**Meeting Minutes**
**City of Fort Lauderdale**
**Community Services Board**
**700 NW 19th Avenue**
**Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311**
**May 12, 2025 – 4:00 P.M.**

| MEMBERS | | PRESENT | ABSENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Christi Rice, Chair | A | 13 | 3 |
| William J. Dunne, Vice Chair | A | 9 | 6 |
| Wismy Cius | P | 11 | 0 |
| Shelly Goren | P | 3 | 0 |
| Latrinsha Greaves | P | 14 | 2 |
| Gary Hensley | P | 8 | 2 |
| Sharon Hughes | P | 13 | 3 |
| James Vanden Bosch | A | 3 | 1 |

**Staff Present**
Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Jonathan Rogers, Administrative Supervisor

**Communications to City Commission**

None.

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

- **Quorum Requirement – As of April 1st, 2025, there are 9 appointed members to the Board, which means 5 constitutes a quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

Ms. Williams advised that an Acting Chair (A/Chair) would need to be designated for today's meeting in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair.

**Motion** made by Ms. Goren, seconded by Mr. Cius, to nominate Gary [Hensley]. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

The City Staff members present introduced themselves at this time.

## III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 14, 2025

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

## IV. REVIEW CDBG / HOPWA 2ND QUARTERLY REPORTS

Ms. Williams noted that the Board would hear presentations from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding recipients first, followed by recipients of Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) funds.

Charmaine Williams, representing Hope Fair Housing, reported that as of the second quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2024-2025, the organization has spent $7,255.45. Year-to-date expenses total $15,276.47. Second quarter expenses included salaries, office equipment, office supplies, utilities, printing services, and fax services.

Four workshops were held in the second quarter, reaching 120 individuals. There have been nine workshops year-to-date, reaching a total of 233 individuals. Ms. Williams provided an overview of demographic information for these attendees. The organization has exceeded its goal of six workshops within the Fort Lauderdale community. Their goal is to reach a total of 350 individuals throughout the fiscal year.

Ms. Williams further clarified that workshops were held for first-time home buyers within Fort Lauderdale City limits. Presentations were also provided for housing providers, including nonprofits, within City limits. Workshop facilitators included Housing Foundation of America, Urban League of Broward County, and others.

Mr. Cius asked how the impact of the workshops is determined. Ms. Williams replied that information is tracked through Housing Foundation of America to identify individuals and households which eventually purchased homes. Hope Fair Housing has also provided funds toward down payment assistance in the past, with the funds distributed through Housing Foundation of America; however, they do not have a system to track all workshop attendees who may purchase homes.

Ms. Williams explained that the workshops provide education on Hope Fair Housing and the resources they offer, as well as information on the Fair Housing Act, federal and state protections, discussion of reasonable modifications or accommodations, predatory lending, the complaint process, and more. The Broward County Human Rights Section is the official agency through which complaints are filed.

It was recommended that the agency seek to clarify the number of Fort Lauderdale residents attending workshops. Ms. Williams replied that she can work toward this in the future. She noted that Hope Fair Housing's help line tracks the cities from which calls come, and clarified that the workshops referred to in today's presentation were held within the City.

LaResia Golden, representing Broward Partnership for the Homeless, reported that in the second quarter the organization spent $14,260. Their year-to-date total is $36,772.50. They have over $12,000 remaining. There were 197 new admissions to the shelter during the second quarter.

The Broward Partnership for the Homeless has provided food, supplies, and bus passes for adults who are employed or are seeking employment. They have assisted 120 heads of household in seeking employment, which represents 94% of heads of household served during the second quarter. They also moved 27% of clients from shelter to stable housing against a goal of 20%, and assisted 85.9% of clients in travel to activities such as job searches, interviews, and medical appointments. 24.3% of clients were able to maintain or increase their total income against a goal of 20%. Expenses included food, bus passes, and supplies.

Ms. Golden noted that while capacity at the Broward Partnership's Fort Lauderdale shelter is 230, they are currently housing 270 individuals. It was requested that future reports also include the organization's waiting list numbers.

