



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

Approved
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
September 9, 2019 – 4:00 P.M.
City Commission Chambers, City Hall
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

October 2018-September 2019

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Noah Szugajew, Chair	P	9	1
April Kirk, Vice Chair	P	8	2
Jonathan Bennett	P	6	3
Christina Disbrow	P	8	1
Wanda Francis	P	9	1
Richard Morris	P	8	3
Marisol Simon	A	1	1

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of August 26, 2019, there are 7 appointed members to the Board, which means 4 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Francis called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present at the meeting.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Francis noted that today’s meeting would be her last as a member of the Community Services Board (CSB). She thanked Staff and the Board members for the opportunity to serve Fort Lauderdale for the past eight years.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 12, 2019

Motion made by Ms. Kirk, seconded by Mr. Morris, to approve the minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. CSB BUSINESS

- **Election of Chair**

Motion made by Ms. Francis, seconded by Ms. Kirk, to nominate Mr. Szugajew as Chair. In a voice vote, Mr. Szugajew was unanimously elected.

Motion made by Mr. Morris, seconded by Mr. Szugajew, to nominate Ms. Kirk as Vice Chair. In a voice vote, Ms. Kirk was unanimously elected.

- **Update on Meeting with Commission**

Ms. Williams stated that she will take the lead in coordinating a meeting with the City Commission, as the individual previously responsible for this coordination is no longer with the City. This was why the meeting had not been scheduled earlier.

V. CDBG

- **Updates**

Ms. Williams reported that all but one agency has exhausted their Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding awards with one month to go. The agencies have plans in place to cover their needs for the final month. She hoped to have representatives of each agency present at the October Board meeting to discuss their accomplishments.

VI. HOPWA

- **Budget Funding for Additional Case Managers**

Ms. Williams noted that spreadsheets representing fiscal year (FY) 2017-18 and FY 2018-19 were distributed to the members. In FY 2017-18, leftover Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) dollars totaling \$421,834.73 were not committed to any specific purpose or activity. In FY 2018-19, \$2,916,735.38 was left uncommitted. These amounts combined provide over \$3.3 million in funding, which can be used for the community as the Board wishes.

Ms. Williams continued that her proposal is for the Board to begin discussion of how to spend these dollars, even though the City has not yet received a physical contract from the state. \$64,000 will be withheld from the funds offered by the state to cover administrative needs. The remaining \$881,154 would go toward rental subsidies, as discussed at the August 2019 meeting. The \$881,154 would be combined with the roughly \$3.3 million in unspent HOPWA funds for a total of \$4.2 million.

Ms. Williams advised that a working group determined these funds could serve approximately 75 clients at a maximum subsidy rate of \$1300 per month. The definitive subsidy amount will depend upon household size and income, as eligible clients are

required to pay a certain percentage of their income toward rent. The short-term rental vouchers would be in use for 36 months. The subsidy estimate of \$1300 per client per month would use \$3,510,000 toward vouchers.

This subsidy amount would leave a remaining balance of roughly \$711,000. If two additional case managers are hired at an entry-level salary of \$50,000 each with some benefits, this would use \$300,000 for both individuals for a set period of time. This leaves an additional \$411,000, which would cover the cost of hiring either a part-time or full-time housing inspector to meet demand. Budgeting for a full-time inspector for three years at \$225,000, which is based on the City's current pay grade for this position, would leave \$186,114, which could either fund another case manager or remain in reserve for any necessary adjustments.

Chair Szugajew asked for the date by which funds from the state must be spent. Ms. Williams replied that because of the rollover of funds from previous cycles, the City will have roughly five years in which to spend these dollars.

Mr. Morris recalled that in the past, the Board's intent was to move away from voucher systems and develop a mechanism to secure longer-term units. If this was still their intent, he suggested that the discussion should focus on using only the \$881,154 toward voucher programs and using the \$3 million another way. Chair Szugajew added that he was concerned with the plan to spend most of the reserve funds as well.

Mr. Morris suggested using half of the available funds toward the proposed program while keeping the remaining half in reserve for the longer term. Ms. Williams pointed out that when the working group met to discuss the use of funds, they considered 12 to 18 months for the duration of the program rather than three years. She characterized the calculation as a "what if" scenario: the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has authorized the use of short-term vouchers, as long as an exit strategy is in place for clients who do not reach self-sufficiency within the life of the program. The exit strategy would require budgeting enough funds to carry these clients for a longer time.

