



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
City Commission Chambers, City Hall
January 9, 2023 – 4:00 P.M.

| MEMBERS | | PRESENT | ABSENT |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|---------------|
| Christi Rice, Chair | P | 4 | 0 |
| William J. Dunne, Vice Chair | P | 4 | 1 |
| Wismy Cius | A | 8 | 2 |
| Gary Hensley | P | 8 | 1 |
| Sharon Hughes | P | 2 | 2 |
| Ronald Pierre | P | 3 | 3 |

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Eveline Dsouza, Administrative Supervisor, Housing and Community Development
Carla Blair, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

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

- **Quorum Requirement – As of January 1, 2023, there are 6 appointed members to the Board, which means 4 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Rice called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Aug 8th, October 10th, November 14, and December 12th, 2022 meetings

Motion made by Mr. Hensley, seconded by Vice Chair Dunne, to approve the August minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Motion made by Mr. Hensley, seconded by Vice Chair Dunne, to approve the October, November, and December minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. CDBG AND HOPWA UPDATES

Ms. Williams reminded all present that immediately following today’s Community Services Board (CSB) meeting, the annual public planning meeting will be held. This meeting will review all entitlement grant funding available to the City. Staff will also explain how these funds may be applied for and the types of services for which the money may be used. There will also be a Fair Housing presentation.

Ms. Williams continued that Staff will provide a survey to all present at the meeting so they can receive feedback on the community's questions and concerns. The survey will also be available online.

Ms. Williams noted that there have been two changes affecting the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) program. As of December 8, 2022, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued a public notice stating that all HOPWA-sponsored housing must provide carbon monoxide detectors and alarms. The City's HOPWA-assisted projects with restrictive covenants will be taken care of for this expense, although other organizations participating in the program will need to oversee the installation of these devices.

This requirement affects not only HOPWA but all HUD-assisted housing. City Staff is working to determine whether or not Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds may be used to assist families with low incomes in purchasing these devices.

Ms. Williams continued that the second change addresses the City's application to HUD requesting a rent exception for HOPWA clients. HUD has responded positively, raising the rent standard. She referred the members to their backup materials, which reflect the new rent standard of providing 130% of the HUD-published fair market rent (FMR). The standard will need to be recalculated each year as HUD publishes a new FMR. The City is allowed to pay up to 70% of FMR for an efficiency, or \$1785.80. This amount will be applied retroactively beginning on October 28, 2022.

Ms. Williams emphasized that FMR addresses not just rent, but refers to the cost of rent plus a utility allowance. She offered the example of clients in tenant-based projects, for whom HOPWA pays the rent as well as providing a subsidy toward utilities. The combined total amount determines the FMR. This will permit clients to access a wider choice of housing units.

Chair Rice asked if this update has been shared with HOPWA provider agencies. Ms. Williams replied that at present the information has been shared informally with two providers that have a backlog of clients seeking tenant-based rental assistance. It will take additional time to bring all policies up to date.

Ms. Williams recalled that at the December 2022 meeting, Staff had advised that they were preparing for a discussion of the HOPWA request for proposal (RFP), which will go out next year. While this information has been sent electronically to the Board members, she also requested feedback from the members. She emphasized that the goal should be housing more people with existing resources. The current services that go out for bid as part of the HOPWA RFP will be reviewed to determine if there are any procedures that should be pursued differently, such as leveraging the different providers' resources to ensure the community receives the maximum benefit. Discussing these issues now will allow sufficient time to plan before the next HOPWA RFP is sent out.

Ms. Williams advised that the City currently offers every service eligible for HOPWA funding. The following services are offered under the current HOPWA RFP:

- Temporary emergency assistance (hotel vouchers): recipients must have an exit strategy, such as identification of permanent housing, as the City may only provide 60 days' assistance in a six-month period; this applies for individuals/families who are preparing to move into permanent housing, as well as to individuals/families fleeing domestic violence
- Permanent housing placement: this program offers move-in assistance for the first and last months in a residential unit, as well as help in connecting utilities; this program typically targets clients who can pay their rent on their own but cannot come up with the lump sum necessary for move-in expenses
- Tenant-based rental vouchers: this is a long-term program, as most clients receive these vouchers until they reach self-sufficiency or are otherwise terminated from the program; these vouchers are used on the open market and will be assisted by the HUD rent exception; the client pays 30% of household income toward the cost of rent
- Project-based rental: this program was not intended for long-term use, although the current housing market has necessitated its use; the subsidy is tied to the specific facility or project, and when a client leaves that unit, they leave the program; there are currently two agencies in Fort Lauderdale operating these facilities, as HOPWA funds were used to acquire them, resulting in a restrictive covenant
- Facility-based housing: this is short-term housing with professional medical staffing available; this type of assisted living is often used by clients transitioning from hospitals who are not currently able to live independently; the typical stay in these facilities is 90 days; one local agency provides this type of housing, and has recently received an opportunity to expand the facility with an additional 28 beds
- Support services: there are two case management agencies which assist clients by assessing their status and needs, then determining what types of services are available for them on the HOPWA spectrum and connecting them to these services; also includes legal services, which assist clients by reviewing leases and addressing any housing-related issues between clients and landlords

