



APPROVED
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
Department of Sustainable Development
700 NW 19th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311
December 11, 2023 – 4:00 P.M.

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Christi Rice, Chair	P	3	1
William J. Dunne, Vice Chair	A	1	2
Wismy Cius	P	8	3
Latrisha Greaves	P	4	0
Gary Hensley	A	7	1
Sharon Hughes	A	2	2
Ronald Pierre	P	4	2
Amy Schimelfenyg	P	9	0

Staff Present

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

Communications to City Commission

Motion made by Ms. Schimelfenyg, seconded by Mr. Cius, to update the Board’s letter and renew the proposal to amend the number of required meetings. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

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

- **Quorum Requirement – As of December 1, 2023, there are 8 appointed members to the Board, which means 5 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Rice called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 13, 2023

Motion made by Ms. Schimelfenyg, seconded by Ms. Greaves, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. REVIEW HOPWA & CDBG SCORING TOOL

Ms. Dsouza reviewed the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) scoring sheet for the Board members, noting that once this application process has closed, Staff will review the applications for eligibility under U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD) guidelines. Applications will only be sent to the Board members if they are determined to be eligible under these guidelines. Staff will then rank the applications and send this ranking to the Board members.

Mr. Cius and Chair Rice requested clarification of some sections of the scoring sheet, which Ms. Dsouza reviewed. She added that the Board members can reach out to her or Ms. Williams if they have questions while scoring the applications. Staff can also provide members with paper copies of the scoring sheet if they wish.

The Board members and Ms. Dsouza reviewed the scoring sheet further for additional clarifications. Ms. Dsouza requested that the members email her with any additional feedback. The Board members will receive one scoring sheet for each agency, and are asked to provide their initial rankings in advance of the April 2024 meeting, at which the applicants will give their presentations and answer questions. After this meeting, the Board members will turn in their finalized scoring sheets.

The Board moved on to the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) scoring sheet. Ms. Dsouza advised that not all sections of this scoring sheet have been finalized; the sheet will be updated once the request for quotation (RFQ) has been posted on the City's supplier portal and all sections are available.

The Board reviewed the HOPWA scoring sheet with Ms. Dsouza as well.

V. REVIEW OF HUD MEETING – NOVEMBER 30, 2023

Ms. Williams reported that representatives of HUD met with City Staff on November 30, 2023 to provide technical assistance. The representatives met with HOPWA providers who have project-based programs, as those providers have expressed concern that this model is no longer financially feasible.

No decision was made at that meeting, and it was determined that more data will be needed. Ms. Williams advised that there are restrictive covenants in place, some of which are through HUD itself, and more legal research must be done before any actions can be taken. More information is also needed on how the project-based model has changed. In the past, these agencies were allowed to bill for rent as well as for operating costs; however, it was later determined that agencies may bill for rent or for operating costs, but not for both.

Ms. Williams continued that at that time, the agencies decided that they would rather bill for the reimbursement of total operating costs than for rent. Since rents have recently increased, however, it is no longer beneficial for the agencies to bill for operations costs only. This cannot be changed without further discussion from both

the agencies and HUD. It is also not permitted under HUD guidelines for agencies to pay themselves.

Another issue is that project-based providers hope to switch to the tenant-based provider model. This program allows individuals to rent apartments on the open market from a landlord of their choosing, so their vouchers are not tied to a single facility.

At present, there are different scenarios on the table, and no decision has been made. The HOPWA program continues to operate at its status quo, and RFQs will go out for the project-based model as they have in the past. It is possible that changes will be made later on.

Ms. Dsouza added that she is also working with HOPWA provider Broward House, which will have a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in the coming year. She will request a complete budget for their project-based housing program to determine where gaps exist. Staff will also work with Broward House on how they can collect the clients' rent portion.

Ms. Williams reviewed the project-based rental program for the Board members, explaining that in this model, the Community Services Board (CSB) recommends a certain amount be allocated to the provider. This provider also collects what is known as a client's rent portion, as every client must pay 30% of their household income toward rent. Because the providers own the facilities at which clients are housed, they are asked to demonstrate that the clients' rent is going back into the program.

