) compared to Q4 2023.
- The main resident line had the largest decline, with a 7.5% drop in demand for maintenance work orders.
- The decrease in call volume allowed an improvement in average wait times of 19 seconds, reflecting a 17% improvement. Service levels also improved by 2%.
- Regarding pest management in Q1 2024, the number of pest treatment demands decreased by 2,649 treatments compared to Q4 2023 due to improved vendor management and focused treatments.
- The annual rent increase in January, typically 2%, contributed to a rise in arrears.
- Arrears are also attributed to nonpayment as tenants catch up post-holiday. Tenants were also trying to catch up with their paperwork, particularly their Notice of Assessments.
- In recent years, there has been an increase in the minimum rent amount tenants can pay.
- Market rent tenants experience guideline increases. The 2% increase applies only to market rent tenants.
- The increase for RGI tenants applies only to those paying the lowest rent amount and it is very small.
- The RGI amount is generally 30% of gross income, though this can vary depending on whether tenants are on benefits.
- There has been a small incremental increase in the minimum rent amount for new tenants who pay the lowest rent.
- Existing tenants paying grandfathered rent are not affected by the new minimum rent increases.
- New tenants paying the lowest rent are subject to a floor amount set by the province. The increase is measured in dollar amounts, not percentages.
- An eviction order does not always result in an actual eviction. Efforts to work with tenants continue even after an eviction order is issued.
- Tenants are sometimes able to pay the arrears balances just before or after the eviction date.

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- There are currently 40 call centre agents handling client calls. Scheduling staff is done with anticipation of call volumes at peak times between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., where over 90% of calls are received.
- Not all calls received are from TCHC tenants; some support internal administrative staff, including staff setting up vendor records or vendors making inquiries.
- These administrative tasks also contribute to the overall call volume.
- Unit turnover times vary due to several factors including the condition of units during move-outs, additional repairs to units, etc.
- Some units turn over quickly especially those vacated due to arrears or specific circumstances.
- Challenges include aligning repair schedules with timelines and ensuring timely removal of unit contents.
- Target turnover time is 60 days, which is managed slightly over 60% of the time.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2024-24, being the TCHC's Operational Performance Measures, for information.

ITEM 7B TENANT FUNDS FOR COMMON AREA PROJECTS – INTERIM REPORT TSC:2024-25

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

A verbal deputation was received from Catherine Wilkinson with respect to this item.

Ms. Gouveia was available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- The program previously known as participatory budgeting was put on hold a few years ago.
- Although funds were allocated for it in the 2024 budget, the program remained on hold and was not part of the final submission.

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- Operations plans to include it in the 2025 budget submission, working closely with the City of Toronto (“the City”) and TCHC Finance team.
- The Confronting Anti-Black Racism (“CABR”) Fund program is a one-year initiative and not ongoing.
- Currently, the Tenant Action Fund program is the only active funding initiative.
- There is discussion about creating a combined funding program for tenants based on feedback received.
- The organization did not want to name the program without understanding the final design of the program.
- The engagement process has taken longer than expected but is progressing with ongoing discussions with TAC and other groups.
- TCHC aims to establish one funding model that all tenants can access.
- The issue was initially discussed possibly through the in-camera session of a BIFAC meeting due to concerns surrounding Participatory Budgeting.
- At the TSC, the issues with Participatory Budgeting was discussed and the program ceased being referred to as Participatory Budgeting.
- Operations is currently engaging with tenants on how funding should be allocated, including whether it should be based on the number of units per community.
- The Participatory Budgeting program initially involved capital projects proposed by different communities, with a voting process for support.
- Over time, the program transitioned to a more traditional funding application style where tenants could select items like park benches for their buildings. This revised program was subsequently placed on hold.
- Tenant feedback indicated that solely purchasing items is not their only area of interest. There is interest among tenants in expanding the program to fund local community projects, different programs, and supports.
- The Tenant Action Fund program is currently active and was never placed on hold. This program enables tenants to apply for up to a thousand dollars for small community projects.
- The updated model for the Participatory Budgeting program may look similar to the Tenant Action Fund in terms of application process.

