



City of Bristol
Bristol, Connecticut

FAIR RENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Bristol City Hall
111 N. Main Street, 3rd floor
Bristol, Connecticut.

MINUTES

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of commissioners.

The commissioners introduced themselves. In attendance this evening was Erick Rosengren, City Council Liaison, Maria Theam, recording secretary, Jeffrey Steeg, Assistant Corporation Counsel, Jonathan Donovan, Assistant Corporation Counsel, Cristina Costa, Adam Brothwell, Brian Brady, Jon FitzGerald. David Haberfeld was also in attendance, but appeared late to the meeting and did not take part in the introduction.

3. Seating of alternates.

Commissioner Brian Brady stepped in as an alternate as some regular voting members were not in attendance.

4. Discussion and approval of the minutes of November 19, 2025 and take any action as necessary.

There was a MOTION to Approve the Minutes by Adam Brothwell and seconded by Cristina Costa. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carries.

5. Hearing on the fair rent complaint in the matter Gennifer Grant-Browne (tenant) and 439 West Street, Bristol, LLC (landlord) and to take any action as necessary.

Jon reviewed the rules and procedures of the hearing with both the landlord and the tenant. Jon then administered the oath to both parties, after which testimony began.

The tenant spoke first. She stated that a \$300 rent increase implemented all at once was unfair. She has resided at the property for approximately eight years. She initially paid \$600 per month, and during the first five years of her tenancy, rent increases were incremental.

She provided a brief history of prior ownership of the property and noted that at one point the rent was increased to \$950 per month. At that time, she was employed and able to manage the increase. At present, she stated that she cannot afford the proposed increase.

The tenant also noted that there is no sink in the bathroom and described the unit as very small, only being 250 square feet.

The landlord stated that she purchased the property in August. She waited until the existing leases expired before introducing herself to the tenants. During that time, she attempted to understand the tenant's plans and informed her that a rent increase would be implemented.

She stated that she offered to install a sink in the tenant's unit and also offered to provide additional time to move out if the tenant chose not to remain. She indicated that she received a text message from the tenant at the end of November and that the lease was subsequently signed.

The landlord appeared with her realtor Jithu Sajeevan and presented comparable rental information for the area, including MLS data. She noted that heat and electricity are included in the rent. She stated that she recently rented a similar studio apartment in the same building for \$1,300 per month and that she is losing money if the rent is not increased. The landlord distributed copies of comparable rental listings obtained from MLS.

The tenant stated that she signed the lease out of fear that she would be evicted.

Brian Brady asked whether heat and electricity had always been included in the rent. The tenant confirmed that they had.

David Haberfeld stated that he felt the proposed rate of \$1,250/month is market rate. There was also some discussion about the lack of a sink in her bathroom and whether or not that was a code enforcement issue.

David Haberfeld made a **MOTION** to deny the complaint and allow the rent increase to go forward because the proposed rent increase is not found to be so excessive to be found harsh and unconscionable effective January 1, 2026. The motion was seconded by Adam Brothwell. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carries.

6. **Public participation.** None.
7. **Discussion by commissioners of old business and take any action as necessary.** None.
8. **Discussion by commissioners of new business and take any action as necessary.** None.
9. **Discussion by commissioners of meeting dates and agendas and take any action as necessary.**
 - a. Next meeting will convene on January 28, 2026 at 6:00 PM, City Hall.
10. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned by way of MOTION to Adjourn brought forth Adam Brothwell, and seconded by Brian Brady. All in favor, none opposed and the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria Theam, recording secretary