To lessen the burden of tracking income, when providers record their program income it offsets certain line items within their budget. After this is done, some providers leave money on the table, which may occur because they have not captured all of their expenses. This may be a reason for the shortfall of the project-based model: it is necessary to capture all expenses in order to ensure they receive the maximum award amount while still using their program income.

Ms. Williams concluded that this is why Ms. Dsouza will meet with the incoming CEO of Broward House to make sure that these details are fully understood, and to provide Staff with a better look at the full picture.

Mr. Cius asked if the agency has left money on the table in the past. Ms. Williams confirmed this.

Mr. Cius also asked if City Staff has previously requested clarification of why this has happened, and whether or not Staff has worked with the agencies to review appropriate accounting models. Ms. Dsouza replied that an example of this was presented to the Board at a previous meeting when funding for provider MODCO's project-based housing program was returned: the return of these funds showed that

the agency has consistently not spent all their funds over the previous three years. The returned funds were reallocated to other provider agencies for use toward their tenant-based models. She is reviewing the project-based model to determine if action can be taken to help bridge at least a portion of these agencies' funding gaps.

Ms. Dsouza continued that she is also looking into how HOPWA agencies perform income certification, including whether or not all necessary documentation is being collected from clients. The intent is to ensure that the program is successful from both the agencies' and clients' points of view.

Ms. Williams further explained that if the program collects only the head of household's income, and not the income of other financially contributing members of that household, they are not capturing the true household income and the client is not paying their fair share.

Mr. Cius pointed out that the issue may be one of quality rather than income eligibility. Ms. Williams confirmed this, stating that the discrepancy cannot be addressed if the agency does not provide a budget that shows its true costs. If maintenance is not performed in a systematic approach, it is difficult to keep track of all expenses.

Ms. Dsouza continued that in the current year, clients have left very little any money on the table, as Staff has worked closely with the HOPWA agencies to make sure they use all of their funding. She estimated that they have used 98% to 99% of their funding. Ms. Williams added that this took considerable work on the City's side in reviewing invoices to ensure accuracy. The intent is to have all agencies reach a place at which they are more independent in overseeing their operations.

Chair Rice asked if Staff anticipates a change for the project-based providers in the future. Ms. Williams replied that no change is expected with the current model. She pointed out, however, that one of the project-based agencies is not subject to a restrictive covenant under HUD: instead, their restrictive covenants are local. The agency has the legal option of buying itself out of these covenants.

Chair Rice observed that if the agencies' current model is not working, they may not wish to apply for the next RFQ cycle.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chair Rice noted that the date of the Board's January 2024 has been changed to Tuesday, January 16, 2024 in order to avoid conflict with the first City Commission meeting of the new year or the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

Ms. Williams advised that the Annual Action Plan (AAP) meeting for prospective CDBG and HOPWA applicants will immediately follow the January 16 meeting. Each

CDBG applicant agency is required to send one representative to attend in person. HOPWA applicants may attend remotely if they wish.

Ms. Dsouza added that agencies which have received CDBG funds for three consecutive years may not apply for funds for a fourth consecutive year.

Ms. Dsouza recalled that at a previous meeting, the Board approved a communication to the City Commission requesting that the Commission amend the CSB's governing Ordinance. The Chair also sent a letter to the Commission to accompany this communication. Because there had been more than two weeks' time between approval of the communication and provision of the letter, the City Attorney's Office has recommended that the Board re-send the communication and letter with updated dates.

Once the City Commission has received the Board's updated communication and letter, they will provide additional guidance to Staff regarding whether or not they wish to proceed with a change to the Ordinance. If the Commission approves, Staff will then draft a new Ordinance to reduce their number of required annual meetings from ten to eight. The Ordinance will then go before the Commission for first and second readings.

Motion made by Ms. Schimelfenyg, seconded by Mr. Cius, to update the letter and renew the proposal. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sharon Alveranga-Jones, representing HOPWA agency Broward Regional Health Planning Council, asked if provider agencies would be able to see the Board's scoring tool as part of the RFQ. Ms. Dsouza confirmed the scoring tool would be provided.

VIII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

It was noted that the January 2024 meeting will review any changes to the CDBG scoring sheet.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

It was noted that the letter discussed under Good of the Order will be updated accordingly and sent to the Commission.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

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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.]