Chair Szugajew asked if the number of clients to be served by the state grant could be reduced. Ms. Williams replied that the City's proposal to the state referred to 75 clients: this would need to be discussed with the state before changing the plan. Mr. Morris clarified that instead of reducing the number of clients to be served, he would recommend using only half of the \$3.3 million for the program and keeping the other half in reserve while seeking longer-term housing options.

Ms. Francis asked if the process of moving 75 clients into housing would take longer if funds are not used to hire two case managers and/or a housing inspector. Ms. Williams clarified that not hiring a housing inspector would put \$225,000 back to be spent elsewhere. The City currently has one housing inspector. It is possible to use a third party vendor for inspections.

Vice Chair Kirk asked if it would be possible to shorten the time frame of the program but still hire two case managers. Ms. Williams confirmed this. Vice Chair Kirk also asked if having the City hire a housing inspector would create red tape for the program. Ms. Williams advised that while this would create some delay, the Procurement Department would be helpful in moving this process forward.

Vice Chair Kirk asked what would happen if the Board decides to fund a new City housing inspector once the time frame of the program is over. Ms. Williams explained that Housing and Community Development is a grant-funded division which oversees its own use of project delivery and administrative dollars. They do not receive significant General Fund dollars from the City.

Vice Chair Kirk emphasized the need to meet with the City Commission to discuss issues such as this, as the Commission needs to have a better understanding of the impact of the Board's decisions over the long term. She concluded that she was in favor of hiring two case managers as proposed.

Ms. Francis also stressed the need for case managers to help identify clients to be placed in short-term housing through the proposed program. Case managers would need to continue to provide support for these clients as they transition to long-term housing.

Mr. Morris noted that the state's intent was to provide short-term funds. Unless the program's goals include some type of self-sufficiency, such as moving clients off vouchers by its 12th month, he felt the result would be failure. He noted that the original time frame discussed was 12 to 18 months, while the time frame proposed at today's meeting was 36 months. He proposed that the program last for 12 to 18 months, after which time it would be assessed.

Ms. Williams clarified that the \$2.9 million can be used within the next five years, as this amount has been renewed in the past by exchanging it with new funds as they become available. The \$400,000 may also be renewed. She added that HUD's only concern was that they wanted to see a strategy in place to ensure clients are not discharged from the program to homelessness if they cannot meet the goal of self-sufficiency. Because there are existing voucher positions that have not been backfilled, a small number of clients from the program could be transitioned to these positions.

Chair Szugajew suggested that if no decision is made today, the working group could revisit plans for the program and determine how to proceed while keeping half the funds in reserve. Ms. Williams confirmed that this could be done and the Board's decision could be made at the October meeting. She noted that the state's interest is only in how their funds are spent: these must be used by the end of June 2020.

- **Assessment Process for Time Limited Vouchers**

Ms. Williams advised that this would be discussed at the October meeting.

VII. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Ms. Williams introduced two new members who will join the Board in October.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Francisco Gomez, Housing Services Manager for Care Resource, stated that he is certified as a housing inspector and can assist with inspections once a new program has been finalized. He also requested more information regarding the term of new case managers. Ms. Williams replied that no final recommendation has been made thus far by the working group. She added that in Mr. Gomez's scenario, the City would provide case management services rather than housing inspection, while the agencies providing housing services contract with inspectors.

Alisha Murwood, Supervising Attorney with Legal Aid Services of Broward County, noted that while there has been discussion of a larger role for Legal Aid using the available funds, the agency is currently at capacity for clients. If another 75 clients are to be housed, the budget will need to be inclusive of legal services for those clients. She estimated that Legal Aid would need at least one half-time attorney.

IX. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Mr. Morris requested that the Board be provided with the revised numbers determined by the working group in advance of the October meeting, as well as the numbers provided at today's meeting. Ms. Williams replied that she would try to make these available as requested. CDBG Public Services will also be discussed in October, as well as feedback from current CDBG agencies.

X. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.