



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
City Commission Chambers, City Hall
November 8, 2021 – 4:00 P.M.
Hybrid Meeting

October 2021-September 2022

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
April Kirk, Chair	P	2	0
Marisol Simon, Vice Chair	P	1	1
Pamela Aiken	A	1	1
Emma Collum	A	1	1
Elizabeth Cupido	P	2	0
Christina Disbrow	P	2	0
Christi Rice	P	2	0
Shackera Scott	P	1	1
Terra Sickler	A	1	1
Dana Somerstein	A	0	1

Staff Present

Eveline Dsouza, Senior Administrative Assistant, Housing and Community Development
Jason Adams, Administrative Assistant, Housing and Community Development
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 October 1, 2021, there are 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Kirk called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Administrative Assistant Jason Adams introduced himself at this time.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 2021

Motion made by Ms. Rice, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, to accept the minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. CDBG FINAL FY20-21 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Chair Kirk noted that the Board members had received documentation of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) final performance reports via email. She advised that each agency would be called upon to provide highlights and any challenges from their performance reports for approximately three minutes.

Laura Turk, representing Broward Partnership for the Homeless, stated that this organization was unable to expend its full grant during fiscal year (FY) 2020-2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. They also experienced a lower than normal census due to Broward County health mandates, and could not fully use bus passes, as Broward County Transit (BCT) suspended bus fares from March 2020 through May 2021. The bus pass program is now back in effect, and the Partnership has received authorization from the City to extend its FY 2020-2021 award through March 2022. Aside from the bus pass program, the Partnership was able to meet its other two performance outcomes.

Chair Kirk requested an update on the goal of having 35% of clients exit the shelter and move into stable housing. Ms. Turk confirmed that the organization met this goal within one percentage point of the target.

Ms. Cupido asked if the Partnership would be able to meet its goal regarding bus passes due to the extension it was granted. Ms. Turk confirmed this as well.

Tierra Smith, representing Mount Bethel Human Services Corporation/Prevention Central, reported that the organization's CDBG funds have helped them supply food to numerous clients. Other services include clothing and assistance with housing. They were able to use all funds and meet their contractual goals. There were no significant challenges.

Ms. Smith noted that Mount Bethel/Prevention Central does not expect to be able to apply for CDBG funds again the following year due to the number of consecutive terms in which they have received these dollars. Ms. Dsouza advised that she would look into this time frame for clarification.

There was no representative present for Turnstone Development. Ms. Disbrow commented that she would like to know whether the number of clients served by this agency has increased, decreased, or remained steady over recent months, as they have more than doubled their goals. It was also noted that the Board wished to see clarification of the goals of Turnstone's self-sufficiency programming. Ms. Dsouza advised that she did not have this information, but would reach out to the agency and bring these details back to the next meeting.

Deborah Lamb, representing Women in Distress of Broward County, reported that the report included in the Board's backup materials represented only the most recent quarter. Their outcomes exceeded their target goals, serving 103 clients against a target of 35. They expended their funding in August. There were no challenges in addition to the changes in service due to COVID-19 protocols.

Vice Chair Simon asked if the agency has witnessed an increase in domestic violence during the pandemic and how they have responded to an increased need for services. Ms. Lamb confirmed that this increase has occurred throughout Florida, adding that many shelters in other counties have experienced COVID-19 outbreaks that limited the full use of their facilities. This led the Broward County facility to bring in more participants.

No representative was present from the South Florida Institute on Aging (SoFIA). It was noted that the organization has served 52 clients against a goal of 63. Ms. Cupido observed that SoFIA has spent 98% of its total allocation, and that she would like to hear how they plan to close the gap in the number of clients served with their remaining funds. They are also at 73% against a goal of 90% in reporting a reduction in the level of caregivers' stress, which Chair Kirk noted may be related to the pandemic.

Ms. Dsouza advised that both CDBG and HOPWA contracts expired as of September 30, 2021, which means amendments would be required if any remaining balance is to be spent. She stated that she would look into this with other City Staff members to determine if it is possible.

