



West Hartford Fair Rent Commission Special Meeting

Town of West Hartford – Legislative Chambers Room 314

50 South Main Street, West Hartford CT 06107

Tuesday August 25, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Minutes

I. Meeting Opening

- A. Call to Order: Chair Berklas calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm.
- B. Roll Call: Chair Berklas conducts roll call. PRESENT: Commissioners Nichole Berklas, John Souza, Bruce Wittchen, Alberto Cortes and Gregory Konover. Commissioners Cortes and Konover serving as regular members. ABSENT: Commissioners Kate Martin, Paige Marion, Venica Blythe, and Alexis Safo-Agyeman.
- C. Approval of Minutes from the April 30, 2026 Meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Souza. Seconded by Commissioner Konover. Unanimous vote to approve minutes of April 30, 2026 meeting.

II. New Business

- A. Discussion of Procedure for Meeting
- B. Explanation of Administrative Hearing Guidelines
- C. Case #2026-10, Smith v. Benachat, LLC. Commission is advised of a second continuance request from the Respondent and a request for continuance by the West Hartford Housing Authority. Commissioner Berklas makes a motion to grant the continuance requests. Seconded by Commissioner Souza. Unanimous vote.
- D. All Parties intending to testify are sworn in.
- E. Case #2026-08, Carter v. Coccomo II, LLC. Both parties are present for the hearing. Complainant's evidence is marked. Complainant puts on their case. Respondent's agent asks questions of the Complainant through the Chair. Commissioners ask questions of Complainant. Complainant's witness testifies. Respondent's agent asks questions of the Complainant's witness. Commission asks questions of Complainant's witness. Respondent's agent submits its exhibits. Respondent's agent puts on its case. Complainant via the Chair asks questions of Respondent. Both Parties make closing

statement. Commission discussion and deliberations. Commissioner Souza makes a motion to find the rental increase harsh and unconscionable. Seconded by Commissioner Wittchen. Unanimous. Commissioner Souza makes motion for a rental reduction in the amount of \$2,250. Seconded by Commissioner Konover. Unanimous. Commissioner Konover makes a motion that the reduction be effective September 1, 2026 through the remainder of the lease. Seconded by Commissioner Wittchen. Unanimous

F. Recess at 8:21 pm

G. Reconvene at 8:26 pm

H. Explanation of Administrative Hearing Guidelines

I. Case #2026-09, Fraser v. Duong. Both parties are present for the hearing. Chair Berklas notes that Commissioner Cortes has recused himself from this hearing. Complainant's evidence is marked. Complainant puts on their case. Commissioners ask questions of Complainant. Respondent's agent submits its exhibits. Respondent's agent puts on its case. Complainant via the Chair asks questions of Respondent. Both Parties make closing statement. Commission discussion and deliberations. Commissioner Konover makes a motion to find the rental increase harsh and unconscionable. Seconded by Commissioner Wittchen. Unanimous. Commissioner Konover makes motion for a rental reduction for the month of July, to appear as a credit in September's rent. Seconded by Commissioner Wittchen. Unanimous.

III. Adjournment at 9:42 pm