



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

DRAFT
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
April 13, 2021 – 4:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

October 2020-September 2021

MEMBERS

April Kirk, Chair	P
Marisol Simon, Vice Chair	P
Pamela Aiken	P
Elizabeth Cupido	P
Christina Disbrow	P
Mary Kinirons	A
Christi Rice (dep. 5:49)	P
Shackera Scott	P
Terra Sickler	P
Dana Somerstein	P

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Eveline Dsouza, Senior Administrative Assistant, Housing and Community Development
Simone Flores, CDBG Grants Administrator
Mauricio Baquero, City Moderator
Crysta Parkinson, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

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

- **Quorum Requirement – As of April 7, 2021, there are 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Kirk called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Williams reminded all applicants present that the Board’s recommendations do not constitute a binding agreement with the City. Their recommendations are contingent upon the applicants’ financial standing with the City, their capacity to provide services, the City Commission’s final approval, and the execution of a written agreement.

After the Board makes its recommendation, other factors are considered, including review of each applicant. This information will go to the City Commission for final approval. Once approval is given, the legal process of drafting a contract and scope of services begins. When the contract has been executed by both parties, the reimbursement process begins. This means the entity receiving funds is required to make expenditures themselves, followed by submission of a complete invoice with correct supporting documents. The agencies are reimbursed for eligible expenditures against their grant award.

Ms. Williams emphasized that the funds in question are not from the City but from the federal government. The timeline followed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) does not always match the City's timeline: there is typically a 90-day gap before the City can begin reimbursement. This provides the federal government with sufficient time to upload funding to the appropriate accounts.

VI. BOARD REVIEW FINAL SCORE & RECOMMEND ALLOCATION

Chair Kirk briefly reviewed the process for today's meeting, recalling that the Board heard from representatives of all applicants at the April 12 meeting and have had time to go back into the Submittable system and make any changes to their scores. They will address Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applicants first. Once scores are tallied, any additional adjustments may be made. The Board will then discuss the total available CDBG funds for allocation and how they would like to distribute them among applicants. They will then follow a similar process for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) scores.

Ms. Williams noted that Ms. Aiken had not voted on the applications of Oasis of Hope and Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO) due to potential conflicts. Roughly 18 months ago, Ms. Aiken was a Board member for Oasis, although she was no longer active with this agency and would receive no financial remuneration from the application process. The City Attorney's Office determined that this would not constitute a conflict.

Ms. Williams continued that in the case of HOPWA applicant MODCO, Ms. Aiken was a member of the New Mount Olive Baptist Church, of which MODCO is the community development arm. The City Attorney's Office determined that this was also not a conflict of interest, as MODCO is a subsidiary organization of the church and Ms. Aiken does not hold a formal position within the church.

Ms. Williams also reminded the Board that there are two separate categories for CDBG funding: Public Services and Community-Based Development Organizations (CBDO). The only CBDO applicant was Housing Opportunities, Mortgage Assistance, and Effective Solutions (HOMES), Inc., which will be discussed separately from the Public Services agencies when determining funding allocations.

The Board members provided their scores for the CDBG applicants. Final average scores are listed below:

- Broward Partnership for the Homeless: 92
- Oasis of Hope Community Development Corporation: 82
- Delta Education and Life Development Foundation: 85
- Jack and Jill Children's Center: 92
- South Florida Institute on Aging (SoFIA): 92
- Turnstone Development: 74
- Covenant House: 92
- HOMES, Inc.: 80 (CBDO)

Motion made by Ms. Cupido for the top four applicants, which is everyone that [has] an average score above 90, that they are funded in full.

It was clarified that this **motion** would fully fund the Broward Partnership for the Homeless, Jack and Jill, SoFIA, and Covenant House. Fully funding these agencies would cost \$175,000 total.

Vice Chair Simon **seconded** the **motion**.

Ms. Somerstein recalled that the previous year, there had been discussion of additional CDBG funds that could be allocated later in the year. Ms. Flores advised that \$202,688 is the maximum available for CDBG Public Services in fiscal year (FY) 2021-2022.

Ms. Sickler suggested that the \$27,688 funds remaining after fully funding the top four applicants be divided among the three remaining Public Services applicants. She pointed out that two of these three organizations are new applicants. Ms. Disbrow agreed with this proposal, although she did not recommend funding for Turnstone Development.

Ms. Cupido expressed concern with Delta's plans to use its funding, noting that the majority would go toward a choreographer for a cotillion. Ms. Disbrow agreed, recalling that she had sent a note to Delta that more funds should go toward programmatic uses, such as program planning and evaluation. She added, however, that the cost of administering a CDBG program is significant, and giving an agency a relatively small allocation would not be cost-effective. She suggested placing a \$45,000 cap on allocations for the top four applicants and using the saved dollars to fund other applicants. Ms. Somerstein agreed with this proposed reduction for the two agencies that had requested \$50,000.