V. HOPWA FINAL FY20-21 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Sharon Alveranga-Jones, representing Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC), reported that this agency reviewed 521 applications for the Tenant-Based Rental Voucher (TBRV), Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility (STRMU), and Permanent Housing Placement (PHP) programs. She noted that there are particular challenges with the PHP program, as clients must be working in order to access this program and the pandemic limited clients' ability to work. BRHPC exceeded its goals for providing STRMU assistance and temporary housing placement in hotels.

Other issues are related to the affordability of available housing in Broward County, as many clients are priced out of the rental market. BRHPC tries to assist clients as much as possible within Fort Lauderdale before referring them to other sources so they can achieve stability. BRHPC's financial literacy workshop is currently not operational, although it is hoped this program can be resumed in January 2022.

With regard to the TBRV program, the agency was awarded additional funding and hopes to assist 10 more clients; however, because clients from this list are selected randomly, the process of bringing them into the program can be lengthy and challenging. The City is working on a solution to address this issue so clients can be contacted more quickly.

Ms. Disbrow requested clarification of the percentage of clients the organization hoped to help through the PHP program. Ms. Alveranga-Jones replied that the goal was to help 80% of these clients. Clients who were not working due to the pandemic could not be assisted through this program.

Ms. Disbrow suggested that the agency's year-to-date percentages might be higher than indicated on the backup materials. She noted that all 64 clients in the PHP program, for example, may have all received assistance in completing a realistic monthly budget, which is one of the goals. Chair Kirk requested that Ms. Dsouza work with BRHPC to review their calculations and bring the updated figures back to the next meeting.

Alexandra Garrison, representing Broward House, addressed the facility-based housing program, noting that several clients were able to move into independent housing in the most recent quarter. A number of clients have reunited with their families, while others decided to go into halfway housing and continue to work toward independence. She emphasized that it is a success for clients to find any type of housing.

Challenges include hardships on staff, including quarantine due to possible COVID-19 exposure, which resulted in greater pressure on other staff members. Ms. Garrison concluded that this was a strong quarter for facility-based housing.

Tamika Weaver spoke on Broward House's TBRV program, pointing out that some clients transitioned from this program to move in with family members or seek independent housing. One client transitioned to a nursing facility. Staff is working to ensure that lines of communication are open between themselves and tenants.

Ms. Weaver continued that the project-based housing program served roughly 86 clients over the past year. A number of units and buildings are being improved, which limited the number of clients who could be served there. One area of focus is a new leasing process, which offered a one-on-one approach between housing care counselors and clients. Broward House plans to further strengthen these relationships going forward.

Jacqueline Stewart, representing Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO), stated that the organization offered both project-based housing and a Master Lease program. The Master Lease program leases a neighborhood home for a family. While the original goal was to transition the family to becoming first-time home buyers, this was not successful; however, the family did transition to independent living. This program will not be renewed.

For the project-based program, MODCO met its goals, with four clients transitioning from the program. The difficulty is in finding units other than MODCO-owned facilities, as landlords often charge more money than fair rental value. 100% of the agency's goals were met.

Chair Kirk complimented the Master Lease program in particular. Ms. Stewart explained that it was difficult to determine the right clients to place on this property to achieve success. Chair Kirk noted that as issues arose with the program, MODCO was able to find different solutions that were successful. She suggested that the agency reconsider bringing this program back in some form in the future.

Francisco Gomez, representing Care Resource, reported that the agency exceeded its target number of unduplicated clients, serving 686 individuals. During the pandemic, not all clients were able to provide all the documentation requested for various services. Care Resource assisted these clients in applying for unemployment, provided food vouchers and other services, and provided medical services. They also assisted clients seeking to apply for STRMU, moving assistance, and other housing resources.