Mr. Cius requested that future reports indicate the number of senior citizens experiencing homelessness, as well as additional demographic information.

Erica Thompson, representing Jack and Jill Children's Center, reported that the organization has not used any of its CDBG funds in the current fiscal year. Reasons include the lengthy application process, as many eligible families do not wish to provide all the required information. Additional challenges include families that begin the application process but do not complete it, as well as students who cannot be served due to developmental or physical needs that the organization is not equipped to serve.

A/Chair Hensley asked if there is a plan in place to address these challenges and spend CDBG funds toward the organization's goals. Ms. Thompson replied that Jack and Jill Children's Center plans to return its CDBG funds and hopes to find a way to better serve Fort Lauderdale's families in the future with resources and opportunities.

Ms. Goren asked if the organization's staff can help families follow through on their applications. Ms. Thompson explained that she provides community outreach as the agency's admissions manager, visiting other organizations, multi-family housing complexes, and liaisons for houses of worship.

Ms. Goren asked if there are steps the City can take to support Jack and Jill in providing services to the community. Ms. Thompson replied that she will take this question back to the organization's leadership to determine if steps can be taken. It was suggested that other CDBG recipient organizations may be able to offer advice as well.

Ms. Thompson further clarified that Jack and Jill's application process is very similar to the application process used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

(HUD). She noted that there are many displaced and/or unhoused families in Fort Lauderdale, which places additional stress on those households. It can be difficult under these circumstances to locate all the documentation required by many application processes.

Ms. Hughes recommended reconsideration of the organization's vision so they can continue to serve Fort Lauderdale in the future. Ms. Thompson advised that there have been recent changes in Jack and Jill's leadership, but emphasized the agency's work throughout the community and its role in supporting families.

Ms. Greaves also acknowledged the stressors on displaced families, and spoke in favor of updating processes in recognition of these needs. Ms. Goren added that the Community Services Board (CSB) has had a long-standing relationship with Jack and Jill, and recommended that the organization consider how they may pursue CDBG funds again next year.

Ms. Williams noted that the next presentations will be made by HOPWA provider agencies.

Sharon Alveranga-Jones, representing Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC), reported that the agency has spent $128,000 to assist 31 clients in permanent housing placement (PHP) during the second quarter. Challenges include rental burdens and the limited financial resources of clients.

The short-term rent, mortgage, and utilities (STRMU) program has spent $331,000 to serve 88 unduplicated clients in the second quarter. The tenant-based rental voucher (TBRV) program is currently serving 96 clients at an approximate cost of $1 million. BRHPC seeks to help these clients move to other housing programs such as Section 8. The TBRV program has spent $2,600 on hotel vouchers during the second quarter.

As of October 2024, BRHPC ceased accepting new applications for the STRMU and PHP programs due to a shortage of funding. Ms. Alveranga-Jones recalled that in April 2024, the agency spent approximately $24,000 on those programs; in April 2025, this expense was $53,000. She emphasized that they are committed to identifying funding for the TBRV program, which led to the cessation of the other programs. Rents within the TBRV program are increasing as well.

A/Chair Hensley requested confirmation that BRHPC is suspending its PHP and STRMU programs. Ms. Alveranga-Jones explained that these programs were stopped so the agency can fund the TBRV program.

A/Chair Hensley suggested placing the potential reallocation of funds on the next CSB Agenda.

Tamika Weaver, representing Broward House, reported that the facility-based program is currently serving 68 clients, although their facility has only 50 beds. She advised that during the previous quarter, the organization's vulnerability assessments have shown an influx of returning long-term clients as a result of the current political climate. These clients are often experiencing homelessness due to increasing rents, which makes it more difficult for them to acclimate to a structured environment. 38 clients discharged from the program, which meant Broward House did not meet its goals for the quarter.

The agency has also seen an increase in substance use over the last 30 days, which is related to mental health and stress-related challenges as clients try to find jobs and stable housing.

The project-based housing program includes roughly 10 apartment buildings, a duplex, and one house owned by Broward House. Clients live in these properties for approximately six months to one year in order to maintain their sobriety. Turnover in these facilities has also made it difficult to keep units turning over at the usual rate.