Ms. Cupido recommended lowering the proposed \$50,000 allocations for three of the four highest-scoring agencies to 80% funding, which would leave additional funds left over. This would lower the three agencies' allocations from \$50,000 to \$40,000.

Ms. Aiken advised that she would like to see some funding go toward new applicants. Chair Kirk agreed, noting that at times new and/or grassroots organizations struggle with the application process because it is new to them; however, funding these applicants is a step toward making them stronger.

Ms. Rice stated that she did not want to lower Covenant House's allocation, as this could be perceived as punishing them for requesting less money than other agencies. Ms. Sickler and Ms. Disbrow agreed, with Ms. Disbrow pointing out that Covenant House serves a vulnerable population. It was determined that the agency would receive its full \$25,000 request.

Ms. Cupido asked if awards can be made contingent upon how they would be spent, offering the example of asking Delta to spend no more than a certain percentage of their award on specific uses. Ms. Williams confirmed that this is possible, reiterating that the Board's recommendation is contingent upon the execution of a contract. Within the contract, the City typically defines the scope of work on which funds may be used.

Ms. Scott asked if a cap can be placed on the percentage of CDBG funds that may be spent on administrative costs. Ms. Williams confirmed that this can be done as well.

Chair Kirk noted that the modifications suggested thus far would provide enough savings to fund Delta and Oasis at \$21,344 each. It was further clarified that if the costs of the choreographer were removed from Delta's application, their request would be \$27,000.

Chair Kirk stated that if a Board member wishes to bring an applicant into the conversation to discuss whether or not they can continue to operate with a proposed lesser amount of funding, they may make this request at any time.

Ms. Williams recalled that Delta was funded in a previous CDBG cycle, but ultimately returned the funds because they were unable to provide the documentation required for income certification. She asked if the agency has worked through this issue. Deetra Durham, representing Delta Education and Life Development Foundation, replied that the agency could work with a lesser allocation than requested. Regarding income certification, she continued that the organization has worked through its issues in gathering information and would not have the same difficulty now.

Chair Kirk noted that a **motion** remains on the table. Ms. Cupido and Vice Chair Simon **rescinded** their earlier **motion** and **second**.

Vice Chair Simon recommended that before a new motion is made, the Board should ensure that Oasis of Hope would be able to use a lesser amount of funding than requested. Jacqueline Reed, representing Oasis, confirmed that they would be able to work with the proposed lesser amount, as they have other funding sources.

Motion made by Vice Chair Simon, seconded by Ms. Somerstein, to recommend funding for Broward Partnership, Jack and Jill, and South Florida Institute for Aging for \$45,000 apiece, for Covenant House at \$25,000, and for Oasis of Hope and Delta Education each for \$21,344. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Kirk next addressed CBDO funding, for which the only applicant is HOMES, Inc. They had requested \$165,000, while the available funding is \$125,000.

Motion made by Vice Chair Simon, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, that [HOMES, Inc.] be recommended for funding at \$125,000. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Kirk advised that any applicants who wish to discuss the submission and application processes further remain until the end of the meeting, when they can provide public feedback. Staff will be in touch with CDBG applicants to advise them of when their requests will go before the City Commission for approval.

The Board moved on to address HOPWA funding, with Chair Kirk noting that online scoring for these agencies may require refinement to address any scores over 100.

The members submitted their scores for HOPWA applicants, which were averaged as follows:

- Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC): 93.33
- Broward House: 92.89
- MODCO: 92.78
- Careresource: 94.22
- SunServe: 93.33
- Legal Aid of Broward County: 94.11

The Board took a brief recess from 5:06 to 5:10 p.m.

Ms. Williams advised the members to review the agencies' client counts. Some agencies had brought it to Staff's attention that they were unable to edit this number and instead had to select a range of numbers. These agencies' representatives were asked to clarify their client counts at this time.

Unduplicated client counts were clarified as follows:

- BRHPC: 192 clients assisted by short-term mortgage, rent, and utility (STRMU) assistance; 96 clients by permanent housing placement (PHP); 100 by tenant-based rental voucher (TBRV); and 36 by temporary emergency hotel voucher (TEHV)
- Broward House: 148 clients assisted by facility-based housing assistance; 80 clients by project-based rental (PBR) assistance; 95 by TBRV
- MODCO: 75 clients by PBR

- SunServe: 500 clients
- Careresource: 500 clients
- Legal Aid: 105 clients

The Board members discussed the average scores and clients to be served, noting that \$6,708,391 is available for programming. Vice Chair Simon noted that there are more STRMU funds available than have been requested.

Ms. Rice asked if the Board is permitted to move available funds between different programs, citing the example of moving the extra funding available in STRMU to another program. Ms. Williams confirmed that this was possible.