Tiffany Arieagus, representing SunServe, stated that the organization was able to meet 100% of its performance outcomes, although they fell slightly short of the number of clients they had hoped to serve due to the pandemic. Because there was a COVID-19 outbreak in their building, staff spent some time working from home, which made it more difficult to meet with clients. Many of their clients have found jobs and transitioned from homelessness to housing.

SunServe is now seeing clients in an office setting again due to the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other controls in place. Ms. Arieagus noted that two clients have died in recent weeks, and the organization has worked to support their families during this time. They continue to provide wellness checks, bus passes, and food for clients as they move toward employment and self-sufficiency.

Edwin Cordova, representing Legal Aid of Broward County, reported that this agency has a main agreement and an extension agreement with the City. They have achieved their target numbers for the main agreement. They have also met goals for the extension, which is reflected on a second spreadsheet. This agreement ran from July 1 through June 30.

Because the City indicated that Legal Aid was required to close both its agreements by September 30, 2021, both documents are provided. Mr. Cordova continued that there is a third agreement, which ran from October 2020 through the end of September 2021, for which the agency did not meet their numbers. This agreement was signed in February 2021.

During the time of these agreements, Legal Aid assisted 212 unduplicated clients. Mr. Cordova emphasized that they did not see the number of clients expected, although between July 1 and September 30, they opened 74 new files, of which 26 were for unduplicated clients. Another 39 unduplicated client files have been opened between October 1 and the first week of November.

Mr. Cordova advised that Legal Aid has been able to complement HOPWA assistance to their clients with their own assistance through other organizations that provide private funds. These organizations provided \$46,430 to assist HOPWA clients. Legal Aid is currently experiencing a delay in reopening due to personnel changes and building issues. He thanked Care Resource and SunServe for their assistance in serving clients.

Ms. Cupido asked if Legal Aid anticipates a surge in activity in the first quarter of 2022 due to the lifting of a nationwide moratorium on evictions. Mr. Cordova replied that Legal Aid has not yet seen a great increase in this activity. He expected this increase will more likely come in December 2021 and January 2022, as they have not seen a significant increase at present.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chair Kirk observed that the City has an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC), with which the Community Services Board (CSB) has previously considered holding a joint meeting. The AHAC looks at ways to create more affordable housing, while the CSB considers ways to provide funding for affordable housing. She suggested that this proposed joint meeting be discussed further in the future.

Chair Kirk continued that there are some items, such as food, furniture, and toiletries, for which the City does not seem to have a clearinghouse or resource for residents who may wish to donate these materials. She proposed that the Board consider making a recommendation that the City make this information more readily available to the public in the future. This may apply to PPE for organizations as well, as many of the CDBG and HOPWA providers have begun to return to an office setting.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Francisco Gomez of Care Resource stated that the HOPWA provider agencies work together to help their clients. He recalled that Care Resource recently received an award for its rapid re-housing program, which assists individuals and families who are earning incomes but are homeless. They also provide support services that assist with the payment of utility bills, child care, and provision of furniture.

Tierra Smith of Mount Bethel Human Services thanked Mr. Gomez and Care Resource for their partnership in assisting clients.

VIII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Chair Kirk reiterated that the Board still has questions for Turnstone Development and SoFIA, which she hoped to see addressed on a future agenda. She also wished to consider a meeting with the AHAC to discuss possible non-grant means of funding for necessities. Ms. Dsouza confirmed that she would reach out to the two agencies, as well as to the Staff Liaison of the AHAC, who can provide an overview of that Committee's

activities. Staff will also contact BRHPC to ensure that they are receiving full credit for their performance measures.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

Chair Kirk recalled that at the October 2021 meeting, the Board had briefly discussed previous communications to the City Commission and the lack of response to them. She advised that she had spoken with Housing and Community Development Manager Rachel Williams on this issue after the previous month's meeting and requested that Staff review the meeting minutes to determine how many communications the Board has sent over the past year. She wished to review these items at the next meeting and discuss how they may wish to further communicate with the City Commission.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 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.]