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- Discussions are ongoing with the Tenant Advisory Committee (“TAC”) to determine how applications will be reviewed, guided by tenant feedback.
- There's a possibility that the program could evolve to offer expanded opportunities for tenants to apply for funding, similar to the Tenant Action Fund
- There is also a potential for this program to be integrated with Tenant Action Fund with tenants having access to potentially two streams

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2024-25, being the Tenant Funds for Common Area Projects – Interim Report, for information.

ITEM 7C COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT YEAR-END WRAP TSC:2024-26
UP

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Verbal deputations were received from Catherine Wilkinson and Miguel Avila-Velarde with respect to this item.

Written deputations were received from Catherine Wilkinson and Miguel Avila-Velarde with respect to this item and was circulated to the TSC.

Mr. Britton and Ms. Bottoni were available to answer questions of the TSC. Highlights of the discussion include:

- The Community Safety Unit (“CSU”) is mandated to provide an annual report to the Toronto Police Service (“TPS”) Board, facilitated through TCHC's boards or subcommittees.
- CSU structure includes special constables, Parking Enforcement Officers (“PEO”), Field Intelligence Officers (“FIO”), Community Safety Advisors (“CSA”), field supervisors, managers, and senior managers and the senior director.

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- CSU collaborates closely with TPS as the law enforcement agency, focusing on safety and security within TCHC properties.
- CSU Community Safety Advisors (“CSA”) conduct safety audits using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, such as ensuring buildings are safe and well-lit.
- CSU is facing challenges in recruiting Law Enforcement Officers (“LEO”), including special constables, due to high demand and competitive career opportunities.
- CSU special constables respond to calls, perform proactive patrols, and engage in building relationships with tenants to enhance community safety.
- CSU has significantly reduced shooting incidents on TCHC properties over the past five years, from 45% to 16.33% of all city shootings in 2023.
- CSU maintains its own detailed incident statistics, acknowledging potential differences with TPS data due to reporting methods, especially when incidents occur near but not on TCHC properties.
- CSU will be collaborating with the City to ensure accurate reporting on shooting incidents.
- Crimes against property showed a steady increase since 2021, increasing from 1,786 incidents in 2021 to 2,011 incidents in 2022, and 2,776 incidents in 2023.
- In 2023, thefts accounted for 45% of reported crimes against property, while mischief incidents constituted 42%. Compared to 2022, mischief incidents increased by 4% while thefts decreased by 5%.
- With respect to crimes against persons, there was a slight 2% decrease in assaults since 2021, with assaults still comprising 49% of all crimes against persons.
- Robbery accounted for 11% and firearm-related incidents for 13% of all recorded crimes against persons.
- There was an increase in firearm-related offenses, rising from 34 in 2022 to 60 in 2023, and other weapons-related incidents increased from 11 in 2022 to 18 in 2023.
- While there has been a reduction in these categories compared to the COVID years, some levels have approached pre-COVID levels, with differences in violence reduction areas.
- The Alternate Response Unit (“ARU”) is one of the strategies implemented by CSU to reduce wait times for dispatch calls.