Vice Chair Simon recommended funding BRHPC at their full request of \$485,500. She noted that \$770,000 is available for housing case management (HCM) and legal assistance, while SunServe, Careresource, and Legal Aid have requested a total of just over \$900,000.

Vice Chair Simon proposed funding BRHPC at the amounts requested in the STRMU and TEHV categories. Ms. Disbrow recommended funding 100% of BRHPC's PHP request as well. Chair Kirk suggested funding both MODCO and Broward House at higher percentages of their PBR requests.

Vice Chair Simon noted that the total TBRV requests from BRHPC and Broward House are less than what is available. She recommended funding these two agencies at 100% of their TBRV requests, which would leave over \$100,000 to be moved from TBRV to another program.

Ms. Williams advised that the agencies have not taken on new TBRV clients in several years, recalling that in the past the Board had discussed the stagnant state of the voucher waiting list. Staff's funding proposal would allow a small number of clients to be added to the waiting list. There are few requests for this program, as agencies have maintained the waiting list while awaiting the final cut of funding for TBRV. The current proposal represents this final cut and would allow the City to make a decision regarding how many more vouchers they can maintain. For this reason, Staff recommends that the Board not move any additional monies from the TBRV program in case further issues arise.

It was noted that despite their high scores, Legal Aid and Careresource were not being funded at their full requested amounts. Ms. Rice recommended that Legal Aid receive at least as much funding as they did in the previous cycle, which was \$180,000.

Motion made by Ms. Rice, seconded by Ms. Somerstein, to fund Legal Aid at the same level as last year [\$180,000].

Vice Chair Simon asked if taking a significant portion of funds from TBRV would raise concerns among HOPWA providers who use this program. Ms. Williams proposed reaching out to TBRV providers for their input on how much it would take to serve additional clients.

Ms. Somerstein asked if the Board wished to vote on funding Legal Aid at a minimum of \$180,000 and then determine where these funds would come from. Chair Kirk replied that her recommendation would be to rescind the **motion** currently on the floor, as she did not wish to lock in this amount for Legal Aid when it may be possible to find more dollars for them elsewhere.

Ms. Somerstein **rescinded** her **second**, but noted that for purposes of discussion, she was supportive of a minimum of \$180,000 for Legal Aid.

Ms. Rice **rescinded** her **motion**.

Ms. Rice left the meeting at 5:49 p.m.

Ms. Williams offered a quick breakdown of what various HOPWA programs provide for clients. BRHPC, Broward House, and MODCO provide direct housing subsidies, which is what HOPWA itself is designed to do. STRMU provides funds for rent, mortgage, or utility payments on behalf of a client, while PHP provides assistance for first and last month's rent. TBRV provides a subsidy toward the household's overall rent: the household is required to pay 30% of their total income toward rent and this program picks up the remainder.

Ms. Williams continued that the City receives points from HUD based on the number of clients who are served by direct housing subsidies. She noted, however, that case management is also an extremely important component of HOPWA, as it helps match clients' needs with the appropriate housing subsidies. She acknowledged the difficulty of making a decision between these programs.

Ms. Cupido requested further clarification of what the STRMU and PBR programs do. Ms. Williams explained that STRMU would help HOPWA-eligible clients who are unable to pay their rent, mortgage, or utility for up to 21 weeks in a calendar year. PBR is similar to TBRV, with the difference that the HOPWA agency owns the building(s) in which clients live and pays for the entire facility. Clients in PBR programs are not eligible for STRMU.

The Board further discussed taking funds from STRMU to fund Legal Aid at \$180,000, as there have been STRMU dollars that were unspent in the past. Ms. Somerstein emphasized that they should provide Legal Aid with at least the same amount it received the prior year, since both SunServe and Careresource would also be receiving more than in prior years. Ms. Cupido commented that she would prefer to see STRMU

remain as is. Ms. Disbrow added that she would recommend funding remain level with the amounts provided in the current fiscal year.

Ms. Williams recommended adding a small amount of funding to TBRV to bring this program to an even \$200,000, reiterating that TBRV providers could be asked to estimate how many additional clients they felt they would be able to serve with this funding. This would determine how many clients could be added to the TBRV waiting list. The Board discussed moving specific amounts from a number of programs to provide the funding allocations they felt were appropriate.

Rhode Rock, representing BRHPC, estimated that the agency could serve five additional TBRV clients with another \$91,680 per year. Stacy Hyde, representing Broward House, stated that the organization could serve another seven clients.

Ms. Scott asked what the results would be if additional dollars were given to MODCO. Chair Kirk acknowledged that MODCO was the only agency discussed thus far not receiving the same amount of funding as the previous year. She recommended that the Board consider this further.

Ms. Somerstein commented that she felt serving another 12 clients with housing to be a compelling reason to move funds into the agencies' TBRV programs.