Ms. Weaver advised that Broward House has served 62 clients against a goal of 72. Seven of these clients discharged from the program. The agency is working to address this by discussing discharge early in the client relationship. Five long-term clients have discharged from the program within the last two quarters.

Broward House is now providing its housing case managers with training on how to create a housing plan for clients, including a budget. She meets regularly with these case managers, who have indicated that one challenge is a lack of understanding of the organization's clientele by landlords. To address this, they are planning a landlord event to ensure landlords are aware that Broward House provides case management to its clients.

Within the last six months, Broward House's TBRV program was serving a caseload of 85 to 87 clients. The program is currently serving 73 clients due to increases in rents. Funding does not allow the opportunity to move most clients from the waiting list to service, which keeps the pool of clients from shrinking. In addition, landlords are not negotiating rent increases, most of which are significant.

Mr. Cius asked if Broward House keeps track of clients they cannot serve because of increasing rents, stating that this data may make it easier to explain requests for more funding to Broward County, HUD, or other entities. Ms. Weaver confirmed that she can provide this information.

Ms. Greaves requested that Ms. Weaver put together a narrative of the information she provided at today's meeting so the CSB can submit it as a communication to the City Commission. This can help ensure the Commission is aware of what is happening in the City with regard to housing needs.

Rhode Rosulme, representing Care Resource, reported that the organization was awarded $270,342 in HOPWA funds to serve up to 300 clients. Through the second quarter, they have spent $116,496.65 and served 295 clients.

Care Resource's goals include:

- 80% of clients achieving initial housing plan goals by a designated target date: the year-to-date percentage for this goal is 100%
- 80% of clients receiving assistance in completing a realistic monthly budget with appropriate follow-up toward self-sufficiency: the year-to-date percentage for this goal is also 100%
- 90% of clients receiving assistance in seeking employment by developing and renewing skills, working with case managers, and reporting job search activities: the year-to-date percentage for this goal is 100%
- 85% of discharged clients demonstrating improvement in vulnerability assessments: the year-to-date percentage of this goal is 100%
- 85% of discharged clients demonstrating improvement in a self-sufficiency matrix: the year-to-date percentage of this goal is 100%

All HOPWA clients assisted by Care Resource have been successfully served during the last funding period, including unduplicated clients in the PHP and STRMU programs. Challenges include deficits in digital literacy, transportation- and health-related barriers, economic challenges such as increases in rents, and difficulty securing landlord participation.

Ms. Greaves asked if the PHP program continues to serve clients. Ms. Rosulme advised that Care Resource has stopped this program as well as STRMU.

Francisco Gomez, also representing Care Resource, advised that the agency plans to request additional funds from Broward County so they can continue to provide these services. Ms. Greaves suggested that Care Resource and other agencies present today that have stopped their PHP and STRMU programs work together to discuss potential solutions.

Edwin Cordova, representing Legal Aid of Broward County, reported that the agency has served 91% of their goal of 125 unduplicated clients over the first two quarters of the fiscal year.

[No audio from 1:04 until 1:11.]

Jacqueline Stewart, representing Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO), stated that the organization was awarded $352,106, of which they have spent $162,680 thus far. They have exceeded their goal of serving 21 clients by serving 31 to date. 100% of their clients have resided with the organization in its housing program for more than 30 days, exceeding the goal of 80%. 100% of clients have completed a realistic monthly budget and received appropriate follow-up, also exceeding the goal of 80%.

25% of clients have made progress toward self-sufficiency by increasing the percentage of their contributions toward rent, which meets the goal of 25%. 13 clients have transitioned from the program, with one eviction. 100% of clients have maintained regular appointments with their primary physicians, exceeding the goal of 80%. 85% of discharged clients demonstrate improvement in their vulnerability assessment, which meets the goal for that performance indicator. 85% of discharged clients have also met the goal of demonstrating improvement in self-sufficiency. 40% of MODCO clients have transitioned from the project-based model to self-sufficiency, exceeding the goal of 10%.

Ms. Stewart confirmed that the agency is taking on three new clients, which will leave one opening for an additional client at this time.