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- ARU involves specially trained special constables stationed in one of TCHC's buildings.
- Calls received by the Dispatch Centre are reviewed to determine if they require a mobile response.
- Lower priority calls, such as those for insurance purposes or where a report needs to be filed, are handled by this unit.
- For crime scene follow-ups, CSU may handle calls over the phone after contacting TPS.
- Special constables from the ARU unit contact complainants to gather information and determine if handling the call over the phone is suitable.
- ARU comprises less than 3% of CSU staff but manages over 5% of the unit's calls, with an increase from 2,800 calls last year.
- Currently, the unit operates mainly during peak hours to enhance response times.
- Parking enforcement numbers have slightly decreased from 26,000 tickets issued last year.
- Currently, there are seven parking enforcement officers deployed across 4 platoons. Despite having only 7 PEOs, all special constables also issue parking violations across TCHC properties
- City-set parking rates are up to \$75. Estimated revenue generated for the city is just under \$800,000 annually, with the average ticket cost of \$30.
- PEOs prioritize education before issuing tickets. PEOs use computer technology to track down car owners within TCHC buildings before issuing tickets.
- Recognition efforts are significant within CSU, with 20 staff members and security personnel receiving recognition coins last year.
- Special constables with over 20 years of service were honoured with the Peace Officer Exemplary Service Medal by the Governor General of Canada for their dedication, years of service and hard work.
- CSU engages in ongoing recruitment within TCHC communities.
- ARU special constables are drawn from the existing pool of CSU special constables.
- Some ARU special constables are accommodated due to personal or physical reasons, or for developmental purposes to enhance their skills.
- CSU is collaborating with the CABR team to recruit two new cadets who are tenants at TCHC.

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- The focus is on hiring Black youth from TCHC communities, offering them a one-year pilot project.
- CSU primarily recruits from within TCHC communities, but due to the profession's requirements, they also consider candidates from outside the community.
- Currently, CSU does not deploy mental health experts in the field, but they are exploring this option.
- Initially, the Community Safety and Policing Act precluded special constable agencies from dealing with mental health cases.
- A subsequent revision reinstated these authorities effective April 1, 2024, allowing CSU to explore more options moving forward.
- CSU welcomes opportunities for committee members to job shadow at any time.
- CSU operates 24/7, making it accessible for job shadowing experiences which involves riding along with CSU staff to observe their duties.
- The process includes a tour of TCHC buildings, dispatch centres, parking facilities, etc.
- CSU staff numbers increased significantly in 2019, adding 60 special constables to the unit's authorized strength.
- It typically takes about 6 months from identification to when the new special constables are able to carry out duties in the field.
- As of December 31, 2023, CSU had 117 fully trained special constables in the field, with an additional 16 undergoing training.
- Currently, another class of 16 special constables is in training, and CSU is aiming to reach a peak of 153.
- Feedback from exit interviews in 2018 showed concerns about limited career opportunities and compensation packages lagging behind other special constable services.
- CSU has since created areas of efficiencies such as the Court Bureau, where 93% of court materials now reach court on time, up from a previously lower rate.
- Developmental opportunities within the Court Bureau include roles like supervisors, fostering career growth for frontline staff.
- Recent internal promotions include three managers who progressed through developmental opportunities, previously hindered by lack of managerial experience.
- CSU successfully hired four former interns as permanent employees, reflecting their competence and success at CSU.

- Feedback from discussions with tenants indicates that CSU staff are perceived as safety and security professionals who actively protect the tenancies.
- While TPS does an exceptional job, their presence at TCHC properties is typically limited to an as-needed basis.
- Tenants often have personal connections with CSU staff, knowing them by name and feeling comfortable asking them questions.
- The value of these interactions is evident by the touching story where a retiring special constable was hugged and thanked by a tenant whose son he had saved 20 years earlier.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Mr. Charlebois, seconded by Ms. Farah and carried, the TSC received Report TSC:2024-26, being the Community Safety Unit 2023 Year-End Wrap Up, for information.

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY
ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE (“CSAC”) AND
TENANT SERVICES COMMITTEE (“TSC”)**

ITEM 10 CHARTERS

TSC:2024-28

The above-captioned report was circulated to TSC members prior to the meeting.

Motion carried **ON MOTION DULY MADE** by Ms. Farah, seconded by Mr. Charlebois and carried, the TSC approved the TSC Charter (Attachment 1) and the Community Safety Advisory Sub-Committee Charter (Attachment 2), forward them to the Governance, Communications and Human Resources Committee for its approval, and following such approval, to the Board of Directors for its approval.

TERMINATION

A motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Mr. Charlebois and seconded by Ms. Farah. The TSC resolved to terminate the public meeting at 10:29 a.m.

Secretary

Chair, Tenant Services Committee