Ms. Williams encouraged the Board members to read through the RFP when it is available so they can make recommendations on which services may require expansion.

Vice Chair Dunne asked how many clients were served by temporary emergency assistance vouchers. Ms. Dsouza estimated that 60 clients were served in the past year. She also clarified that 40 clients were awarded tenant-based vouchers over the past year in addition to the 175 clients who were already participating in this program. Most of these clients are not homeless, but do not have a permanent housing solution pending at this time.

Vice Chair Dunne asked if HUD might decrease the rent exception for next year. Ms. Williams replied that the only way this would be decreased is if HUD's FMR decreases. Since 2011, she noted that FMR has only been reduced once.

Chair Rice requested that the CDBG timeline be reviewed for the members. Ms. Dsouza provided the following dates:

- January 9, 2023: mandatory meeting for any agencies applying for CDBG public service funds; the application process is explained at this meeting
- January 31, 2023: pre-applications must be submitted; while these do not come before the Board, Staff reviews these documents to ensure the proposed activity is eligible for CDBG dollars
- February 6, 2023: eligible applicants are sent a full application packet
- February 9, 2023: individual meetings are scheduled with applicants to discuss the intent of their projects and ensure the scope is within CDBG guidelines
- Full applications are submitted, and Staff reviews them to ensure they have submitted CDBG-eligible requests; additional documentation is also required for the full application; if this documentation is not provided, the application is considered to have a fatal flaw
- The Board will have nearly a full month to review the applications
- April 10-11, 2023: applicants will present their applications to the Board, which will then send recommendations to the City Commission
- Public notice will be posted and the recommendations will be placed on the City Commission's Agenda in May or June 2023

Ms. Dsouza advised that paper or electronic copies of the applications may be provided to the Board members. It was noted that the ranking tool used by the Board in this process would be reviewed for new members at the next scheduled meeting. Staff will also provide scoring for a portion of the applications. Scores are tabulated on a spreadsheet and provided to the Board members prior to the application review meetings. Board meetings are typically scheduled over two days in the month of April to accommodate application review.

Chair Rice encouraged the members to ask any questions of Staff before the CDBG process is underway. It was noted that the Board will not go through the HOPWA RFP process in the current year, as that RFP is sent out every three years. The members will make recommendations for HOPWA agencies based on their performance since the beginning of the three-year cycle.

V. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chair Rice asked if Broward County will conduct a count of homeless individuals in 2023. Ms. Williams replied that a count is planned, with the County intending to hire part-time workers to take this count rather than relying on volunteers as in the past.

Ms. Williams continued that there is still a significant homeless population in Broward County, with the last count identifying over 2000 homeless individuals. Fort Lauderdale houses 700 individuals. She explained that the City is in a unique position, as all Broward County shelters are located here, as is the County jail. The City operates a “community court” which, instead of sending homeless persons who have committed infractions through the regular court system, they come to City Commission chambers and are put in touch with community service providers, including case managers and housing resources. This program has been very successful and attracts “walk-in” attendees as well as those on the official docket.

The challenge, Ms. Williams noted, is the current lack of housing stock, as the City has little affordable housing available. Broward County has launched a program that incentivizes landlords to register in its database so individuals seeking housing will have a wider choice of housing stock. She concluded that it will take more than the City and local communities to end homelessness, as this is a nationwide problem, like the need for affordable housing.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Ms. Williams advised the Board members to be prepared for further discussion of the HOPWA RFP. She also noted that the Board may wish to hear quarterly reports from CDBG recipient agencies. It was determined that these agencies would be invited to provide their written updates in advance, and would have the opportunity to appear at the next meeting and answer any questions the members might have.

Ms. Dsouza concluded that the members would also review the CDBG scoring tool.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

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