Mr. Cius requested additional information on how the progress of clients who have achieved self-sufficiency is monitored by the organization. Ms. Stewart replied that a case manager meets with each client on a monthly basis and reviews their long- and short-term goals, which are documented. She noted that most clients are employed.

Ms. Stewart continued that MODCO currently has two senior clients whose time at the agency's facility is ending, but whom she cannot place at this time. It can be difficult to secure placement for individuals on fixed incomes, as there are no affordable senior communities in Fort Lauderdale that can accommodate them at this time. Ms. Greaves encouraged her to document a narrative of this and other challenges that can be provided to the City Commission, also noting that the definition of "affordable" should be reassessed, as affordability is not the same from one state or region to another.

Brenda Rentas, representing SunServe, advised that this agency does not have any funding to provide vouchers; they provide case management services only. She confirmed that increases in rent are a significant issue, and the organization advocates on behalf of its clients with their landlords. They also reach out to the Sheriff's Department for assistance in relocating clients who have no other options, and seek openings in other counties to assist these clients.

Ms. Rentas noted that there is a worsening mental health crisis, which can make it more difficult for some clients to keep their jobs. There has been an increase in activity related to the Baker Act. Funding for PHP and STRMU has stopped at SunServe, as with other agencies. Clients are requesting services that are not available, which affects staff as well as the clients themselves.

Ms. Rentas continued that SunServe's community partners have been very helpful in guiding and assisting clients whenever possible. They are currently unable to increase the number of clients served, as their focus is on existing clients who need help. She agreed that all agencies need to reach out to the City Commission to ensure their awareness of the issues facing service providers.

Suze Vedrine, representing the South Florida Institute on Aging (SoFIA), reported that the agency's companionship program provides in-person and support services to elderly and disabled adults in the Fort Lauderdale community. They were awarded $49,723, of which they have used $26,863.22. They have served 24 clients thus far against a goal of 35.

Ms. Vedrine explained that SoFIA has issued its regular biannual survey, for which results will be collected in June. The results will show how clients have been affected by the services provided. The organization continues to offer services to 332 individuals throughout Broward County so they can continue to live independently. Volunteers meet with these clients each week.

As of January 2025, SoFIA has successfully recruited 23 new volunteers, and another 10 will complete their training by the end of May. The program has spent 54% of its total allocation thus far.

## V. GOOD OF THE ORDER

The Board discussed the circumstances of a former MODCO client who was evicted from the program following several incidents in which rules were not followed. Ms. Williams advised that in cases such as this, there is a grievance process that former clients can follow if they wish.

Ms. Williams reminded the Board members that CDBG and HOPWA funds are not City dollars, but are federal funds. This means HUD, rather than the City Commission, controls how much funding is available for agencies. All of these dollars are awarded to provider agencies. She concluded that it would be more appropriate to lobby Representatives and Senators at the federal level rather than the Commission.

Ms. Hughes stated that she felt there should continue to be conversations with the City Commission as well, as the Commission may be able to identify more funding that could help residents in need. There may also be other services available in Broward County. A/Chair Hensley added that the Board can communicate the urgency of the affordable housing crisis to the City Commission.

Ms. Hughes added that there are multiple concerns facing many clients served by HOPWA and CDBG recipient agencies, including digital literacy, substance abuse, aging, and other needs, which may discourage many individuals from seeking assistance.

Ms. Greaves requested that in the future, demographic and waiting list information also be provided by the agencies.

## VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

## VII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Ms. Williams stated that there will be further discussion of reallocating returned funds for potential use in other programs, including PHP and STRMU.

## VIII. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

A/Chair Hensley reiterated that in the future, the Board may wish to emphasize the urgency of the affordable housing crisis to the City Commission to determine if that governing body may provide additional recommendations or assistance. Ms. Greaves noted that this should be addressed with particular emphasis on seniors.

Ms. Williams advised that the City also has an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) which addresses issues related to affordable housing. She suggested the Board may wish to schedule a joint meeting with that Committee to discuss common goals. This will require the approval of the City Commission.

## IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 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.]