Vice Chair Simon observed that her concern was for Careresource in particular, as the Board has discussed funding only 72% of their request with other organizations at 90% to 100%. This is despite their score being higher than those of other organizations for which funding has been discussed at a much higher percentage.

Chair Kirk stated that the TBRV programs have been discussed as particularly sensitive, and should be considered on their own. If funding is retained for voucher programs, moving other funds around would provide all agencies, including Careresource, with the same funds as the previous year so they would not have to decrease their programming.

Edwin Cordova, representing Legal Aid, commented that in addition to taking on new clients, some agencies are not working with the same number of personnel as in the previous year. Legal Aid has lost three attorneys in the past two and a half years, including attorneys dedicated to HOPWA services. He also noted that the money used by some organizations will not include supplies or equipment but will go only to salaries.

Chair Kirk asked if Legal Aid would be able to work with level funding in the amount of \$180,000 as the previous year. Mr. Cordova concluded that he was not sure.

Chair Kirk advised that the Board members serve on a volunteer basis and have no access to additional funds or authority over how the City moves the funds around. They make funding recommendations with the assistance of Staff in order to make the

process as fair and equitable as possible for all agencies. She concluded that the Board members would fully fund as many organizations as they could if this were possible.

Ms. Williams stated that every HOPWA provider that has worked with the City to provide services over the last few years is aware that the HOPWA Modernization Act, which passed some years ago, would result in funding decreases. The final cut of roughly \$30,000 came in the current year under discussion. HOPWA funding is awarded to the City by a formula: no funds are being withheld.

Ms. Williams continued that the primary goal of HOPWA, as stated in its title, is housing for households affected by HIV/AIDS and earn 80% or less of the area median income. She emphasized the difficulty of the decision the Board is asked to make to provide an equitable distribution of funding, based on the resources available and the mandate the City must fulfill.

Ms. Williams reminded the Board that they had provided a number of agencies with additional funding due to the anticipated need generated by COVID-19 funding. These were not CARES Act funds but leftover dollars from previous years. The agencies receiving these funds have up to two years to spend them.

Motion made by Ms. Cupido, seconded by Vice Chair Simon, to allocate FY 2021-2022 funds to the applicants as captured in the current worksheet presented [attached]. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Kirk thanked the Board members and City Staff for their work on funding allocations.

Ms. Williams clarified that the funding listed above does not represent contractual agreements, but only recommendations from the Board. Additional steps, including City Commission approval, must take place before contracts are executed. The recommendations are also contingent upon the agencies' remaining in good standing with the City. She emphasized that the contracts for both CDBG and HOPWA are for reimbursement processes. The time frame from contract execution to the first reimbursement may take up to 90 days. Reimbursement is based on complete, eligible, and properly invoiced activity.

Ms. Williams also noted that Board member Mary Kinirons had not participated in the funding allocation process due to a conflict.

Ms. Scott left the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

VII. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chair Kirk addressed the Submittable platform used for CDBG and HOPWA applications, noting that this issue will be discussed at the next meeting as well. She

requested feedback from the Board members as well as from any applicants' representatives who were still present at this time. She recalled that the Board had requested an online submission platform for some time before this one became available, and acknowledged that some of the challenges with this system are outside Staff's ability to improve them.

Ms. Disbrow observed that the questions and scoring on HOPWA applications could more easily follow the flow of the application, or the application could be broken up into sections. Overall, she preferred the online system to the hard copies and USB drives previously used.

Vice Chair Simon noted that the "second review" portion of the HOPWA process might have been easier if it had mirrored the system used for CDBG funding. She also felt it would have been helpful for the Board to see how much funding could be allocated prior to the second meeting so they could have an idea of the amount they would be working with.

Chair Kirk commented that both the CDBG and HOPWA portions should have been separated out into different fields for review, as this could have contributed to scores of over 100 points that required correction. She also noted there were differences between headers on the digital and printed copies, which had led to accidental underscoring.

All three members who provided feedback on the Submittable system confirmed that it was preferable to the USB drives and paper copies used in previous funding cycles.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Edwin Cordova, representing Legal Aid, thanked the Board for their work and emphasized that all agencies are part of the same community with a common goal.

IX. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Ms. Williams suggested that the Board spend more time at the next meeting to review ways the application process could be made easier. She recommended inviting agencies' representatives to attend the next Board meeting as well so they can provide feedback on the system and process after having had some time to consider it further. Chair Kirk agreed, requesting that today's attendees be asked to provide feedback at the next meeting.

Ms. Williams concluded that after today's meeting, 30-day public notice will be provided of the recommendations before they go to the City Commission for approval. She encouraged Board members to be available at the City Commission meeting at which the recommendations will be presented. They will receive notice of the Conference Agenda meeting at which the item will appear.

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 6:52 p.m.

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

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]